CONDENSED TLS FRAMEWORK

Adaptation Research Alliance

UKaid from the British people

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Traditional monitoring and evaluation efforts often remain confined to individual projects, without an active dissemination of knowledge and sharing between likeminded partners across the implementation, research, and policy spheres. To overcome this paradigm, the Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA) has developed an innovative strategy to collectively track, learn, and share (TLS) evidence from research on climate adaptation initiatives. It draws on best practice from knowledge management research and the lessons from other consortiums of partners working on climate change adaptation. This document gives an overview of the TLS framework, with suggested tools and methods for pursuing tracking, learning, and sharing across the diverse membership that the Alliance hosts. The ARA aims to use the framework to develop a community of practice that collectively builds the evidence base for what works in climate change adaptation.

1 DEFINING THE TLS STRATEGY

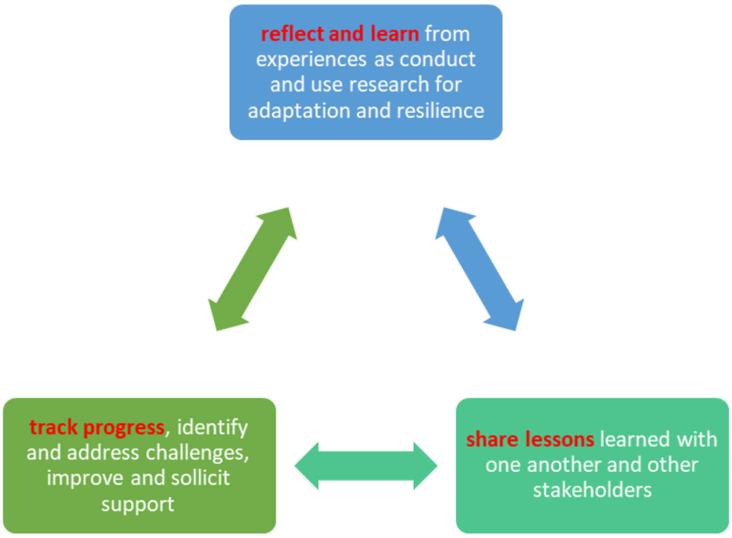
Tracking, Learning, and Sharing (TLS) is the framework the ARA uses to document, share, and incorporate research lessons into practice. The ARA is a global collaborative effort to catalyse increased investment and capacity for action-oriented research that supports effective adaptation to climate change – primarily in developing countries – at the scale and urgency demanded by the science. The ARA aims to promote evidence-based solutions that serve those most vulnerable to climate change. This requires an agile ecosystem of action research, with alignment among all influential actors in this nexus: action funders, research funders, policy-makers, beneficiaries on the frontlines of climate change, researchers and intermediaries. This section outlines what makes this TLS strategy different from traditional monitoring and evaluation efforts and the Adaptation Research for Impact Principles that underlie this research.

1.1 WHAT IS THE ADAPTATION RESEARCH ALLIANCE'S TRACKING, LEARNING AND SHARING (TLS) STRATEGY?

As part of the effort to improve the evidence base and collective understanding on adaptation, the ARA has developed an innovative Tracking, Learning, and Sharing (TLS) strategy. The strategy aims to improve the practitioner's ability to:

1. **learn** actively about what works and what does not when designing, conducting and applying results-oriented action research for adaptation and resilience;
2. **share** their learning with each other and with other stakeholders in the adaptation ecosystem;
3. **track** their progress against the ARA outcomes and the Principles as a component of learning.

To track, learn, and share, this strategy promotes a **knowledge engagement approach** to enhance learning across the research and action communities. Knowledge engagement is the practice of proactively harnessing and building a core set of knowledge, and empowering teams to tap into a collective source of intellect, so that the value and utility of their collective knowledge constantly grows. In the context of the ARA, this means supporting members to actively reflect on their experiences, share their lessons, learn from other members in the Alliance, and apply those lessons in their adaptation practice.



Rather than instituting a top-down system that focuses on standardising systems for tracking process, the approach emphasises the importance of the knowledge engagement behaviours of actors in a network – how they engage with knowledge using different means and techniques, as well as how they interact with others in a knowledge network – while acknowledging their need for the concrete means to share, access, collaborate across and leverage knowledge, if its full value is to be realised.

1.2 WHY NOT FOLLOW A TRADITIONAL MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING (MEL) APPROACH?

Members are participating in the ARA voluntarily and do not have clearly specified responsibilities to which they might be held accountable. They are also likely to take very different approaches in contributing towards the outcomes of the ARA and in applying the Principles. As a result, they will have diverse learning needs and will use very different means and metrics for measuring their progress.

A strict MEL approach in which performance is measured against specific indicators and targets would also not be suitable for application in a community of practice such as the ARA. ARA members are highly diverse in terms of their strategic mandates, technical expertise, capabilities, access to resources, etc. and work on very different aspects of adaptation and resilience.

Rather than following a traditional MEL approach, which generates and shares information that is subject to some form of external judgement and accountability from the donor, knowledge engagement intends to bring ARA members together to learn from one another. This learning is then put into action to improve adaptation and resilience outcomes for the most vulnerable people.

1.3 HOW DO ARA MEMBERS GENERATE EVIDENCE FOR TLS?

The TLS relies on the Adaptation Research for Impact Principles to generate learning that can be tracked over time and shared between members. This is an umbrella term for a variety of research methods that are used to link knowledge to action; the unifying factor is that the research conforms to six key Adaptation Research for Impact Principles.

1. **Research is needs-driven**, solutions-oriented, and leads to a positive impact on the lives of those at risk from climate change. This principle emphasizes the importance of practical research and allowing the people using the information to set the research agenda.
2. **Research is transdisciplinary and co-produced with users**. The research should be produced with the people using it, and should cut across science, practice, and policy communities. Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems should be valued alongside scientific or academic knowledge systems.
3. **Research emphasises societal impact**. Research should be directed towards overcoming the most relevant challenges and be measurable with metrics relevant to the needs of those at risk.
4. **Research builds capacity and empowers actors for the long term**. Research should be enhancing the capacity of local institutions, organisations, and practitioners to respond to climate risk. Research should be in local languages and embedded into capacity building activities to build knowledge for climate action.
5. **Research processes address structural inequities** that lead to increased vulnerability and reduced adaptive capacity of those at risk. Research should be conducted to encourage vulnerable and marginalised individuals to meaningfully participate and lead adaptation decision-making.
6. **Learning while doing enables adaptation action to be evidence-based and increasingly effective**. Research should integrate emerging lessons on what is working into adaptation action. Flexible approaches to planning and implementation can allow for real time feedback loops between research and action.

The Principles are not instructive about methodology or disciplines most appropriate for evaluating progress. They offer guidance for *how* any action research should be conducted across a variety of settings and organisational capacities. This TLS framework is intended to support ARA members and other stakeholders to better understand how to do and use research more effectively to deliver adaptation and resilience at scale.

2 IDENTIFYING KNOWLEDGE GAPS AND DEVELOPING A LEARNING AGENDA

With a diverse membership that brings a range of different implementation approaches and research expertise to the ARA, a collective mapping of knowledge and research needs is a critical foundation for launching the TLS framework. This section describes how to identify knowledge and learning needs, and subsequently using these exercises to define a broader learning agenda for the ARA.

2.1 TO BEGIN TLS, WHAT METHODS CAN MEMBERS USE TO IDENTIFY KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING NEEDS?

The starting point of adhering to the Principles is ensuring that research is needs-driven. For practitioners, this need could be translating research findings into practical guides that are accessible to people working in vulnerable communities. For academic researchers, their needs may be in publishing in peer reviewed journals and sharing research at conferences. Different members can and will have different needs, so tools must be used to help identify the knowledge gaps and how to generate information that fits diverse needs.

Knowledge mapping is a methodology for identifying knowledge gaps. Knowledge mapping refers to the process of surveying, assessing and linking the information, knowledge, competencies and proficiencies that are held by individuals and groups within an organisation or network.[1] This process enables an organisation or network to identify, locate and categorise the diverse variety of knowledge assets that they possess or can access, and also allows them to identify any knowledge gaps, barriers or constraints that may limit their ability to achieve their goals and objectives.

Knowledge comes in different forms. It might be **explicit knowledge**, which refers to information that has been gathered, processed, organised, and structured. This is often written down in books, reports, databases, guidebooks, or toolkits. Alternatively, knowledge could be **tacit knowledge**, which has been gained through personal experience, observation, interaction and practice. This is not as easily codified and communicated as explicit knowledge. Disseminating tacit knowledge requires trust and regular interaction, and people that possess tacit knowledge may not be aware of it or know how to transfer it easily. The ARA values both explicit and tacit knowledge.

Undertaking a knowledge mapping should be led by an experienced facilitator who is able to coordinate a participatory multi-stakeholder process. The facilitator’s main role is guiding members to identify and locate **‘knowledge assets’** they hold. Identifying knowledge assets could begin by generating a list of subjects or topic areas relating to adaptation and resilience that the member’s knowledge assets are relevant to. This will enable the ARA to generate a knowledge map that will support members to identify knowledge assets across the Alliance by topic or keyword.

[1] Anandarajan, I., and Akhilesh, A. K., 2012. An exploratory analysis of effective indo-Korean collaboration with intervention of knowledge mapping. In Proceedings of the 4th international conference on Intercultural Collaboration, p. 129-132. ACM.

The members should be facilitated to compile a table of the knowledge assets that they own (see table below).

SUBJECT/ TOPIC AREA	KNOWLEDGE ASSET	FORMAT? EXPLICIT OR TACIT?	HOW IS IT USED?	WHO HAS IT?	WHERE IS IT?
Climate risk assessment	**Guidebooks on participatory climate risk assessment**	**Explicit, document**	**By CSOs and local authorities to deliver participatory community climate risk assessments**	**Name of organisation or repository**	**Location, either website or repository**
	Issue expertise	Tacit, expert knowledge	To conduct research and advise partners	Team or specific individual	Where they are located, contact details

Once ARA members have mapped their own knowledge assets, they can then be facilitated to consider their **knowledge needs** and to identify knowledge gaps. A similar table can be utilised to complete this task, but the mapping should begin with the *knowledge needs* of the member (see table below).

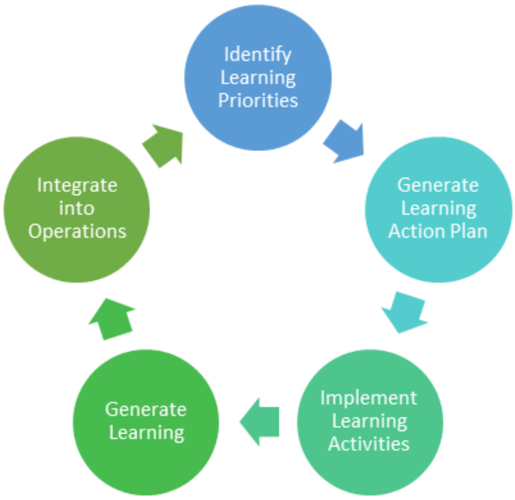
WHAT KNOWLEDGE IS NEEDED?	WHO NEEDS IT?	HOW IS IT/WILL IT BE USED?	FORMAT? EXPLICIT OR TACIT?	IS IT AVAILA BLE?	IS IT ACCESSIBLE?	WHO HAS IT?	WHERE IS IT?
How to translate climate risk information into formats accessible to vulnerable community members	Research scientists wishing to make their data accessibl e to end users	To design research dissemin ation strategies	Explicit – guides Tacit – expertise from other researchers and practitioners	Yes – with internet	Yes – with internet	NGOs	Location online or in repository, contact details of individuals

2.2 HOW DOES MAPPING KNOWLEDGE NEEDS TRANSLATE TO A LEARNING AGENDA FOR THE ENTIRE ARA?

Once individual members have completed knowledge mapping and a knowledge needs assessment, the ARA will have the ingredients for developing a **learning agenda**. Simply put, a learning agenda is a set of questions that relate to the work of an organisation or network. Working collaboratively to answer those questions provides an organisation or network with a framework to guide their learning, and also contributes to improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of the members.

The use of a learning agenda should be flexible and iterative whilst focusing on the most valuable questions for improving policy and practice. The learning agenda should not be a static document, but one that is revisited regularly and often. Members of the organisation or network should be facilitated to revisit the learning agenda questions regularly, to reflect on what they have learned and to share the knowledge they have generated on a rolling basis.

The learning agenda must not focus on the priorities of only scientists, academic researchers, or donors. Given the focus of the ARA on supporting adaptation and resilience in developing countries, priority should be given to learning questions that relate closely to that goal and to the learning priorities of those that need to apply evidence from The Principles in policy and practice.



The first step is identifying and prioritizing learning questions across the ARA, which should reflect the results of the knowledge needs analysis. Because identifying useful learning questions in a participatory way is key for collective learning, the ARA suggests a process that members can participate in:

1. **Solicit inputs.** The ARA process lead should provide guiding documents to outline the process, including templates for members to complete with their suggestions for key learning questions. Members are given a timeframe to provide inputs. The ARA Secretariat helps refine the questions into a smaller number, which are shared with members for inputs to help prioritise them.
2. **Conduct follow up meetings.** The ARA should conduct calls with individual members to discuss their priorities. This could be a sample of members and could focus on those that provide compelling inputs that reflect a broad constituency of members.

3. **Convene validation meetings.** The process lead should convene a workshop or series of meetings with members to review the list of questions. The prioritisation should be based on criteria that are co-developed by members, based on factors they consider most critical for the learning process. This process can also help clarify whether some learning questions have been answered in full or in-part by other members during their knowledge mapping.

Importantly, questions should be actionable, not conceptual, or theoretical. Strong learning questions should be clear and focused, have applicability in the work members do, be feasible to answer, and have been co-developed with those that will be tasked with answering them.

Once questions are agreed, learning activities should be planned to answer the questions. Each member will have a different mix of learning activities, depending on resources available and the questions they have chosen. An effective learning plan should lay out the timing (when do we need answers?), activities (how can we answer the learning questions?), products (what learning products will we produce?), and resources (what resources do we have or need to implement learning activities)?

Lastly, the partners must identify an appropriate strategy for engaging with the knowledge they developed. This forms the basis of TLS.

3 THE "L" OF TLS: WHAT ARE DIFFERENT METHODS FOR LEARNING?

This section describes different methods and tools to encourage learning on the part of individual members or in groups of ARA members. All these approaches are examples of **learning by doing**. The ARA aims to support members to learn from the process of designing, conducting, and using evidence from research to improve adaptation and resilience outcomes for climate vulnerable people.

These methods also benefit from **collaboration** within and between members. Collaboration through the ARA provides members from developing countries with a unique opportunity to work alongside formal/academic experts and international policy makers and funders in unique ways. But it will be equally important for international and academic members to learn from local and national members about the needs of climate vulnerable communities and actors, both in terms of how they can more effectively support adaptive capacity and resilience building and improve local access to knowledge and information.

3.1 STRUCTURED REFLECTION

To learn from experience people need not only to perform activities, but they also need to be able **to digest their experiences** so that they can understand what has worked, what has not worked and why. In reflection, people need to ask themselves, "What just happened?"; to reflect on their experience, by asking, "Why did it go that way?"; and to relate their experience to general patterns of cause and effect, by asking, "Has this happened before?" Asking these questions meaningfully, in a manner that allows people and their organisations not only to learn from what they have done, but also to capture what has been learned and to communicate that learning to others – either internally or externally – **requires a structured process**. This requires the **investment of attention, time and disciplined effort** for the process to be effective. But the evidence from organisational learning research suggests that the payoff from such investment can be significant. The ARA Secretariat and staff within member organisations can also encourage reflection through active leadership, by having staff in executive positions model reflection and endorsing it as a key part of everyday business.

In consultations, ARA members have shown a strong interest in learning through group reflection and peer-to-peer sharing processes. Feedback form other platforms also indicates that group-based reflection offers one of the most effective ways to stimulate engagement between network members and peer-to-peer learning. As a nascent community of practice, the ARA offers multiple opportunities for members to come together in groups to reflect on their experiences. These may be their experiences of implementing initiatives that are directly related to the ARA (evidence reviews, consultative processes, co-creation spaces, TLS) or more generally to their experiences in designing, conducting, and applying the findings from research, either in the past or in the present.

CASE STUDY: LEARNING AND SHARING THROUGH STRUCTURED REFLECTION IN THE ARA

In 2022, the ARA secretariat ran an immersive 'learning and sharing initiative' aimed at catalysing a process of 'structured reflection' with ARA member organisations. This initiative responded to the fact that a large number of organisations with a high degree of expertise were now part of the ARA and substantial benefits could accrue from enabling peer to peer learning between them. Based on consultations, the team running the initiative ascertained the need to have two learning themes- 'understanding climate risk' and 'bridging adaptation action and research.' Four workshops were held in which ARA members came together to co-create findings on these two themes. The periods between these workshops were employed for individual learning tasks undertaken by the participating organisations. This included collating evidence to answer the learning questions identified preparing outputs, peer-reviewing the outputs of other participants and supporting the development of this learning product. At the end of this structured learning initiative, participants collaboratively produced a set of blogs on understanding climate risk that were peer reviewed within the group. As a set, these blogs explored examples of how experts, decision makers and vulnerable communities must collaborate to adequately determine the extent and nature of climate risk in different contexts. Organisations participating in this initiative also produced case studies encapsulating the opportunities, enabling conditions and challenges of bridging adaptation action and research.

3.2 LEARNING THROUGH COLLABORATION

Collaborative learning refers to any process in which groups of people enhance their learning by working together to solve problems, complete tasks, or learn new concepts. The approach actively engages learners to process and synthesize information and concepts by collaborating on projects. Through defending their positions, reframing ideas, listening to other viewpoints, and articulating their points to one another, participants in collaborative learning processes can gain a more complete understanding of an issue than they could as individuals.

It especially provides members from developing countries with a unique opportunity to work alongside formal/academic experts and international policy makers and funders in unique ways. But it will be equally important for international and academic members to learn from local and national members about the needs of climate vulnerable communities and actors, both in terms of how they can more effectively support adaptive capacity and resilience building and improve local access to knowledge and information. The ARA can play a catalytic role by creating spaces in which members can encounter one another, identify possible partners and work collaboratively – such as through the TLS platform.

Collaboration could take varied forms, depending upon the specific needs and interests of the members, but examples that have worked in other platforms include:

- Co-development of new project designs and funding proposals
- Creation of new consortia for research, adaptation action and advocacy/policy reform
- Collaborative development of learning products, from peer reviewed journal articles to book chapters, blogs, videos and webinars/events.

The ARA aims to convene collaborative learning and encourage co-creation between members, in which they identify problems, tease out possible solutions, and design and implement projects collaboratively. Types of learning that can be integrated into a co-creation workstream include knowledge sharing clinics between members collaborating on initiatives (Q&A sessions, presentations, etc), peer-to-peer support between members, quarterly group reflection on what members have learned through collaboration, documenting learnings into reports or blogs, and in-person meetings.

It is extremely important that any collaboration or collaborative learning processes that are facilitated by the ARA are equitable. The ARA must be clear that it is not only scientific institutions or members from the developed world that have knowledge to transfer to practitioners, policy makers, or to researchers in developing countries. Informal, local and anecdotal forms of knowledge on what is needed, what works and what does not work in adaptation and resilience building must be given equal weight in the interactions of ARA members. To protect open and equitable processes for collaboration, the ARA Secretariat moderates the engagement of the TLS platform to ensure the environment is one of trust and safety.

3.3 LEARNING BY DOING

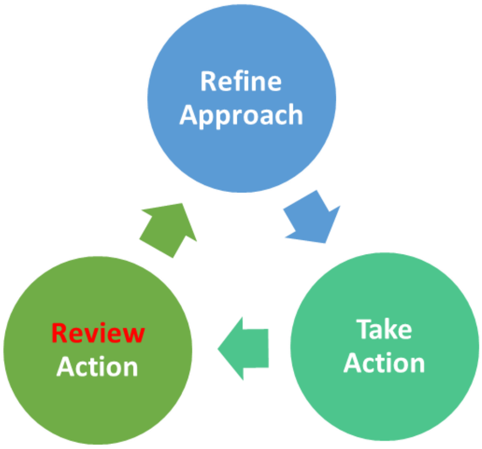
By implementing both their day-to-day operations and the activities agreed in the ARA learning agenda, Alliance members can generate learning on how to design, conduct and use research effectively. This learning by doing is central to knowledge creation. All individuals, organisations and networks acquire knowledge from their own direct experience of performing tasks. By performing tasks, we first learn how to do them, and then through practice we learn how to perform them more effectively and efficiently.

We may test new ways of doing things, seeing what works and does not on the job, refining and iterating as we go in response to performance feedback, which may be formal or informal. By working with others, we can also learn who is good at different types of tasks and see from them how we can do things better ourselves. Through practice, tools and approaches are calibrated, routines are refined, structures fine-tuned, and individuals and organisations can interpret whether task performance was a success or failure. This in turn can stimulate new research, so performing a task can ultimately lead to the creation of new knowledge.

3.4 CONDUCTING AFTER ACTION REVIEWS OR CRITICAL MOMENTS REFLECTION

After Action Reviews are a good tool for structured reflection and revisiting failure. An after-action review (AAR) is a structured and systematic process for reflecting on experience and generating lessons that improve future performance. The process takes four steps to quickly identify key lessons and immediate actions.

1. **Conduct the AAR as soon after the experience as possible**. Do not wait until the end of the project or an annual performance review process.
2. **Describe the experience.** Individuals should be encouraged to create an accurate picture of the experience they just completed. Key guiding questions: What was supposed to happen? What actually happened?
3. **Develop counterfactuals**. Individuals should be encouraged to engage in counterfactual thinking, which involves imagining "what-if" scenarios. Key guiding questions: Why were there differences between what we expected and what happened? How could things have been done differently?
4. **Identify new insights, feedback**, and how the lessons of this experience can be applied to improve performance in future experiences. Key guiding questions: What can we learn from our experience? What can we do differently right now to improve our approach?



The **Critical Moments Reflection (CMR)** approach is a useful alternative to the After Action Review that offers similar opportunities for internal reflection on what has happened by reflecting on experience in a group setting. This approach would be particularly useful to facilitate reflection in diverse groups characterised by power differentials, e.g., where community members or local organisations are included. It takes longer (about 2.5 days) and thus is less agile than an AAR, but it provides an opportunity for deeper learning. The CMR process consists of the follow five steps:

1. **Set the frame and identify inquiry questions.** This general purpose is formulated as an overarching question with implications for the subject of the learning and the time period to be covered. For example, a framing question for a participatory research project could be: From the perspective of community participants, what can we learn about what worked or did not work so well during the first year of the project's implementation that will help improve the project in future years?
2. **Define concrete questions.** As a subset of this frame or overarching question, participants define more concrete questions that reflect what they would each like to answer with the reflective process. Then the group reviews each of the questions and prioritizes them until they are able to select one top inquiry question.
3. **Generating critical moments.** Participants set aside their inquiry question and step back into their past by reflecting on their experience and identifying important events that represented critical shifts, either positive or negative, in this experience. These events are referred to as "critical moments." Participants share their critical moments and organise them in a timeline that illustrates the evolution of the whole experience. Critical moments might include:
   - A change in context or disturbance of a strong belief
   - The occurrence of surprises (either good or bad)
   - The emergence of a difficult problem or its solution
   - The visualisation of new futures/possibilities
   - The achievement of highly desired objectives
4. **Selecting critical moments for further analysis.** The facilitator re-introduces the top inquiry question and asks the participants to select the critical moments that, if analysed in greater detail, would help them answer their top inquiry question. Because the critical moments timeline often sheds new light on the experience, the group participants often slightly revise their inquiry question at this point to reflect any new learnings or revelations as a group, and then select the critical moments that, upon further analysis, would have implications for their revised inquiry question.
5. **Storytelling, lessons, and implications for inquiry question.** Participants analyse the selected moments in detail by telling the stories behind the moments and responding to probing questions from the facilitator. This process enables the participants to identify lessons learned and the implications of these lessons for answering the inquiry question and moving their work forward.

It is essential that the stories, critical moments, and lessons that emerge from the CMR process are captured and documented, so that participants can refer to them in their future practice.

3.5 PRODUCING LEARNING STORIES

Sharing experiences though narrative builds trust, cultivates norms, transfers tacit knowledge, facilitates unlearning, and generates emotional connections. Stories can inspire, motivate and influence in ways that reports and data cannot. In consultations many members suggested that they would be keen to share their learning via learning stories or case studies and to learn from others via that channel.

To be effective stories should not be complex or overly long, or they will exclude audience members. Stories should be true and recent – so that they are relevant – and should be told as simply and as briefly as possible. Learning stories need only to focus on two primary questions:

- **What did you face?** What were the biggest challenges? How have you and your team worked to overcome these challenges? What innovative practices have you put in place to tackle these challenges?
- **What did you learn?** What worked or did not work and why? How will you use what you have learned in your practice? Will you use a new approach to research?

There are a variety of means that members can use to tell their stories to one another and to external audiences. These options include **learning stories**, which can be generated from the reflection processes. They could be in the form of **digital recordings** (audio or video) and circulated through ARA platforms. They could also be in the form of **case studies**, which can focus on a particular initiative or use a particular method, communicating practical examples of what works and does not work on the ground.

4 THE “T” OF TLS: WHAT ARE DIFFERENT METHODS OF “TRACKING” PROGRESS?

The strategy suggests that the process of **tracking progress** is implemented primarily as a **learning activity**. In this case, tracking progress refers to monitoring and reporting on the progress of individual members and of the ARA as a whole in working towards the achievement of the ARA’s outcomes[2] and the application of the Adaptation Research for Impact Principles. Because the ARA is a consortium of members, there are two levels on which progress will be tracked: individual members and the Alliance.

Consultations with ARA members suggest a preference not to engage in a quantitative data collection exercise or to conduct rigorous monitoring and evaluation exercises as part of their participation in the Alliance. As a result, member’s engagement in these Principles is based on **voluntary participation** and **qualitative methods**.

4.1 OUTCOME HARVESTING

The first method for tracking progress is **outcome harvesting**. This is an approach based on a self-assessment process that is designed to support learning and improvement. The purpose of outcome harvesting is not to focus on achievement of specific targets but to observe and record changes that occur as a result of implementation.

Outcome harvesting should follow a simple process in which members:

1. Engage in **intentional design to plan** how they intend to contribute to the ARA outcomes and apply the Adaptation Research for Impact Principles
2. Engage in **regular reflection** (at least every 3 months) on how they have progressed, what changes they have influenced through their practice, how they have influenced them, what they have learned about what works or not.
3. Record their observations in the outcome journal or as outcome statements.
4. **Share their progress** with others via the TLS platform.

Designing a Plan

Designing a plan for outcome harvesting can be done in conjunction with structured self-reflection detailed in section 3. An outcome harvesting plan should begin with reviewing ARA outcomes and Principles, to decide which ones are most relevant to their work. They should then describe the changes they aim to contribute to this outcome. These should be accompanied with progress markers, which are graded on a scale from changes that

[2] The outcomes in the ARA’s Theory of Change include: increased profile of Adaptation Research for Impact Principles; increased funding in developing countries for research on adaptation and resilience; enhanced impact of research investments through better coordination, prioritisation, and uptake; capacity built at individual and institutional levels; enhanced learning and increased research uptake in implementation; strengthened collaboration across countries (south-south, south-north), disciplines, and scales

members expect to see happen (easily achieved), changes they would like to see happen (harder to achieve or influence), and changes they would love to see happen (highly desirable but unlikely to happen within the lifetime of a project).

CHANGE GOAL EXAMPLES		
Outcome	**Change Goal**	**Progress Markers**
Capacity built at individual and institutional levels	Research projects conducted include activities that build the capacity of local organisations and community members to assess and plan for climate risks that affect them	*Expect to see:* Researchers produce a knowledge product that local stakeholders can use to improve the way they do things. *Like to see:* Researchers include training activities for local stakeholders on how to conduct a climate risk assessment. *Love to see:* Researchers support local stakeholders to conduct the research activities themselves

Based on this plan, members can define actions they will take to contribute to the outcomes. These will be varied, reflecting the diversity of ARA's membership. They should also identify different individuals, groups, organisations or institutions they aim to influence. This could be internal – how a specific individual or team designs or applies the findings of research – or external – changing the behaviour or local partner organisations, community members, government agencies, or donors.

Regular reflection

Once the members have elaborated their plans, they then need to reflect on a regular basis on their progress in delivering them. This should take the form of a quarterly meeting of relevant personnel, which should be convened independently by the member itself. Where an individual member feels they require support, they should feel free to invite facilitation from a member of the ARA Secretariat.

The ARA suggests that one individual within the member's team is tasked with collating data on how the member has been progressing, by reviewing project reports and other data (meeting notes, email correspondence, project evaluations, workshop reports, etc), and having discussions with key personnel and partners. The team member should share the data with colleagues prior to the team meeting and could act as the ARA TLS focal point.
Finally, the reflection meeting can be designed in whatever format best meets the partner's needs, but it should include a reviewing of data to understand progress towards achieving change goals, evaluating intended and unexpected results, and identifying cases of positive performance and areas for improvement.

Record observations

The results of the team discussion should be logged in the **Outcome Journal.** By logging their reflections, they will build up a learning bank that they can use to track progress over time. This can then be used as a resource to inform future revisions to programming. The outcome journal should be maintained by the TLS focal point, but it can also be added to by individual team members in real time as they reflect on their progress.

Where the member teams identify changes that they have influenced which have contributed towards the achievement of the ARA outcomes or the application of the Principles, they should then complete an **Outcome**

Statement. The outcome statement is a format that will guide the members both to think through how change happened and to record the details of that change. As such, it provides a tool for both learning and for reporting progress. The outcome statement should include:

- description of the change that occurred
- the significance of the change
- the contribution of the member to the change and the contextual factors that helped or hindered
- the evidence to support the claim.

Finally, members should share their progress. Methods of sharing will be explored in more detail in section 5.

4.2 TRACKING PROGRESS AT ARA SECRETARIAT LEVEL

The ARA Secretariat will track the progress of the Alliance as a whole across three main processes:

1. **Key Performance Indicators:** Collect and collate data on KPIs across the Alliance. This can integrate data provided by members via the KPI submission form on the TLS platform.
2. **Outcome harvesting:** Collate progress and achievements from the outcome journals, outcome statements and learning stories provided by members, and conduct outcome harvesting reflection exercises at the level of the Alliance.
3. **Network effectiveness:** Conduct a network effectiveness evaluation on a regular basis to track the progress of the Alliance through the Community of Practice life cycle. The methodology for network effectiveness assessment was developed by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and covers effectiveness, structure and governance, efficiency, resources and sustainability, and life cycle.

CASE STUDY: EMPLOYING OUTCOME HARVESTING FOR TRACKING THE OPERATIONALISATION OF THE PRINCIPLES AND OUTCOMES

In 2022, the ARA secretariat ran an initiative to track the degree to which ARA members were helping operationalise the Adaptation Research for Impact Principles and Outcomes from the ARA's Theory of Change using an outcome harvesting approach. This was a light-touch approach for soliciting ARA member engagement in a sensemaking exercise to determine progress being made. As part of this, the ARA secretariat provided the tools, platforms, and systems to enable members to track progress easily and effectively. The process was split into two phases- in the first phase, ARA members came together to better understand the tracking process, why it is important, and began deciding on how they would intend to contribute to the ARA's Theory of Change (ToC) outcomes and apply the Action Research for Impact Principles by writing up individual "actions" and "goals" towards particular outcomes and principles. In the second phase, members were given the opportunity to share their reflections, learning and progress through online discussions and a detailed questionnaire. A total of 31 organisations wrote 67 goals and actions against their selected principles and outcomes. Some participants selected only one principle or one outcome while others selected more than one. This process allowed the ARA secretariat to determine the degree to which the principles and outcomes resonated with members and ways in which these are being operationalised. At the same time, the process gave the participating ARA members the chance to think deeper about the principles and outcomes and put these at the forefront of participating ARA members' minds. For instance, one participating member explained that because he was engaged in the tracking process, he was much more aware of the need to mainstream gender (i.e., principle 5) within an initiative he was designing at the same. Going forward, the ARA secretariat is designing an online platform that will facilitate a regular and efficient process of outcome harvesting.

5 THE “S” OF TLS: WHAT ARE DIFFERENT METHODS FOR SHARING?

One of the ARA’s key roles is that of knowledge broker – fostering sharing between members and other stakeholders as a means of increasing the collective intelligence of the Alliance and the adaptation ecosystem.

Consultations with members and with other networks have indicated that organisations are most keen to learn from their peers and others within the network. They are also keen to share their learning and experiences with others. Members closer to the grassroots level – local CSOs, local researchers and community members – are very keen to share their understanding of how climate risk and adaptation are experienced on the ground with others in the ecosystem.

5.1 TLS PLATFORM

The TLS platform launched in early 2023 and functions as a hub for ARA members to interact through the Members Area on the ARA website. This space enables real-time engagement around activities that are currently in development, and which benefit from collective editing, reviewing, and inputs on draft documents like funding proposals, reports, white papers, and others. The platform also enables Alliance members to share final and published documents that result from collaborations. Using the Members Area on the ARA website, members can upload outputs in the form of Resources, to be shared publicly on the website and with the adaptation community.

The TLS platform also supports real-time brainstorming and networking by facilitating live chats, video calls or messages, and audio calls and messages. The platform is integrated with the ARA Slack workspace, enabling it to move from a static knowledge and resource sharing space to a space that enables live engagement such as video or audio calls, messages, and other real-time activity. The ARA Slack workspace is able to host events and plans to do so.

Currently the TLS platform is used to publicise calls for engagement on specific activities such as Co-creation Spaces. It is also being used to generate more widespread attention around calls for grants, open opportunities, and to facilitate discussions around issues of special interest to members such as climate rationale in funding by ARA member Fundación Avina.

The ARA represents the global breadth of the adaptation community, with significant representation from Global South entities. The TLS platform encourages collaborative learning by inviting experts from these organisations to actively share insights and inputs on activities as they are initiated, designed, and throughout their lifespan. This ensures learning is drawn from a variety of contexts and can be disseminated horizontally across organisations working on climate adaptation.

5.2 KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

The most obvious means for sharing learning is the generation of knowledge products. There is a wide range of options that the ARA and its members might choose to use, and consultations revealed a wide spectrum of preferences among members. For instance, academic researchers from developed countries showed a keen interest in using the ARA as an opportunity to produce peer-reviewed articles for academic journals and even suggested that the ARA should consider launching its own journal to present the findings of research informed by the Adaptation Research for Impact Principles.

On the other hand, community representatives and practitioners from developing countries expressed a strong preference to produce concise, practical guides on how to conduct adaptation and resilience building activities, methodological guides and case studies describing different approaches to supporting adaptation and resilience. Ultimately, each member should be supported to generate the kinds of knowledge products that best meet their objectives in contributing to the ARA's outcomes and applying the Principles.

Some of the knowledge products that were suggested during consultations with ARA members include:

- **Blogs** – Means of publishing short, simple, reflections on progress. Blogs are often widely read and can be used to point people in the direction of more detailed products in a repository. They should not be longer than 800 words and should be written in accessible style without jargon.
- **Voices from the frontline** - A series of blogs and reports that present the perspectives of communities affected by climate change and/or organisations actively putting adaptation into practice.
- **ARA briefings –** A series of short briefing papers (2-4 pages) in which the ARA Secretariat members reflect on emerging evidence of good practice.
- **Outcome journals and outcome statements –** These have been described in section 4.1.
- **Learning stories –** These have been described in section 3.3**.**
- **Case studies -** Case studies should be short reports of no more than 5 or 6 pages that present the story of a particular project or initiative or the use of a specific approach. There is a high level of interest among members for case studies that tell practical stories of what works or does not in undertaking adaptation research informed by the Principles and in supporting adaptation within vulnerable communities.
- **Solutions briefs -** Similar to case studies, this could be a series that focuses on presenting short descriptions of technical solutions that have been shown to work, including descriptions of their design and how to implement them. Effectively a short 'how to' guide that can be used by members and external stakeholders.
- **Solutions database -** Members have expressed an interest in having a database of solutions that they can refer to. It should include documentation on practical solutions, approaches and methodologies - including those that already exist, and those that are developed in the future. This database can be maintained by the TLS team, but members should be encouraged to add solutions and their documentation to the database.
- **Methodology guides -** Members have also expressed interest in gaining access to methodology guides that detail specific approaches to conducting adaptation research informed by the Principles.
- **Training materials -** The ARA should make training materials available to all members on key approaches and methodologies, where possible. Where these already exist, they can be collated into a database of training materials on the ARA repository.
- **Online courses -** The ARA should consider complementing training materials with online courses for members. These should be led by members who have expertise in particular solutions or approaches.
- **Video reports -** Videos can be a very powerful and effective means of communicating complex information quickly and easily, and most people now have access to the means to make a video using a smart phone.

This product may be useful for members from developing countries that have lower levels of literacy, or who are more comfortable telling stories using oral approaches. Videos should be short (no more than 10 minutes).

- **Broadcast events -** The ARA should aim to livestream and record events that are held by members. Livestreaming will enable the members to engage with learning and sharing processes on any issue that they are interested in.
- **Research reports -** Many members who are conducting research projects will generate research reports, and these should be deposited in the ARA repository and circulated to the members.
- **Project reports -** Research and adaptation related project reports should also be deposited in the ARA repository, where appropriate.
- **Journal articles -** Academic members of the Alliance should aim to publish their results in open access journals and to make their articles available to ARA members. Members who make articles available via portals such as ResearchGate should share links to their papers via the ARA website/TLS platform.

5.3 DIGITAL PLATFORMS

ARA members can make use of a range of communication channels to share information and knowledge with one another. Ultimately, the diversity of members and their needs will require the ARA to use a diversity of applications to facilitate communication. We recommend that the ARA makes use of a suite of apps to meet different needs, but that it should aim to ensure that chat, call and video meeting functions are integrated into the TLS platform, ideally using an app that is already familiar to the majority of members. We recommend a combination of:

- **Email list:** to disseminate newsletters and direct communication to individual members and external stakeholders – but with limitations on its use.
- **Slack:** to facilitate live discussion on various workstreams.
- **Google Chat and Meet**: to facilitate synchronous chat and video meetings.
- **Zoom**: to facilitate large meetings, webinars, and possibly conferences.
- **WhatsApp**: initially with an ARA group chat to disseminate messages to all members in real time, but allowing members to establish smaller groups to enable real time communication related to working groups, learning sets etc.

5.4 EVENTS

Consultations with other platforms have indicated the critical importance of events (both in person and online) as opportunities for members to share knowledge and to build relationships with one another. Consultations with members have also indicated a high degree of interest in convening events in which members from different countries and levels of expertise can meet, engage, and develop collaborative relationships.

In-person conferences are the preference, as bringing diverse members together in person is valuable in fostering the sense of community that is critical for the success of an initiative such as the ARA, and the relationships generated during such events provide the foundation for more effective engagement in online spaces.

Where in-person meetings are not possible, online group meetings can maximise knowledge transfer between members and disseminate information to external stakeholders.

These can be in the form of **webinars**, which are a platform for presentations on research findings and responding to questions in real time. Alternatively, they could be in the form of **webcasts**, which follow a similar format to webinars but are pre-recorded and may be preferable for members with time constraints.

Panel discussions or debates on specific topics are another means of sharing, though these should be moderated by a convener to be effective in opening new lines of inquiry and explore contentious issues. Finally, **policy dialogues** that convene policy makers, researchers, and practitioners are a means of discussing how evidence can inform policy and better connect to the research priorities of policy makers.

6 WHAT GOOD PRACTICES CAN BE APPLIED TO TLS EFFORTS?

Focus on knowledge engagement, not only knowledge production. The ARA puts a strong emphasis on the interface between knowledge creators and users, especially between researchers and policy makers or practitioners. Rather than seeking simply to manage the knowledge production and dissemination process, knowledge engagement understands that knowledge itself is a renewable resource and a dynamic form of collective intelligence that grows and evolves through interactions between knowledge producers and users.

Foster a community of practice. Communities of practice (CoPs) are deliberate collaborations to expand the capacity for organised people to acquire, produce and apply knowledge. Transforming the ARA into an effective CoP that can enhance learning for its members and external stakeholders will require strong and active leadership from dedicated and skilled people who are willing to nurture the initiative. The ARA Secretariat must therefore play an active role in building and maintaining the ARA CoP through the practice of knowledge engagement, and by actively curating and convening spaces and moments in which members can connect and collaborate.

Establish a space of trust and safety. Because of the breadth of membership in the ARA, it is vital to cultivate a space where all partners can share knowledge safely, openly, and honestly without judgement. The ARA's membership includes many smaller organisations from the Global South, many of which are community-based, indigenous, women-led organisations. For these organisations, equitable inclusion irrespective of size, mandate, or capacity is vital. Formal and scientific forms of knowledge should be translated into forms that are accessible for other partners, and these types of evidence should not be prioritised over other forms of oral knowledge and indigenous or citizen science.

Support learning by doing. Co-creation of new innovations through the design and delivery of projects is a particularly powerful means of enabling members to gain new knowledge. The ARA envisions supporting members to learn collaboratively by designing and implementing initiatives together, especially by working with members that have other forms of experience or expertise.

Ensure knowledge is relevant and actionable. It is critically important that policy makers and practitioners can use information generated through research. Research should answer questions they are asking and be generated within timeframes that suits their work. One important component of this is working through the ARA membership to agree on research priorities and making joint research plans. Researchers should be encouraged to identify and use methods that fit the time horizons of projects or policy makers.

Fail intelligently. Rather than avoiding failure, members can plan for and learn from failures, make failure more visible, and develop a culture around failing which supports improvement and innovation. Not all interventions will work, so analysing failure can be as important as analysing success in climate adaptation.

Avoid portal proliferation. There are already a variety of platforms for sharing research on adaptation; for instance, SEI's WeAdapt or the GRP's Resilience Platform. Building on existing platforms where possible is best to avoid portal fatigue and make it easier to actively engage with portals that exist.

Curate knowledge engagement. Experience from other portals shows that without active curation, members quickly become passive, especially those who have lower levels of resources and capacity. This would undermine the effectiveness of the network. The ARA Secretariat has an important role to play in convening knowledge sharing, supporting progress tracking and reflection, facilitating members to identify knowledge gaps, and learning needs, and publishing stories of success and failure from members.

NEXT STEPS: HOW THE ARA AIMS TO COLLECTIVELY ADVANCE ADAPTATION KNOWLEDGE

The ARA is fully committed to operationalizing the framework that has been laid out in the preceding sections. This is evidenced through the fact that tracking, learning and sharing activities have been piloted through 2022 and have been received very favourably by ARA's membership.

Going forward, the ARA will work on tracking the operationalization of outcomes and principles by continuing the use of outcome harvesting approaches to gauge the degree to which the work of members may be aligning with these principles. Additionally, the Alliance will attempt more intensive engagement with 'frontrunner' organisations to gauge in detail how they might be changing organisational behaviour, procedures, and protocols through the process of operationalizing ARA principles and outcomes. As for learning and sharing, the ARA membership has suggested that this be expanded to additional themes and employing the online platforms for continual, asynchronous engagement between members wishing to learn from each other. Overall, the Alliance is ensuring that tracking, learning, and sharing is a core part of its agenda and has committed the institutional will and resources towards its execution.

Condensed TLS Framework

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