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CMCC Policy Brief

Accelerating Adaptation Delivery

Why the Adaptation Accelerator Hub & the NAP Implementation Alliance matter now

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Executive Summary

US$310-365 bn / yr	US$26 bn	US$35 bn
estimated developing-country adaptation need by 2035 (UNEP)	international public adaptation finance, 2023 (UNEP)	MDB adaptation finance in low- & middle-income economies, 2025

The gap is not in the plans, but in converting them into delivery [1, 2]

The international adaptation agenda has entered a delivery phase. Countries have made real progress in planning. By 2025, the NAP Global Network reported that 143 of 154 developing countries had begun a National Adaptation Plan process, and the UNFCCC had recorded 67 submitted NAPs by the end of September 2025;[3] that figure had risen to over 79 by September 2026. [4] Yet, implementation continues to lag: finance, institutions and project pipelines have not moved at the pace of policy ambition.

The challenge is no longer recognising the need for adaptation but rather delivering it at scale. Adaptation gaps are already evident and are projected to widen according to the IPCC[5], while UNEP estimates that annual adaptation finance needs in developing countries could reach US$310-365 billion by 2035, compared with roughly US$26 billion in international public finance in 2023.[1]

Two recent initiatives address this bottleneck directly. The **Adaptation Accelerator Hub (AAH)**, launched under Italy's G7 Presidency, is a collaborative G7 initiative, with UNDP serving as its principal technical partner, and works with vulnerable countries to move from their own adaptation plans to implementation by strengthening national institutions, co-developing finance-ready pipelines and connecting country-led priorities to public, blended and private finance.[6] The **NAP Implementation Alliance (NIA)**, launched under the COP30 Action Agenda by Brazil's COP30 Presidency together with UNDP, Italy, Germany and technical partners – including the NAP Global Network and the NDC Partnership - works on the coordination of a support ecosystem that has become broad but fragmented.[4,7]

This Policy Brief explains how these two initiatives are complementary rather than competing, and it locates them on a single **adaptation delivery chain** that runs from national priorities to measurable results on the ground. The AAH operates at the country end of that chain - the "missing middle piece" between strategies and financing decisions - while the NIA operates at the system end, aligning the actors and the finance that surround it. Their value depends on keeping that division of roles and actions explicit and testable. The message for the next phase of cooperation is that the frontier is shifting from planning alone toward parallel delivery, even as many countries are still completing their NAPs.

From a planning gap to a delivery gap

Climate adaptation is not short of plans, but rather of delivery systems that can translate ambition into implementation. This is the message now emerging from the formal international processes. The Paris Agreement's Global Goal on Adaptation, the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience and subsequent UNFCCC work on indicators and finance are pushing in the same direction: countries must be able not only to identify risks and priorities, but also to implement, finance and monitor adaptation in a systematic way.[8]

National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) are the central vehicle for that transition, intended both to reduce vulnerability to climate change and to integrate adaptation across development planning. Planning has spread widely, but converting plans into funded implementation pathways remains difficult. The evidence from UNEP's 2025 Adaptation Gap Report and from OECD's work on adaptation finance[9] points to a constraint that is not only about money: it is also about investment preparation, technical capacity, delivery systems and the practical sequencing and continuity of public, concessional and private finance.

Across countries, the reported barriers are remarkably consistent: weak inter-ministerial and subnational coordination; gaps in climate data and in methods for risk assessment, costing and monitoring; limited capacity to prepare investment-ready projects; discontinuous access to funds between readiness and implementation; thin private-sector engagement; slow approval cycles; and difficulty measuring results.[10]

The analytical point that matters (recurring across UNFCCC, GCF and national readiness documents) is that these barriers are interconnected. Indeed, weak coordination produces weak projects which do not attract finance; without finance, data, monitoring and capacity systems are not strengthened; and without those systems it is harder still to convince financiers. The response cannot be only more money, or only more technical assistance, but rather an integrated chain.

The adaptation delivery chain

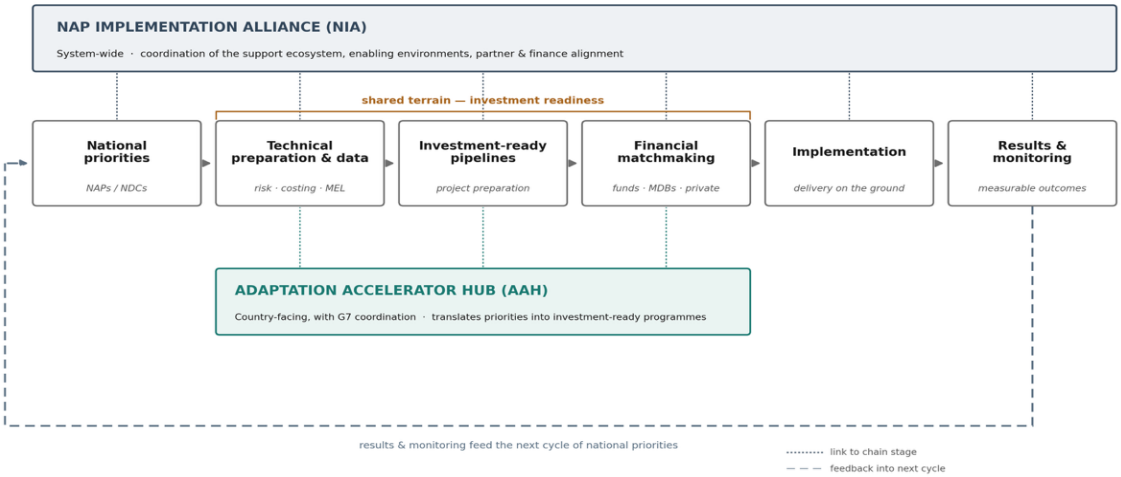

Figure 1. *The adaptation delivery chain, with the two initiatives mapped onto it. The NIA operates system-wide; the AAH operates at the country end; their shared terrain is investment readiness. A feedback loop closes the chain: results and monitoring feed the next cycle of national priorities.*

Reading the two initiatives against the integrated chain clarifies what each one is for. The chain runs from national priorities (NAPs and NDCs), through technical preparation and data, investment-ready pipelines and financial matchmaking, to implementation and the monitoring of results. Each step depends on the one before it, and the last loops back into the first: results and monitoring feed the next cycle of national priorities, rather than closing the chain. This makes isolated interventions unlikely to produce lasting change.

The AAH operates primarily at the country interface, supporting governments as they translate their own adaptation priorities into coordinated, investment-ready programmes, by strengthening institutional coordination and connecting national counterparts with development partners, climate funds, MDBs and private investors. The NIA[4] operates primarily at the system interface, seeking to improve how the international adaptation support architecture functions, by enhancing coordination among implementing partners, promoting investment-enabling environments, and elevating the political priority of NAP implementation. Together, these initiatives strengthen both the demand for implementation and the coherence of the support ecosystem. Their shared terrain is investment readiness, where both initiatives focus on strengthening investment pipelines, mobilising private capital, and bridging the gap between adaptation plans and implementation. Even on this shared terrain, they operate through different instruments: the AAH engages primarily through country-level project preparation and blended-finance transactions, while the NIA engages through convening, political alignment and coordination mechanisms.

Two initiatives, two segments of the chain

The AAH originated under Italy's 2024 G7 Presidency and was formally launched at COP29 with UNDP as support agency.[11,12] Its purpose is to work alongside vulnerable developing countries as they move from adaptation planning to implementation, particularly by co-developing viable investment plans with national counterparts and engaging existing initiatives more coherently. Italy provided initial financial support, and several G7 partners announced aligned support at the launch. In governance terms, the AAH is deliberately light. Rather than creating a new institution with its own governing board, it builds on an Italy-UNDP partnership designed to accelerate implementation through existing institutions. Its early record is already operational rather than symbolic, with support for Ethiopia's participation in the Adaptation Investment Matchmaking Symposium (August 2025, co-organized with the Government of Zambia, visibility at the Africa Climate Summit on investment pipelines and readiness, and, by April 2026, country-specific implementation pathways in Ethiopia, Senegal, Mauritius, Ghana, the Maldives and Cambodia.[6,13]

The NIA addresses a different dimension of the same problem. Launched at COP30, it recognises that the ecosystem supporting NAP implementation is now broad but fragmented. Its three public objectives are to foster global collaboration, to strengthen enabling environments for investment readiness and financing, and to promote private-sector engagement in NAP financing.[7] Its materials emphasise mobilising and aligning existing public and private resources rather than a dedicated envelope, and its governance is described as a collaborative process still being structured through 2026, deliberately not as a new institution.[14]

Table 1. The two initiatives compared. Elaborated from [6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15]

Dimension	Adaptation Accelerator Hub	NAP Implementation Alliance
Mandate	Support countries in turning their own NAPs into concrete, investable, finance-ready plans and projects, without building parallel structures	Accelerate effective NAP implementation by strengthening global collaboration, national enabling environments and private-sector engagement
Political origin	Italy's G7 Presidency (2024)	COP30 Action Agenda, under the Brazilian Presidency (2025)
Governance	Italy with UNDP as support agency; deliberately light, no autonomous board in public materials	COP30 Presidency with UNDP, Italy, Germany and technical partners; collaborative process, governance still being structured through 2026
Public funding	Initial financial Italian support; aligned/complementary G7 support announced at the COP29 launch *(ongoing process)*	Emphasis on mobilising and aligning existing public and private resources; no dedicated financial envelope in public sources
Core function	Country-level: institutional coordination, gap assessment, investment-ready pipelines, matchmaking with MDBs, funds and private capital	System-level: convening, division of labour, enabling environments, alignment and coordination of technical and financial partners
Geographic scope	Vulnerable developing countries; named tracks in Ethiopia, Senegal, Ghana, Mauritius, the Maldives and Cambodia *(ongoing process)*	Global and open; a platform to which governments and organisations can accede, not a country portfolio. Focus on specific pilot countries to be decided

Dimension	Adaptation Accelerator Hub	NAP Implementation Alliance
Country-level evidence	Operational: coordination, taxonomies, costing, EWS, pipelines and blended finance in partner countries	Still evolving (NIA is more recent): early milestones already move beyond process design, including a first Matchmaking Symposium at NAP Expo, toward concrete convening.
Relationship to finance	Closer to transactions: investment plans, investment-ready projects, blended finance, investor engagement	Closer to system coordination: ecosystem-wide mobilisation, matchmaking, enabling conditions

Complementarity, overlap, and the pending gaps

Where the two initiatives reinforce each other is clearest at the meeting point of demand and supply. The NIA exists to improve collaboration among governments, funds, MDBs, investors and technical providers; whereas the AAH exists to help countries make their priorities investable. If the systemic problem is that support is dispersed while national demand is often not yet translated into bankable projects, then the Alliance can make the system less fragmented, and the Hub can make countries readier to use it. Both initiatives can connect with instruments already operating around the UNFCCC process, including: the UN4NAPs, which provides rapid technical backstopping through a roster of more than 50 organisations; the LEG's NAP Technical Working Group[16], which promotes coherence and synergies among technical-support providers; Climate Promise: Forward, the UN system's common framework - coordinated by UNDP and the UN Development Coordination Office - for accelerating NDC implementation, with a growing role on NAPs; and the NAP Global Network, which has delivered direct support to more than 70 countries, so far.[3, 17] In this wider architecture, NIA could provide a platform for greater political alignment, coordination and financing around NAP implementation, while the AAH could serve as a complementary operational mechanism for country-level investment preparation and delivery. The clearest opportunity for closer alignment is financing and investment readiness, where both speak of pipelines, investment and private capital: a shared narrative and coordinated messaging here can turn a potential area of overlap into a source of mutual reinforcement, rather than added transaction costs for countries or mixed signals to financiers.[10] A second, more diplomatic opportunity concerns political visibility: the NIA seeks to elevate the political weight of NAPs, while the AAH, born from the G7, is also a visible platform for adaptation. Framing the two consistently - with the AAH presented as an operational contribution inside a wider ecosystem, not an alternative to UNFCCC and COP leadership - would help ensure that partners read the G7 initiative as a complementary contribution rather than a parallel platform. This framing is well supported by both initiatives' insistence on country ownership and non-duplication and offers a natural basis for a shared narrative going forward.

What the country evidence shows

The country trajectories, already visible under the AAH, illustrate what the instrument can become. To date, Ethiopia provides the clearest illustration of the AAH's partnership-based approach. Building on the existing country adaptation strategies and national priorities, the AAH supports efforts to strengthen coordination across institutions, develop investment-ready portfolios, and connect adaptation priorities with potential sources of finance. The emphasis is not on generating new plans, but rather on helping translate existing national ambitions into implementable and financeable programmes through stronger investment preparation and innovative financing approaches.[18]

In **Mauritius**, working from the country's own priorities, the added value is institutional and financial: strengthening coordination, developing an investment pipeline, operationalising a green taxonomy and identifying financing strategies. In the **Maldives**, the focus is prioritisation, costing and a coherent country platform for adaptation finance. In **Cambodia**, agricultural early-warning systems and the investment case around them feature prominently. In **Senegal**, coastal resilience, infrastructure investment prioritisation and stronger Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems for NAP and NDC implementation are the main sectors under consideration for that purpose.[6] Each case is consistent with the barriers the UNFCCC identifies: pipelines, coordination and monitoring.

The NIA is still evolving, and its evidence base is accordingly earlier-stage than the AAH's but the NAP Expo 2026 Matchmaking Symposium already offered a useful prototype of what it can deliver beyond process design. Co-organised by the NAP Global Network and UNDP with support from Canada and Italy, it brought African, Asian and small-island vulnerable countries together with the GCF, the Adaptation Fund and donor governments around NAP-linked investment opportunities and was presented as coherent with the AAH.[19] It showed what the Alliance could do well: not replacing the funds but rather shortening the distance between national priorities and financiers.

The financing landscape: the instrument exists, the conversion does not

The structural fact remains the mismatch between needs and flows. UNEP places developing-country adaptation needs at US$310-365 billion a year by 2035, against about US$26 billions of international public adaptation finance in 2023, a gap of roughly US$284 - 339 billion a year.1 At the same time, the financing counterpart has grown: MDB climate finance in low- and middle-income economies reached US$103 billion in 2025, of which US$35 billion for adaptation, with a further US$35 billions of private mobilisation, and MDBs remain committed to reaching US$42 billion a year

for adaptation in these economies by 2030.2 The implication is that if pipelines become more credible and better prepared, the financial counterpart is now considerably larger than a few years ago.

Table 2. Selected instruments already available. Most constraints below are less about the design of any single instrument than about coordination, sequencing and country-level preparation across the financing architecture. Elaborated from [3, 10, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24]

Instrument	What it offers today	Constraint for delivery
GCF Readiness	Up to US$7 m per country over four years, including dedicated support for NAP formulation and, under conditions, implementation	Still fragmented relative to the implementation pipeline; UNFCCC reports the need for faster access and clearer implementation windows [10, 20]
GCF adaptation & crosscutting	By late Sept 2024, 202 projects across 120 countries (US$9.86 bn GCF); for 58 countries with submitted NAPs, 86 projects were NAP-aligned	UNFCCC's own SBI reporting notes that the shift from plan to project remains incomplete and uneven across countries [10, 20]
GEF LDCF	423 projects/programmes for ~US$2.1 bn by mid-2024; GEF-8 cap of US$20 m per LDC	Uneven access: by July 2024, 13 LDCs had exhausted their cap and 16 had not yet accessed the fund [22]
Adaptation Fund	Direct access via accredited entities; readiness, project-formulation, technical-assistance and scale-up grants; rolling submission	Valuable for capacity and scale-up, but still not sufficient alone to close the pipeline and large-scale implementation gap [10, 20]
NAP Global Network & UN4NAPs	70+ countries supported directly; rapid technical backstopping across a roster of 50+ UN and intergovernmental organisations	Strong on technical answers, not geared towards orchestrating capital and project finance [10, 20]

What the evidence suggests, then, is a set of concrete opportunities for blended finance and MDB engagement[25]: preparing *portfolios* rather than single projects; building a de-risking architecture; connecting country platforms to preparation facilities; anchoring the dialogue with financiers to shared results systems; and institutionalising structured matchmaking. These opportunities are precisely the segments of the delivery chain where a well-coordinated AHH–NAP Implementation Alliance pairing can make the largest difference.

Italy, MASE and CMCC: catalytic value

Italy's contribution has been most visible in agenda-setting and coalition-building: it used the G7 to create political momentum around adaptation implementation, helped establish the AAH, backed UNDP's operational role, linked the initiative to bilateral partnerships such as Ethiopia, and remained engaged through the launch and development of the NIA.[11,15] UNDP's centrality across both initiatives is justified precisely because it can combine country presence, technical assistance and multilateral convening. CMCC contributes as a science-policy partner to the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE), supporting the translation of climate knowledge into negotiation and implementation-oriented strategy across the UNFCCC, IPCC and G7 processes in which these initiatives have taken shape.

The lesson for Italy is that its added value lies in catalytic leadership and in continuity, keeping implementation-oriented adaptation on the political agenda, while avoiding institutional fragmentation. That leadership carries weight only if it is matched, in practice, by genuine co-development with the vulnerable countries the two initiatives are meant to serve: agenda-setting from the G7 or the COP Presidency is a starting point, not a substitute for priorities set by the countries themselves.

Recommendations along the chain

Short term

Any account of this complementarity should start from country ownership: both initiatives exist to support priorities that vulnerable countries have already identified for themselves, not to define new ones on their behalf. Within that principle, the priority is less to establish new coordination mechanisms than to articulate more clearly how the two initiatives complement one another in practice. Their respective strengths are already emerging: the NIA is well placed to strengthen coordination across the adaptation support ecosystem, promote political alignment and engage financing partners, while the AAH can focus on supporting country platforms, investment readiness and the development of investment-ready adaptation pipelines. Making this complementarity more explicit would reinforce the commitment to country ownership, alignment and non-duplication that both initiatives already emphasise.[6,14] A practical next step would be to demonstrate this complementarity through a small number of joint country pilots. Testing a complete implementation pathway (from national adaptation priorities and coordinated technical support to project preparation, engagement with climate funds and MDBs, and monitoring, evaluation and learning) would provide valuable lessons for future scaling. Equally important will be maintaining a shared narrative centred on co-development with partner countries, ensuring that both initiatives are recognised as complementary components of a broader implementation architecture rather than parallel programmes.

Medium term

The objective is not to build additional institutions, but to improve how existing ones work together. A shared monitoring architecture could progressively emerge by linking nationally defined indicators with the Belém Adaptation Indicators and the MDB common approach, creating greater coherence between national implementation, global accountability and investment decisions.[26] Similarly, existing international milestones - from the NAP Expo to the Bonn sessions, Regional Climate Weeks and COPs - could become part of a more structured annual implementation cycle, bringing together governments, technical partners and financiers around evolving country priorities.[21,23]

Long term

NIA is already moving toward “light but real” governance: a small steering group including the sitting COP Presidency and troika, developing partner countries, UNDP, a funders/MDB representative and a NAP technical-provider representative. The AAH, in parallel, should consolidate as a replicable operational engine with a clear toolbox (governance diagnostics, pipeline protocol, MEL template, private-capital engagement plan, and MDB and fund engagement roadmap), which would turn a G7 initiative into a more transferable public good.

Risks to manage throughout

Institutional proliferation; a drift toward what is bankable at the expense of essential but less monetizable priorities such as institutional capacity, data systems and the protection of vulnerable groups; a slide, in practice rather than intent, toward a donor-driven mode in which G7 or COP-Presidency partners set the pace instead of the countries the two initiatives are meant to serve. This dynamic would undercut the country-ownership commitments both make in their own public materials; over-promising on private finance, which the World Bank, ADB and EIB all caution cannot substitute for concessional finance, grants and public investment[25]; and the administrative burden of measurement, best mitigated by interoperability and re-use of existing metrics.

Road to COP31

Rather than close with a general appeal, this Policy Brief anchors its argument to the calendar of multilateral opportunities between now and COP31. Read against the delivery chain set out earlier in this brief, the sequence below illustrates opportunities for the two initiatives to reinforce each other in practice, a work in progress, not a fixed division of roles.

When	Venue	Strategic opportunity	AAH added value	Alliance added value
Sep	**UNGA & Climate Week (New York)**	*Increase political visibility and reinforce G7 leadership.*	Reinforce the G7 origin and Italy's catalytic leadership, framed explicitly as a contribution inside the wider ecosystem rather than a parallel platform.	Broaden political visibility beyond the G7 audience - consistent with its COP30 Action Agenda mandate to raise the political profile of NAP implementation system-wide.
Oct	**Pre-COP**	*Coordinate common G7 messages and prepare COP31.*	Align G7 partners around a shared narrative of co-development and non-duplication, avoiding the perception of a parallel initiative.	Use pre-COP as the natural venue to test coordination-compact language with the COP31 Presidency and troika, as a first step toward “light but real” governance.
Oct	**Adaptation finance events (Adaptation Fund, MDBs, GCF, WIF)**	*Promote investment pipelines and engage finance institutions.*	This is the Hub's core function: bring investment-ready pipelines directly to the Adaptation Fund, MDBs, GCF and WIF, on the shared investment-readiness terrain the two initiatives occupy together.	Use the same convenings to advance system-level requests - the shared monitoring architecture and the readiness-to-investment financing sequence - so that financiers can engage with a single, coherent set of asks.
Nov	**COP31**	*Showcase AAH as an operational implementation platform and expand partnerships.*	Present an expanded country portfolio and demonstrable delivery results, building on the political momentum secured to date.	Present a matured, “light but real” governance and a public coordination compact with the Hub, showing the support ecosystem has become more coherent, not more crowded.

Calendar: *provided for this brief. The strategic-opportunity column reflects that input; the AAH and NIA added-value columns are the authors' analytical application of the mandates and gaps set out earlier - in the discussion of the delivery chain, the two initiatives and their complementarity - and in the recommendations that follow, not a published joint roadmap.*

Read end to end, the calendar traces a deliberate arc. It opens with sectoral positioning and SIDS engagement (August-September), where both initiatives can extend their reach into new constituencies without duplicating effort; moves through political-visibility moments (Climate Week, UNGA), an opportunity to present the AAH's G7 narrative and the Alliance's system-wide mandate as one coherent story; continues through Pre-COP, a natural venue to advance in public the coordination compact recommended in the Recommendations section; and builds toward the October finance events, where the two initiatives' shared terrain - investment readiness, identified earlier in the discussion of the delivery chain and of the two initiatives' complementarity - offers the opportunity for a single, coordinated request to financiers. COP31 offers a natural moment to demonstrate this alignment in practice: an expanded, evidence backed AAH country portfolio alongside an NIA that has moved further toward "light but real" governance, both presented through a shared,

coordinated narrative. The steps set out in the Recommendations section already point toward this outcome.

Three key messages

1. The priority in adaptation is no longer to draft plans, but to help partner countries turn identified national priorities into concrete, actionable investments aligned with their own resilient-development pathways - and the Adaptation Accelerator Hub is a pragmatic, country-driven contribution to that delivery.
2. Italy sees the NAP Implementation Alliance as a valuable opportunity to strengthen coherence, coordination and complementarity in the global support ecosystem: the aim is not to create parallel structures, but to build on what exists, avoid duplication, and bring national priorities, technical assistance and finance closer together.
3. The decisive challenge remains finance for implementation - helping countries build credible pipelines, improve enabling conditions, strengthen monitoring, and bring governments, climate funds, development banks and the private sector around the same table. This planning-to-delivery transition is where Italy intends to focus toward COP31.

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(*) Note on method

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