

Guidance on Scoring Adaptation Options

This guidance is to be used with the [Adaptation Options database](#):

Below is the generic version of the scoring scheme for the Adaptation Options system. This will be tailored to different sectors, with the guidance to be included within the thematic briefs, providing sector-specific examples, and adapting the scoring levels where necessary.

Technical feasibility

The technical feasibility criterion is important in assessing which adaptation options are practical, given the skills, experience and capacity of the organisations tasked with implementing the project. If there is no prior experience with an adaptation option then the barrier to implementation may be too high, and there is an increased risk that it fails to meet its objectives.

1: Implementing partners have no experience implementing this type of adaptation option and there are no project partners with this experience.

2: Implementing partners do not have direct experience with this adaptation option, but partners are available who can provide technical expertise and experience with this type of option.

3: Implementing partners have previously implemented this type of adaptation option, and have this technical expertise.

Economic case

The economic case includes a cost-benefit analysis and other instruments to establish the business case for public investment. The benefits must exceed the costs: the ratio of benefits to costs is greater than 1 in a cost-benefit analysis. Comparing the costs and benefits of different options allows for a comparison of the efficiency of different options, but requires costs and benefits to be calculated over the lifetime of the option and therefore requires a discount rate to be applied. The choice of discount rate for the analysis has an important bearing on the overall ratio of benefits to costs. Cost-benefit analysis for adaptation should also make some allowance for benefits that are hard to value in a traditional assessment, such as the benefits arising from improved environmental goods and services.

1: The benefits are less than the costs ($BCR < 1$) over the lifetime of the option, even with indirect benefits included

2: The benefit-cost ratio is in the range of 1-2. Benefits of implementing the option are higher than the estimated costs over the lifetime of the option although the benefits are not large and may be distributed unevenly among beneficiaries.

3: The benefit-cost ratio is greater than 2. Benefits of implementing the option are significantly higher than the estimated costs over the lifetime of the option and should be readily achieved.

Addresses climate risks

The extent to which an adaptation option increases resilience to the climate risks facing the project is a key consideration in prioritising options. All other things being equal, an option which increases resilience to several of the identified risks (e.g. livelihood diversification) should be prioritised over options that only address a single risk (e.g. increased flood protection). In the final consideration of which options to include in the project, care should be taken to select a package of options which address the different risks identified in the climate screening process.

1: Adaptation option is not relevant or may not be effective for the risks identified for the project.

2: Adaptation option effectively addresses at least one of the identified risks.

3: Adaptation option is relevant for all of the major climate risks identified for the project.

Accessibility for project beneficiaries

Adaptation options for IFAD projects should be appropriate for the project beneficiaries. This means ensuring that the adaptation option is affordable for target groups such as rural smallholders, youth or indigenous populations, or will not exacerbate existing gender inequalities (for example an insurance product that is only accessible to heads of the household, who may be predominately men).

1: Adaptation option is inaccessible for the main project beneficiaries (e.g. unaffordable, requiring regular complex maintenance), or exacerbates existing inequalities.

2: Adaptation option is accessible for the majority of the project's target beneficiaries.

3: Adaptation option is accessible to project beneficiaries and specifically benefits women or other marginalised groups.

Flexibility

Flexible and agile strategies for dealing with the uncertainty inherent in predictions of climate change ensure that adaptation options and strategies are developed in response to pressing needs and opportunities. This includes allowing for changes in approach as new information becomes available, or certain impacts start to pose a major risk. Flexibility in adaptation options is a function of the timeframe being considered, the design of the option, and the approach to managing change in the options being considered.

1: The adaptation option has a long life-time (>10 years) and its design does not allow for any adjustment. For example, a flood defence designed to cope with an additional 1m of flooding, and which would have to be completely replaced if greater protection was required.

2: The adaptation option being considered has a short lifetime (<10 years) meaning that considerations of flexibility are not as relevant.

3: The adaptation option is low or no regrets or is part of an adaptive management approach. Low regrets mean the option has benefits across a wide range of conditions. Thresholds and trigger points identified in adaptation strategies support adjustments in response to new information, risks or opportunities.

Mitigation co-benefits

Where possible we should prioritise those options which also have emissions reductions potential. For example, the reforestation to stabilise slopes prone to landslides has clear mitigation benefits, while a reduction in the use of fertilizer resulting from the implementation of low or no-till agricultural practices would decrease the emissions used in food production.

1: No mitigation co-benefits or adaptation significantly increases greenhouse gas emissions.

2: Adaptation option leads to emissions reductions, either at present or in the future.

3: Adaptation option involves reforestation, restoration of carbon sinks, or the substitution of fossil fuels for renewable energy sources.

Transformative potential

An adaptation option may enable fundamental change in the target system so that it becomes more resilient to climate change. Key attributes of transformative adaptation are that it addresses underlying barriers to change, and that it operates at scale; for example enabling access to insurance products amongst smallholders may create knock-on effects in risk-taking and ability to invest in productive assets and thus create transformative change in livelihoods and significantly increase resilience to climate change at a large scale.

1: Adaptation option is limited to small increases in the resilience of target group, but does not involve changes in wider systems.

2: Adaptation option operates at scale or enables wider implementation of the option, for instance with a declining marginal cost.

3: Adaptation option enables change in the system in question which significantly increases opportunities for target beneficiaries to adapt to climate change.

Complementarity to IFAD themes

Where possible the adaptation options selected should complement the other IFAD cross-cutting themes (Gender, Youth and Nutrition). For example, a drought-resistant crop variety may be introduced which is nutritionally superior to existing varieties.

1: No complementarity

2: Complements at least one other cross-cutting theme that is directly relevant to adaptation outcomes.

3: Complements more than one other cross-cutting theme to support systemic resilience.