



Mitigation Action Plans & Scenarios

Understanding the interface between LCDS, NAMAs AND MITIGATION ACTIONS

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Objective

To better understand the interface between the concepts Low Carbon Development Strategies, NAMAs and Mitigation Actions through the review of existing literature and expert perspectives.

Context

This briefing paper is the second in a series of outputs of the MAPS programme exploring the concepts of Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) and Mitigation Actions (MAs). The first output is a memo which provides initial working definitions of these concepts. The third is a research paper which applies the framework developed by the first two outputs to explore the interface of the concepts as they are put into practice in developing countries involved with MAPS.

The overriding objective of the output series is to support and deepen the implementation of ambitious mitigation in developing countries. It is hoped that focusing on the terminology and concepts will a) assist in understanding and therefore provide clarity, and b) potentially reveal useful findings about how mitigation is implemented in developing countries and how its ambition can be extended.

Key messages

- ▶ The literature considering the interface of Low Carbon Development Strategies, NAMAs and Mitigation Actions is almost exclusively written from an international (as opposed to domestic developing country) perspective.
- ▶ From this (international) perspective, a Low Carbon Development Strategy provides the overarching framework for Mitigation Actions, with the motivations for developing NAMAs and Low Carbon Development Strategies being primarily to access international resources and to articulate mitigation activity in a developing country. There is no consensus on the sequencing of Mitigation Action/NAMA/Low Carbon Development Strategy development.
- ▶ A domestic developing country perspective opens new areas of enquiry into interfaces, motivators and sequencing of Low Carbon Development Strategies, NAMAs and Mitigation Actions that could have useful implications for deepening mitigation ambition in developing countries.

Working definitions of LCDS, MAs and NAMAs

The terminology LCDS, NAMAs and MAs (although MA is not formally identified as a separate term) is used extensively in the fields of international climate policy and developing country mitigation approaches. MAPS has suggested the following working definitions of these terms for the purposes of a common understanding within

the MAPS programme, and as a specifically developing country input into the international mitigation policy discourse (MAPS 2012):

An **MA** is understood as any activity that contributes (directly and/or indirectly) to reduction of GHG emissions. MAPS understands MAs as including all kinds of mitigation actions in a country, because this suggests a more inclusive, bottom-up approach to identifying, understanding and supporting mitigation actions in developing countries. The MA term includes individual NAMAs as a sub-set or approach (but not aggregate NAMAs, see below).

The **NAMA** term is exclusive to actions seeking support and/or recognition in the international context. Therefore, an (individual) NAMA is conceived as an MA undertaken by developing countries utilising finance, technology and capacity-building transfer from developed countries in the context of the international climate negotiations. Aggregate NAMAs refer to the deviation of GHG emissions below BAU (e.g. targets) concepts submitted under the Copenhagen Accord as NAMA.

The **LCDS** term provides the context and the long-term vision for a transition to robust economies that are carbon efficient, and that have thus minimized the output of GHG emissions. LCDS can include plans, scenarios or other planning tools to deal with the future.

Literature review on possible interfaces between the three concepts

The analytical literature on possible interfaces between the three concepts is almost exclusively undertaken by institutions situated in developed countries, such as the Wuppertal Institute, Ecofys, ECN, and UNEP Risoe. A literature search revealed that the term MA has not been established in the literature (although the generic term 'mitigation action' is ubiquitous). There is therefore no literature considering the interface of MAs with either NAMAs or LCDS. The interface of NAMAs and LCDS is considered in the literature, albeit both scantily and inconclusively. In order to position the literature review in the MAPS perspective which includes MAs as a central concept, the interface between NAMAs and MAs is first established.

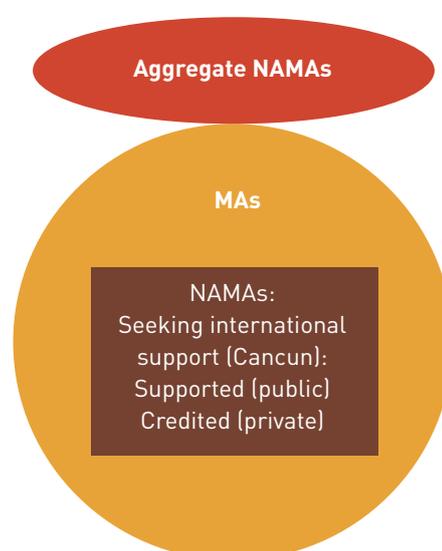
NAMAs and MAs (a MAPS perspective)

The literature describes various categories of NAMAs. These descriptions are from two different perspectives. The first is that of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes, where 'domestically supported' NAMAs and 'NAMAs seeking international support' are conceived (Cancun Agreements). The analytical literature identifies 'unilateral NAMAs' (an equivalent to the UNFCCC's domestically supported NAMAs) and then splits internationally supported NAMAs into those which seek private sector support through the carbon markets (credited NAMAs), and those which seek public sector support through international agreements (supported NAMAs) (Jung et al. 2010; UNEP Risoe 2011).

From the perspective of MA terminology then, the full suite of NAMA types, excluding Aggregate NAMAs (the NAMA special case) are MAs. Aggregate NAMAs are not MAs because an activity orientation is central to the MA concept. However, only those MAs seeking international support through international public funding or the carbon markets are NAMAs. The so-called 'domestically supported' (or unilateral) NAMAs do not fall into the NAMA subset. We will therefore deal with all the instances where the two share a common meaning under the term MA. When we refer to NAMAs, we refer specifically to the instances where international support of some nature is assumed.

The MAPS perspective on the interface between NAMAs and MAs is depicted graphically below.

DIAGRAM 1:
A MAPS PERSPECTIVE ON THE
INTERFACE BETWEEN MAs AND NAMAs



The interface between MAs and LCDS in the literature

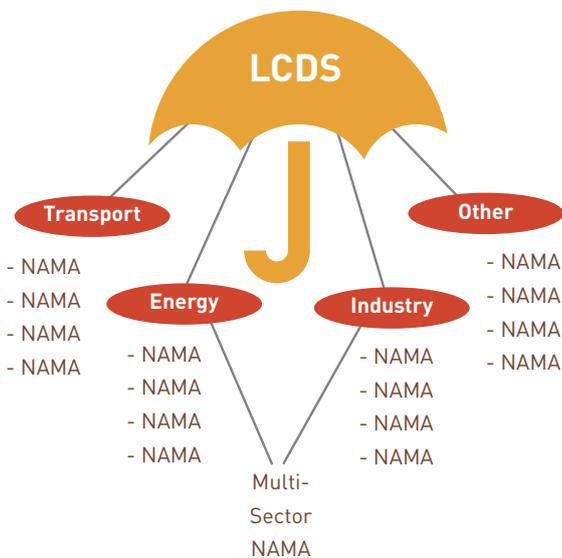
Understanding therefore that MAs are a broader conceptualisation of the term NAMAs, but that the international literature does not recognise the term MA, we move on to consider the interface of MAs and LCDS in the literature by considering the NAMA-LCDS interface as a proxy.

What is written of the NAMA-LCDS interface?

Decisions under the UNFCCC do not make an explicit link between NAMAs and LCDS. The Cancun Agreements introduce the concept of LCDS in paragraph 65 amidst paragraphs about NAMAs, but without any formal link (UNFCCC 2011).

The analytical literature mostly interprets an LCDS as an overarching framework under which NAMAs sit at a sectoral or sub-sectoral level. This is graphically demonstrated by Helm (2011), with the LCDS depicted as an umbrella.

DIAGRAM 2:
LCDS-NAMA interface



Source: Helm 2011

Different texts emphasise different characteristics of this type of interface, focused on how the LCDS provides guidance, coherence and clarity to a country's mitigation

actions. It facilitates the identification of NAMAs, in a coherent framework, and through a coherent process (Van Tilburg et al. 2011), it enables NAMAs to be both designed and achieved (UNEP Risoe 2011), and enhances synergy between NAMAs within and between different sectors (Van Tilburg et al. 2011).

UNEP Risoe (2011) describes the individual NAMAs as being subservient to the LCDS: *'While the LCDS provides the long term direction – the low carbon development pathway – for the national economy in meeting development goals and objectives, the NAMAs are vehicles to implement the strategy.'* Ngara (2011) offers NAMAs a more active role, as building blocks for LCDS.

There is a level of greyness in the literature though, suggesting that in some instances LCDS and NAMAs are less distinct. Van Tilburg et al. (2011) note that a NAMA has a lot in common with an LCDS, *'but it (sic) generally considered to be on a lower level of abstractness'*. This may be the case where LCDS or NAMAs are defined at a sector level, with the NAMA being in the form of a sector mitigation plan.

The literature reflects the tension of understanding the NAMA-LCDS interface from an international versus domestic perspective. UNEP Risoe (2011) reflects that an LCDS reflects the Common but Differentiated Responsibilities of all countries (UNEP Risoe 2011), and that it is both internationally focused and a component of development planning. Helm (2011) explains that *'LCDS are umbrella strategies/plans for mitigation actions that allow countries to follow sustainable-development pathways'*.

How is NAMA-LCDS sequencing understood?

The literature lacks consensus on whether NAMAs lead to LCDS or the other way around, or whether the process is more continuous.

NAMAs->LCDS: NAMAs can be considered as building blocks towards sustainable development and LCDS (Wuppertal Institute as cited in Ngara 2011).

LCDS->NAMAs: A NAMA is an outworking and implementation of the LCDS: *'With actions not being the result of strategic processes or careful national planning, they do not necessarily represent the most efficient or appropriate mitigation or adaptation responses – but probably the most immediately attractive for the policy maker'*

or the individual project developer mostly driven by short term perspectives' (UNEP Risoe 2011).

Van Tilburg et al. (2011) describe LCDS as a continuous process which perhaps allows for a two-way, iterative relationship.

From a motivational perspective, why should there be an interface between NAMAs and LCDS?

The motivation for a NAMA-LCDS interface in the literature is largely centred on accessing international support and articulating developing country mitigation actions to an international audience. It is always considered from the perspective of how an LCDS can assist NAMAs, never the other way around.

An LCDS can clarify the type of support that individual NAMAs are seeking: *'An LCDS can include a clear methodology to make the distinction between the three types of NAMAs (unilateral, supported or credited)'* (Van Tilburg et al. 2011). It can also clarify how the carbon market and government-led emission reduction programmes interact in a country, and which emission reductions are for use against internal domestic targets and which for international crediting (Van Tilburg et al. 2011). An LCDS is also described as providing a signal to donors that NAMAs are aligned to domestic priorities. It can facilitate financing for NAMAs through providing an economic context and analysis (Helm, 2011).

Some texts suggest that an LCDS can also enhance NAMAs by catalyzing them (Helm 2011) and making them more strategic (UNEP Risoe 2011).

Aggregate NAMAs and LCDS

The literature is silent on the interface between Aggregate NAMAs and LCDS.

Expert discussion

The interface of NAMAs, LCDS and mitigation actions in the literature is largely considered from the perspective of the UNFCCC, and its consideration of developing countries within the evolving UNFCCC framework. There does not appear to be a body of

literature considering these issues using this particular terminology from the domestic perspective of a developing country planning and prioritising its sustainable development.

The authors therefore set themselves the task of considering what the interface and sequencing of, and motivation for MAs, NAMAs and LCDS could look like; from the domestic perspective of a developing country and also, how this informs the aim of deepening mitigation action in developing countries. A number of questions and issues were raised.

The role of LCDS from the domestic perspective of a developing country could be further interrogated. The literature suggests LCDS as being the 'mitigation pathway' related to economic structure and with socio-economic implications, but not necessarily being national developing planning per se. Is this how developing countries understand LCDS? How relevant and effective is either development planning or mitigation planning in developing countries? What perspective on mitigation planning is required in developing countries to ensure it is considered along with other development priorities such as poverty alleviation? A different take on the interface could be that a group of MAs could theoretically encompass the totality of a country's LCDS, especially if there is no tallying of total emissions reductions aimed for, therefore no need for top down analysis; the LCDS is the rolling out of a variety of MAs. A NAMA would then be a subset of a suite of MAs (i.e. discrete and well defined actions attached to mitigation outcomes) and financially supported internationally.

How is 'development' interpreted in the MA, NAMA and LCDS concepts? In LCDS this could be through the consideration of socio-economic implications of mitigation pathways. Alternatively, mitigation could be understood as the co-benefit of development planning. In MAs development issues could be considered through the design or prioritisation of actions which have greater development implementation (see the MAPS work on Poverty Alleviating Mitigation Actions (PAMAs)). Is mitigation action most effective when targeted explicitly through concepts such as MA, NAMA and LCDS?

It would be useful to understand why developing countries which are embarking on an LCDS or MA are doing so, particularly where one approach is favoured above the other. Are there reasons why a country adopts the

approach of a (more top-down) LCDS approach or the (more bottom-up) multiple MA path, or maybe both or neither? Is there another modality, such as sectoral approaches, which could be more appropriate for particular country contexts? The motivation currently dominant in the literature is that of the international context driving the development of LCDS and MAs. This happens through a number of mechanisms. Firstly, at a legal level, the international agreements and commitments to which the country is party encompasses a 'stick' approach to embarking on an LCDS or MA. Secondly, and more abstractly, the role a country envisions for itself in international diplomatic circles could also function to motivate its decisions. Thirdly, tangible and ultimately very important motivators in the decision are the availability, type and contingent nature of international support on offer to a country (a 'carrot' approach). The availability of specific budget line items for financial support might facilitate the creation and adoption of an overarching LCDS strategy for instance; whereas specific technological support might lead to the adoption of discrete MAs, unbounded by an overarching strategy, instead.

The literature does not touch on domestic motivators, such as ensuring competitiveness in a low-carbon world, or that of development being the primary driver behind developing an LCDS or MAs. How do these relate to development motivators? How are they strengthened? How effectively do they result in enhanced mitigation action? What could be the interaction(s) between the domestic and international motivators?

Better understanding of different developing countries' approaches to the concepts of MAs, NAMAs and LCDS could enhance their use at a domestic level, but also could contribute towards refining their application internationally. Both could potentially enable the deepening of mitigation action in developing countries.

Conclusion and future research

NAMAs, mitigation action and LCDS are terms which populate the mitigation literature. On interrogation, it would appear that these terms are very closely associated with the UNFCCC international policy process, with close to no consideration of their usage from a the domestic perspective of a developing country. This is important, however, in order to understand the role these concepts

play in deepening mitigation activity in developing countries.

The expert discussion in this Briefing has identified issues and questions for future research by considering the concepts and their interface from the domestic perspective of a developing country. MAPS will explore some of these further through a research piece focused on developing countries involved with MAPS (Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, India and South Africa). This research focuses on two main question areas:

- 1) How do developing countries understand the concepts of MA (including the NAMA sub-set) and LCDS, and how do they interface in these countries?
- 2) Is one of the three more helpful for deepening mitigation action? What alternative concept or interface option could assist?

The research will then consider what the findings imply for both the international approach to these concepts and their use in developing countries from the perspective of deepening mitigation action globally.

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Mitigation Action Plans and Scenarios (MAPS) is a collaboration amongst developing countries to establish the evidence base for long term transition to robust economies that are both carbon efficient and climate resilient. In this way MAPS contributes to ambitious climate change mitigation that aligns economic development with poverty alleviation.

Central to MAPS is the way it combines research and stakeholder interest with policy and planning. Our participative process engages stakeholders from all sectors within participating countries and partners them with the best indigenous and international research.

MAPS grew out of the experience of the Government mandated Long Term Mitigation Scenarios (LTMS) process that took place in South Africa between 2005 and 2008. The LTMS, with its home-grown stakeholder-driven approach, its reliance on scenarios and the rigour of its research and modelling were key to its approach. The LTMS informed South Africa's position for Copenhagen and is the base of much of the country's domestic policy.

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