



**Practical
ACTION**

ESTABLISHING THE SANTIAGO NETWORK FOR LOSS AND DAMAGE

What we can learn from the
Climate Technology Centre
and Network

SUMMARY

Loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change is an urgent issue with impacts already being experienced by frontline communities. The establishment of the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage (SNLD) as part of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM) is a step in the right direction, but it needs to be fully operationalised. This policy brief looks at the lessons learned from the operationalisation of the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) and makes recommendations for the SNLD.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Have a common understanding of SNLD's functions:** Without a common understanding, it will be nearly impossible to negotiate and operationalise a SNLD that is fit for purpose to deliver for developing country needs to support the people on the frontlines of the climate emergency.
- **It must remain a party-driven process:** The functions of the SNLD must be agreed by a party-driven process and must be adopted by a decision at the COP. This would maximise the potential for the SNLD to deliver on the needs of vulnerable countries.
- **Financial agreements should be in place from the start:** Finance for both the coordinating secretariat and the activities of the SNLD must be in place from the outset. It is crucial that the finance system is designed so that no one is left behind and those most vulnerable are protected¹.
- **Capacity in country is key:** The SNLD will respond to requests from climate-impacted countries. Therefore, the Loss and Damage contact person must be capacitated to act. However, for the SNLD to succeed as a country-driven process, related national institutions must also be capacitated, building long-term capability in the country itself.
- **The SNLD will require a robust, appropriate, and accessible host institution:** The SNLD host must be robust and should ideally be located in the global south. For loss and damage, countries will rely on the SNLD to deliver during times of crisis.
- **Operationalise the SNLD as the technical implementation arm of the WIM:** This will enable vulnerable countries to receive support to avert, minimise, or address loss and damage as per their specific country needs. There is no one-size-fits-all solution.

BACKGROUND

There has been no decision on the operationalisation of the SNLD nor a mandate to adopt modalities to facilitate cooperation and collaboration between parties and organisations, bodies, networks, and experts. There is also no common understanding of what the functions of the SNLD will be.

It is, therefore, unclear how parties can come together to discuss the future of the SNLD to ensure that it meets the needs of climate-impacted people and countries, and that it is operationalised as a technical implementation arm of the WIM through which vulnerable countries can receive support to avert, minimise, or address loss and damage.

As it can be difficult to create new institutions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the current practice is to use existing models.

In this instance, there are no relevant models other than the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN).

THE NEED TO ESTABLISH THE SANTIAGO NETWORK FOR LOSS AND DAMAGE

It has taken years for the loss and damage negotiations to gain momentum and for parties to agree to establish the SNLD. At the same time, developing countries face increasing levels of loss and damage to lives and property due to climate change impacts in the form of extreme weather events, such as superstorms, and slow-onset events, such as sea level rise and desertification (Fig. 1).

At COP25 (2019), the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) established the SNLD as part of the WIM². Decision 2/CMA.2, however, did not indicate a process to convene or make the SNLD operational.

There is, therefore, no decision on the operationalisation of the SNLD nor a mandate to adopt modalities to facilitate cooperation and collaboration between parties and organisations, bodies, networks, and experts.

Despite this, establishing the SNLD is not yet a formal agenda item at COP26. This leaves further uncertainty on how parties can come together to discuss the future of the SNLD so that it meets the needs of climate-impacted countries and people. There is also no mandate given to the Executive Committee of the WIM (ExCom) to take steps to operationalise the SNLD. As a result, the COP26 President currently guides its implementation.

What is crucial is ensuring that the SNLD is operationalised as an implementation arm of the WIM through which vulnerable countries can receive support to avert, minimise, or address loss and damage.

Why look at the CTCN for answers?

As it can be difficult to create new institutions under the UNFCCC, current practice is to use existing models in terms of lessons learned.

In this instance, there are no relevant models under the UNFCCC other than the CTCN. Since the UNFCCC's Technology Mechanism (TM) already has policy and implementation components, there was consensus among civil society groups that it would be useful to look at the CTCN to inform the development of the SNLD.

During the initial years of the negotiations, technology transfer was a controversial topic that created barriers to agreements to establish the CTCN. However, as negotiations progressed and barriers were addressed, the topic became less controversial and saw less resistance at the negotiations. Therefore, the CTCN became operational in 2013 in accordance with various COP decisions³.

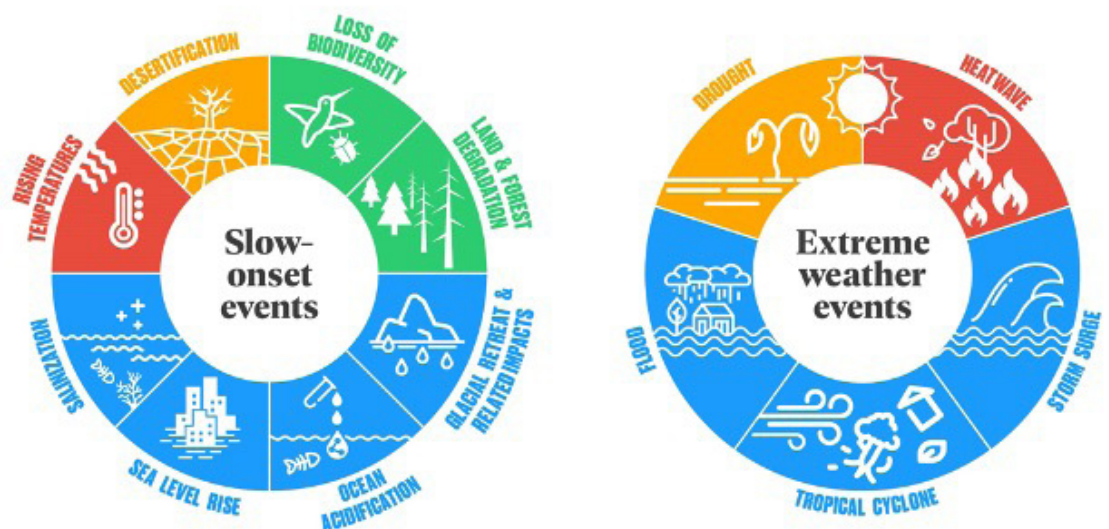
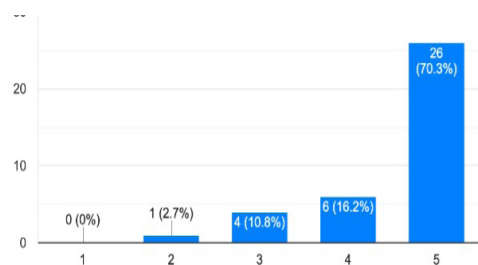
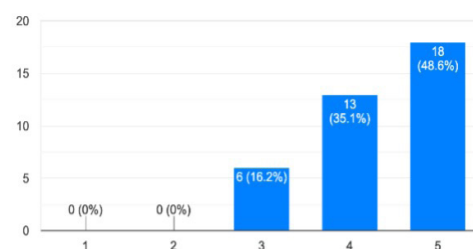


Figure 1. Slow-onset events vs. extreme weather events. To rapidly respond to the highly complex impacts of climate change, the SNLD will need to coordinate technical assistance effectively (Adapted from UNFCCC, 2020a).

In a recent study⁴, the establishment, operations, and effectiveness of the CTCN were reviewed and those who negotiated the CTCN were interviewed for lessons learned (Fig. 2)

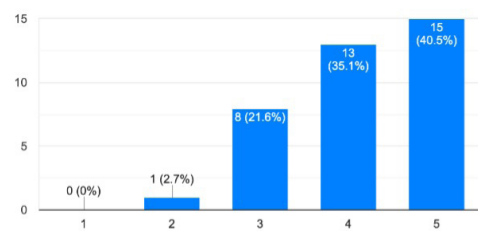


The Santiago Network should catalyse support for local, grassroots and subnational-level initiatives.

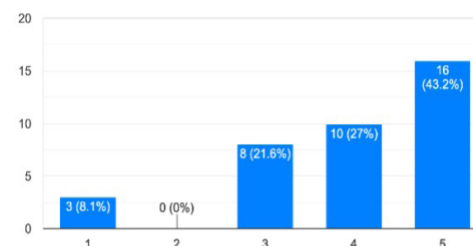


The Santiago Network should catalyse support for national-level initiatives.

Figure 2. At what level should the work of the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage be targeted on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)? (Santiago Network Report October 2020).



The Santiago Network should catalyse support for regional-level initiatives.



The Santiago Network should catalyse support for international-level initiatives.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT, OPERATIONS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CTCN⁵

Have a common understanding of the function

The CTCN has a specific mandate, this function was agreed during a party-driven process and crystallised in COP decisions.

Connect the proposed network with the financial mechanism

On a closer look at the workings of the CTCN, the voluntary financial contribution setup was a major stumbling block. When asked what could have been done differently if the process could be renegotiated, interviewees were in agreement that any new structure should be connected directly to the financial mechanism. If this is not in place, the director of the new structure would essentially become a fundraiser and the SNLD would face operational delays.

Unintended consequences

When designing a new structure it is important to consider all relevant options and pre-empt the possible unintended consequences. Even well-intended designs might cause implementation delays. For example, it took time to establish the Network, and the Climate and Technology Centre needed a host, which brought additional complications. During the design of the mechanism the intention was for the Network to play a much bigger role, but the Climate Technology Centre is still the most dominant while the Network is only a little more than a list of potential contractors.

One size does not fit all

One of the main lessons learned from the CTCN is that “one size does not fit all”, and there were complaints that the CTCN has become a technology umbrella. In an interview, one of the CTCN originators said they repeatedly pointed out that it was important to establish “something different and provide something different to different countries. Countries are not alike in terms of needs and capacity.” So far, the CTCN has been unable to come up with packages that provide tailor-made services to various countries⁶.

Build in-country capacity

The CTCN is a country-driven process and thus can only deliver on requests from countries; this must be the same for the SNLD. Therefore, it is vital that national capacity must be built for the loss and damage contact point and key institutions. This capacity building must guide developing countries to set up national level systems to deliver support in a way that ensures country ownership and self-determination. It should also ensure that support reaches the populations that are most vulnerable and in need. It is vital that the SNLD avoids mobilising technical assistance via external consultants or consultancy firms, as in-country capacity will not be developed.

CONCLUSION

The SNLD must be formally operationalised as soon as possible and guidance for this process should be drawn from the lessons learned during the establishment of the CTCN.

The functions of the SNLD must be driven by Parties' needs and priorities. The process to establish the SNLD must be party-driven and ideally will be captured in the decision at COP26 in Glasgow.

Ultimately, the focus of the SNLD as a platform must be to help countries access technical assistance. The SNLD must avoid becoming a forum for debate and discussion alone.



References and Endnotes

This policy brief has been produced based on the following paper:

Practical Action (2021) Review of the Climate Technology Centre and Network: To inform ongoing negotiations to establish the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage, Practical Action, Rugby, UK.

¹ Article 2, UNFCCC (1992) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>

² UNFCCC. (2020). Decision 2/CMA.2: Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts and its 2019 review, para. 43. Retrieved from <https://unfccc.int/documents/209506>

^{3, 4} Practical Action (2021) Review of the Climate Technology Centre and Network: To inform ongoing negotiations to establish the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage, Practical Action, Rugby, UK.

⁵ These are some of the key lessons learned. For more lessons learned, please see: Practical Action (2021) Review of the Climate Technology Centre and Network: To inform ongoing negotiations to establish the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage, Practical Action, Rugby, UK.

⁶ CTCN originator (Author, Interviewer) (2021).



About Practical Action

We are an international development organization putting ingenious ideas to work so people in poverty can change their world. Our vision is for a world that works better for everyone.




We help people find solutions to some of the world's toughest problems, including challenges made worse by catastrophic climate change and persistent gender inequality.

We believe in the power of small to change the big picture. And that together we can take practical action to build futures free from poverty.

Big change starts small.

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