

*Keywords:*

Climate change; mitigation; adaptation; low carbon; resilience; least developed countries

## Policy pointers

**Synergies between low carbon and resilient development** can be found at different levels of policymaking and governments need to choose the most appropriate; these can be specific policy instruments, broad policy objectives or financial mechanisms.

**The structure and dimensions of low-carbon resilience strategies** can themselves influence success: governments should align time-bound priorities, financial mechanisms and institutional architecture for climate change adaptation (resilience) and mitigation (low carbon).

**Governments need to carefully assess the costs and benefits of bringing together these policy agendas in different sectors to determine when this approach is most useful.**

**Both governments and development partners need to support a learning-by-doing approach that will generate robust evidence of what works.**

## Low-carbon resilient development in the Least Developed Countries

Low-carbon resilient development is emerging as a dynamic policy area in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). It brings together three traditionally separate goals: reducing climate change emissions (mitigation), resilience to climate change (the adaptation side of climate change policy) and economic and social development. Since 2009, nine LDCs have released national plans or strategies that link low-carbon approaches (usually associated with greenhouse gas mitigation) with climate resilience. Recent discussions at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) also emphasise the links between mitigation and adaptation agendas.

Governments must now decide how best to secure benefits in key sectors through this approach. Some national approaches focus on a general political commitment to low-carbon resilience while others use specific policies and financial instruments to try to bring them together. Governments and development partners need to build up the evidence base on where synergies can be easily implemented and how best to support them.

Since 2009, nine Least Developed Countries (LDCs) have announced national plans or strategies incorporating elements of both low-carbon development and resilience to climate change. Low-carbon development is an approach that focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the development process; this is linked with the mitigation side of the climate change debate. Resilience refers to building the capacity of society — whether individuals or communities — to recover after any climate-related shocks and is associated with adaptation to climate change. Low-carbon resilient development seeks to link all three of these policy objectives — mitigation, adaptation and development — at national level.

These nine countries are 'early adopters' of the low-carbon resilient development agenda, and

so offer important insights into how the agenda is working in practice. They also offer other LDCs an opportunity to learn lessons should they want to develop such strategies in the future. Certainly, the number of strategies and plans indicates a widespread interest by LDC governments in how they can begin to incorporate both aspects of the climate change agenda at the national level, and a high level of support from development partners for these planning processes.

The national plans and strategies show climate change planning emerging on a different scale from earlier national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) and the nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs), both of which were driven and structured by the priorities and needs of the United Nations Framework Convention on

## Important questions remain about how to bring low carbon and resilience together

Climate Change (UNFCCC) process. In contrast, the national plans and strategies described in this paper are products of national development planning and seek to cut across the international-level divide between climate change mitigation and adaptation.

This briefing is based on a database (completed August 2013) and analysis of

LDC national plans and strategies, extracted from government websites and the UNFCCC website. Only plans including both low carbon and resilience elements were included. On the basis of this initial data collection, more detailed parameters were developed for analysing each country's plan. More detail is available in an IIED issue paper.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1. National low-carbon resilience plans and strategies of the LDCs**

Country	Date	Strategy/plan name
Bangladesh	2009	Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP)
Bhutan	2012/13	National Strategy for Low-Carbon Development
Cambodia	2010	National Green Growth Roadmap
	2012	Green Growth Master Plan for Cambodia
	Forthcoming	National Climate Change Strategic Plan
Ethiopia	2011	Ethiopia's Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Strategy
Laos	2010	Strategy on Climate Change of Laos
Mozambique	2012	National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation (ENAMMC)
Nepal	2011	Climate Change Policy
	Forthcoming	Low-Carbon Economic Development Strategy (LCDS)
Rwanda	2011	Green Growth and Climate Resilience: National Strategy for Climate Change and Low Carbon Development
The Gambia	2012	Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE)
	2012	Priority Action Plan for Climate Change

## Elements of national plans and strategies

The structure and dimensions of these national climate change strategies can themselves play an important role in how low-carbon development and resilience are brought together. Time-bound priorities, financial mechanisms and institutional architecture are particularly important.

**Time-bound priorities.** Identifying time-bound priorities in a national plan has implications for finding synergies in low-carbon, resilient and development agendas. Setting different timeframes will make finding synergies more challenging – for example, Bangladesh identifies mitigation actions as not short term, but many adaptation and resilience objectives as immediate and short term, making it less likely that synergies will be found.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, identifying 'big wins' or 'low hanging fruit' might prioritise mitigation actions that are easier to measure and execute from a central government ministry, and so hinder the search for longer-term projects with synergies or win-wins that might be more time consuming.

**Financial mechanisms.** The financial structures for funding climate change strategies can also influence how agendas come together. Demand-driven structures that allow line ministries and others to apply for money around certain themes, but with projects and programmes they have devised, may support existing policy programmes rather than promoting those that attempt to innovate, or that focus on synergies. Discrete funding 'windows' for each area — such as for green growth or resilience — will also split the incentive to bring the two aspects together.

**Institutional architecture.** The plans and strategies vary in their institutional architecture for oversight and in the roles assigned to parts of government, sub-national actors, the private sector and civil society. In most countries the Ministry of Environment is expected to play a key role in strategy coordination for climate change, including low carbon or green growth.

Figure 1 sets out graphically how it is important to align timeframes where possible and assign similar levels of prioritisation to elements of the plan that might offer policy synergies. Financing needs to support innovative approaches and also take opportunities to use funding to address both low-carbon and resilient policy areas simultaneously. Finally, institutional architecture needs to bring in powerful ministries as well as establishing cross-sectoral mechanisms.

## The range of co-benefits need recognition

There are very few examples so far where low-carbon resilient development has gone systematically beyond policy rhetoric into implementation. Important questions remain about how to identify the key areas for such synergy and how to align incentives to bring low carbon and resilience together. Table 2 gives an example of how one country, Ethiopia, is addressing the issues of climate resilience and low-carbon development in its national strategy (termed 'green economy' in Ethiopia's national plan), but without, so far, many mechanisms to achieve synergy between objectives.<sup>3</sup>

In Ethiopia and in the other LDCs, plans and strategies need to give more explicit recognition to the range of co-benefits or win-wins in low-carbon resilient development: from mitigation benefits only; to minor co-benefits for resilience and development; to areas of genuine synergy; and at the other end of the scale, adaptation benefits only. Assessing where a policy, sector or programme might fit on a sliding scale like this can help governments develop an appropriate policy approach and determine the best scale for bringing these agendas together.

## Levels of policymaking

National governments of LDCs have varying options available to them for bringing agendas together or finding synergies:

- **Discrete policies.** For example, a national campaign to distribute solar lanterns as a decentralised renewable energy solution could offer benefits in all three areas: mitigation through renewable technology; adaptation through addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability; and development through better educational outcomes and income diversification, brought about by being able to work in the evenings.
- **An overarching stated policy objective within which policies address specific strands of the agenda.** these could focus more on mitigation, adaptation or development. An example might be a policy objective in a national plan for low carbon resilient development that is realised through separate sectoral policies.
- **Implementing low carbon, resilience and development objectives simultaneously with a single funding mechanism.** This does not necessarily imply any synergies in implementation beyond a general political will to support multiple agendas. There may also be policies that primarily address one objective —

Figure 1. Elements of a climate change plan that can support synergies in low-carbon resilient development

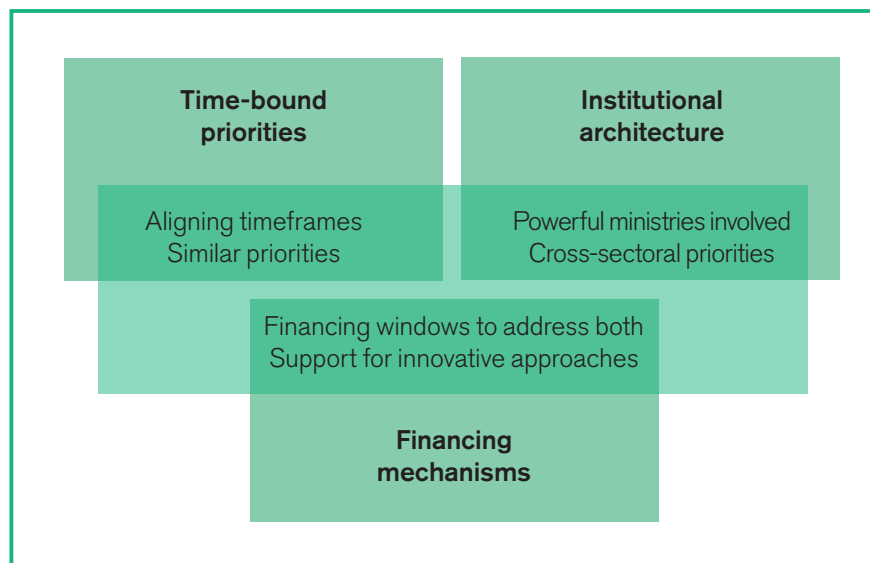


Table 2. Ethiopia's national strategy

Priorities identified	Merging together
<p>Separate green growth and climate resilience strategies are coming together to form the Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy (CRGE, launched 2011).</p> <p>The priorities for green growth and climate resilience are being separately identified and developed.</p>	<p>While Ethiopia's climate-resilient plan and the green economy strategy will constitute the CRGE, there is no intention for all benefits to cross over between both strategies. Instead, they will be implemented simultaneously with complementary aims to meet the overarching policy objective.</p> <p>Some flagship programmes — such as the national cookstove and biogas programmes — aim to bring mitigation and adaptation together, although there is so far little evidence on how, or if, win-wins will be leveraged.</p>

mitigation, adaptation or development — but are slightly modified to make some contribution to another.

Table 3 shows how some countries have addressed low carbon resilient development through financing mechanisms.

## The 'reach' of policies affects potential synergies

The scale, or reach, of the policy agenda is a crucial issue, yet one that can get overlooked. So far, at country strategy level, LDCs have generally focused on an overall framework or policy objective that multiple projects (often on one policy area) feed into. It is not yet clear how synergies alter at different scales, or whether an overarching framework or objective is more effective than a focused objective situated within

Table 3. LDCs with a climate change fund

Country	Fund name	Fund details
Bangladesh	Bangladesh Climate Trust Fund (BCCTF)	A basket fund* for donor and national funds, it manages climate change and supports the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP); primarily providing funding for adaptation but also mitigation.
	Bangladesh Climate Resilience Fund (BCCRF)	A basket fund for donor and national funds, it manages climate change and supports the BCCSAP. The fund includes finance from the government budget for both adaptation and mitigation activities.
Ethiopia	Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE Facility)	A basket fund to mobilise and disburse climate finance; it funds both climate resilience and green economy strategies.
Nepal	Central Renewable Energy Fund (CREF)	Renewable energy and low carbon fund. There are no financial strategies for the wider aspects of the climate change policy (2011) though there is project funding for policy priorities. <sup>4</sup>
Rwanda	National Climate and Environment Fund (FONERWA)	A basket fund that aims to ensure financing is available and accessible to support environmental sustainability, resilience to climate change and green growth. The fund will have 'windows' when groups can apply for financing that will reflect government priorities, many of which have been laid out in the National Strategy for Climate Change and Low Carbon Development. <sup>5</sup>

\*A basket fund is a pooled fund that various development partners put money into for a specified objective or policy. This has been used to support sector wide approaches in health and education as well as cross-cutting areas such as climate change.

a sector, which would at least align with existing planning processes and incentives around policy implementation.

Overarching objectives can meet with institutional barriers to cross-cutting development planning — for example there is often inertia towards working across ministries as diverse as agriculture, energy and transport. There needs to be a significant evidence base and justification that such an approach will yield transformative benefits, rather than reliance on the theory.

### Learning by doing

Perhaps the best way to bring low-carbon and resilience agendas together is to identify and pursue theoretical win-wins or areas where low-carbon resilient development looks most feasible.

Governments then need to invest in monitoring and evaluation programmes for these areas, including monitoring for any unexpected

consequences such as distributional effects, potential trade-offs and actual synergies. This will build evidence on the practical benefits of combined agendas.

There are already several emerging areas of low-carbon resilience policy taking different perspectives and working with different arms of government. The green growth agenda is the most defined of these, seeking economic growth and poverty reduction without environmental damage. Governments and development partners should carefully monitor the natural experiments occurring over the next few years in countries taking different approaches; and ongoing research must continue to feed into these processes. This 'learning by doing' approach will ensure any potential trade-offs can be recognised and managed according to national priorities.

### Susannah Fisher

Susannah Fisher ([www.iied.org/users/susannah-fisher](http://www.iied.org/users/susannah-fisher)) is a researcher in IIED's Climate Change Group.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Fisher, S. 2013. *Low-carbon resilient development in the least developed countries: Emerging issues and areas of research*. IIED Issue Paper, IIED, London. See: <http://pubs.iied.org/10049IIED>. The database is available on request from the author. / <sup>2</sup> Government of Bangladesh, 2009. *Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP)*. See: [www.sdnbd.org/moef.pdf](http://www.sdnbd.org/moef.pdf) / <sup>3</sup> FDR Ethiopia, 2011. *Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy*. See: [www.undp-aap.org/countries/ethiopia](http://www.undp-aap.org/countries/ethiopia) / <sup>4</sup> Government of Nepal, 2011. *Climate Change Policy*. See: [www.climate.nepal.org.np](http://www.climate.nepal.org.np) / <sup>5</sup> Republic of Rwanda, 2011. *National Strategy for Climate Change and Low Carbon Development*. See: [www.rema.gov.rw](http://www.rema.gov.rw)



## Knowledge Products

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) promotes sustainable development, linking local priorities to global challenges. We support some of the world's most vulnerable people to strengthen their voice in decision making.

Contact:  
susannah.fisher@iied.org

80–86 Gray's Inn Road  
London, WC1X 8NH  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399  
Fax: +44 (0)20 3514 9055  
[www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org)

IIED welcomes feedback  
via: @IIED and  
[www.facebook.com/theiied](https://www.facebook.com/theiied)

This research was funded by UK aid from the UK Government, however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the UK Government.

