

## Policy pointers

**A shared understanding** of the national agenda for low-carbon resilient development (LCRD) should be built through stakeholder consultation and dialogue.

**Policymakers should** clearly define which area of co-benefits in the LCRD agenda they are targeting.

**Policymakers should** forge new policy networks across areas of government and other organisations to support innovative approaches to planning.

**Policymakers and** development partners need to support access to relevant, high-quality information on climate planning, including new policy approaches.

# Implementing a low-carbon resilient development agenda: lessons from Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Rwanda

Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Rwanda are at the forefront of developing national plans that address elements of both climate change mitigation and adaptation with a low carbon resilient development (LCRD) agenda. This briefing explores the experience of LCRD planning in each country using interviews, analysis of policy documents and surveys to draw lessons for other countries seeking to integrate mitigation and adaptation into their national plans. Establishing a national consensus on what is understood by LCRD is shown to be important in building stakeholder support for any proposed LCRD agenda, as is clearly defining which co-benefits are being targeted. It is also clear that LCRD planning will need better access to high quality information on climate change planning and new policy approaches.

Low-carbon resilient development (LCRD) is a policy approach that aims to address both the need to lower carbon emissions (mitigation) and to manage the effects of climate change (adaptation). This briefing explores the factors supporting national planning processes for LCRD in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Rwanda. Its recommendations are based on 75 semi-structured interviews with policymakers in the three countries, detailed analysis of policy documents, and two surveys on the use of information and knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The four main areas of focus are:

- the motivating factors for LCRD
- building national coalitions of support

- defining co-benefits
- the use and flow of information.

Ethiopia, Rwanda and Bangladesh are all categorised as Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and have all initiated national policy processes to address elements of climate change. This is partly in response to growing international attention on the issue of climate change, the UNFCCC requirements to undertake processes such as developing a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), the outcomes of Rio+20 and the Bali Action Plan, and the potential financial incentives. But these national strategies and

## *Wider stakeholder engagement with the LCRD agenda is needed*

frameworks also go beyond the approach of a NAPA or a NAMA by considering how low-carbon resilient measures can be integrated into national planning processes.

In all three countries, governments have developed new institutions and structures

to support climate change planning by:

- drawing cross-sectoral support for this cross-cutting issue
- defining financing arrangements
- maintaining political support
- building mechanisms for implementation.

The new structures also draw on support from national and international experts in aspects of climate change planning. The main features of the three countries' approaches are shown in Table 1.

### **Motivating factors**

There is a range of potential incentives for countries to address LCRD in national planning supported by widespread stakeholder consensus. We identified a strong consensus between all three countries that the most important incentives involve accessing climate finance and supporting existing national priorities. In Ethiopia, for example, stakeholders talked about using the LCRD approach to be more ambitious with their national agenda. Some stakeholders in Bangladesh still emphasised that low-carbon elements of the agenda should be funded through external sources, highlighting that their priorities lie in developing resilience and potentially including low-carbon objectives if externally supported. But Rwandan stakeholders saw incentives for low-carbon resilience as closely linked to their broader environmental sustainability agenda. Therefore, for the policy agenda to gain traction with a range of stakeholders, there is a need to align the chosen policy approach with strong national motivating factors.

### **Building coalitions of support**

The understanding of what LCRD means varies hugely both within and between countries. In Bangladesh, environment ministries and power-related ministries have formed coalitions around their different views of what the LCRD agenda means. In Ethiopia, views remain diverse and there is little evidence of coalitions forming

around particular perspectives within or between ministries. Rwanda also shows a diversity of views across stakeholder groups, although they broadly remain within the discourse of long-term environmental sustainability.

When a policy is supported by a coalition, there is a group of stakeholders with similar understandings and priorities seeking to move this policy approach forward, define it and start implementation. When coalitions are more diffuse around different ideas, there may be insufficient shared understanding to generate a unified approach, such as to co-benefits. The diversity of views identified around what the LCRD agenda means in each context suggests that consensus must be reached and coalitions formed before each LCRD agenda can be wholly defined. Some variety will probably remain, but to move key policy areas to implementation there must be greater consensus on what approach to take in each sector or context, particularly between actors who will be working together. This suggests that further debate across government is required to consolidate ideas and develop a national approach with wider national ownership.

### **Co-benefits**

Each country is taking a different approach to including climate change in their national planning. This will lead to different incentives and frameworks aimed at integrating the low-carbon and resilience agendas, and discovering the co-benefits between agendas.

The main planning approach in Bangladesh treats mitigation (low carbon) and adaptation (resilience) as separate issues within a policy, whereas Ethiopia's approach merges mitigation and adaptation to find synergies within a standalone climate change agenda, and Rwanda's approach mainstreams both mitigation and adaptation into national development planning (see Table 1). Co-benefits can be defined as finding areas of mutual benefit between the adaptation and mitigation agendas, or between either of these agendas and the national development planning priorities, or across both agendas and the national development planning priorities.

Each country has identified the co-benefits of its overarching vision in policy documents and strategies, but policies moving towards implementation contain little detail on how these co-benefits will be realised in practice. As policies have often been developed sequentially, identification of their co-benefits has proved difficult during those processes. Also,

	Ethiopia	Rwanda	Bangladesh
<b>Main approach</b>	Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) vision and respective strategies	National Strategy for Climate Change and Low-Carbon Development (NCCLCD)	Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP)
<b>Main cross-sectoral arrangements</b>	Technical committees responsible for preparing green economy and climate-resilient strategies; CRGE Inter-Ministerial Committee	Technical committee Sector Working Group FONERWA Management Committee and Technical Committee	National Environment Committee National steering committee on climate change Governing Council of the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund (BCCRF) Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) Trustee Board including members from a variety of sectors
<b>Financing mechanisms</b>	CRGE Facility: overseen by the ministerial and CRGE management committee. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development manages overall activity in close collaboration with Ministry of Environment and Forest.	National Fund for Environment and Climate Change (FONERWA) Governance includes FONERWA Management Committee, Technical Committee and Secretariat	Two funds: BCCTF governed by board of government stakeholders including Ministers and Secretaries BCCRF governing council including government and donor representation
<b>Political will</b>	Ministerial Committee being chaired by Prime Minister's office and involvement of key ministers	Prime Minister involvement in the strategy	Involvement of ministers of Governing Council of BCCRF and Trustee Board of BCCTF Involvement of Planning Commission More political support for adaptation
<b>Implementation arrangements</b>	Line ministries and regional governments (implementing entities) and non-state actors (executing entities) through access to CRGE facility funds CRGE units established in each implementing entity	Implementation through access to multiple funding windows of FONERWA. Line ministries and government agencies, civil society organisation, districts and private sector all eligible. Climate change and international obligations unit in the Rwanda Environment Management Authority; focal points in line ministries	Implementation through application to the funds, including line ministries, national NGOs and civil society organisations Three main implementing ministries receive the most funds: water board, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and national disaster management ministry Climate Change Unit sits within the Ministry of Environment and Forest, climate change focal points in ministries

implementation has been sectoral and co-benefits may not fit within one sector or within sectoral priorities. Policymakers need to be explicit about the type of co-benefits they are seeking in their LCRD agenda and how these will be operationalised. Clarifying this will affect the timing of policy development across sectors, the nature of the financing structures and the types of interventions prioritised.

### Information and knowledge flows

Government policymakers and other stakeholders need new information to plan for climate change, indicating that this policy area is still emerging. Which information is used and how is partly a political choice, shaped by each country's understanding of what the LCRD agenda is in practice and how it should be implemented.

Areas requiring new information include technical data on climate change models, impacts and sectoral data. Technical information on climate models was the most widely required information in Ethiopia, whereas in Bangladesh technical climate science and sectoral technical data were most in demand, rather than policy approaches and international experience.

Our analysis of policy and institutional mechanisms showed a lack of clarity on how and where to find co-benefits — revealing a need for additional knowledge on policy approaches. The survey results also showed that information tended to be from pre-existing easily available sources, such as published reports, internet-based sources, colleagues and, in the case of Ethiopia, formal committees. Policy and planning decisions based on existing knowledge are more likely to draw on existing approaches and analysis rather than taking a new approach to particular co-benefits. Further support is needed to develop new policy networks and access to high-quality information on innovative policy approaches to cross-cutting climate change issues, such as meeting both low-carbon and resilience objectives.

## Conclusions

The low-carbon resilient development agenda is still emerging but this research clearly shows that greater attention must be paid to developing wider stakeholder engagement with the LCRD agenda. Actors need to develop a common understanding of key points to allow progress towards implementation, and this must be supported by high-quality, easily available information. This may require investing in social networks to connect the different policy areas and improving access to information on innovative policy and planning processes.

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**Bringing together the low-carbon and resilience agendas**  
by S Fisher, D Fikreyesus, N Islam, M Kalore, N Kaur, Md Shamsuddoha, E Nash, N Rai, L Tesfaye and J Rwirahira.  
<http://pubs.iied.org/10099IIED>



## 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.

Echnoserve Consulting is a consultancy working in Ethiopia in the fields of environment, energy, agriculture and sustainable development.

The Institute for Policy Analysis and Research is a non-profit, independent think-tank in Rwanda guided by a fundamental concern for the well-being of all Rwandans.

The Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies is an independent, non-profit, non-government, policy, research and implementation institute working on sustainable development.

The Center for Participatory Research and Development is an independent, non-profit, and progressive policy, research and implementation institute.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The survey was conducted in Ethiopia and Bangladesh. It was not conducted in Rwanda due to time constraints.