

Policy pointers

Policymakers should recognise that ideas and knowledge can shape policy responses and implementation.

Policymakers need to be supported to establish a common understanding of what it means to implement a climate-resilient green economy within national planning contexts.

New, reliable and iterative information is needed to support merging climate resilience and green economy policy agendas within national development planning contexts.

Knowledge networks that enable the flow of information around new policy areas should be embedded in development planning structures with long-term support.

Ideas and knowledge: supporting Ethiopia to develop a climate-resilient green economy

Ethiopia has developed an innovative Climate Resilient Green Economy Vision and is moving towards implementation through a variety of policy and financial instruments. This is therefore an important time to take stock of lessons learnt. As well as being a technical agenda, this is also an area of policy shaped by the information available, the ideas and narratives underlying solutions and the understanding of key policymakers. Policymakers in Ethiopia need to recognise this and work to build consensus around key approaches to implementation, while also supporting access to high-quality information and informal policy networks around the issues.

Ethiopia is one of the first countries to formally merge policy agendas around climate resilience and the green economy at a national planning level by adopting a Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Vision and Strategy in 2011.¹ In this policy approach, climate resilience investments aim to keep Ethiopia's development achievements on track, while green economy investments aim to unlock opportunities around economic growth. The Growth and Transformation Plan, the national development plan of Ethiopia, considers designing and implementing green economy strategies as key to securing the country's economic interests, specifically in the context of energy security. It also emphasises the need to implement climate resilience strategies so as to address development losses caused by climate change.²

Additional drivers shaping public policy responses to CRGE include access to climate finance, technology and capacity-building initiatives. Taking on a 'leadership' role at the global and regional level is cited as another reason to adopt a CRGE pathway.³

Policymakers are now focusing on implementing the twin policy agendas of climate resilience and green economy by designing policy frameworks and institutional and financial arrangements to support these aims.⁴ This briefing outlines how establishing stakeholder support and consensus around a policy approach can support better articulation and implementation of CRGE policy responses. It is based on 25 interviews carried out with key actors in Ethiopia over 2013–2014; action research workshops with policymakers; detailed analysis of policy frameworks; and an online survey of key respondents in the policy process.

Policy approaches and narratives change over time

Policy responses are framed by the ideas, knowledge and values that underpin them — known as policy discourses. These discourses are narratives that “underwrite and stabilise the assumptions for policymaking”.⁵ When a group of policy actors come together around and support a particular discourse, this is the formation of a

discourse coalition: actors within a coalition have a similar understanding of the policy problem and seek to prioritise it.

In Ethiopia, the discourses and associated policy responses aimed at dealing with climate change are evolving as policymaking moves from international to national policy spaces and from environmental to development-focused policymakers. This evolution is reflected in the three phases of discourse formation in Ethiopia (Table 1).

In phase one, a limited number of international- and national-level policy actors frame adaptation and mitigation as separate policy agendas. This narrative is reflected in project-based policy

responses taking the form of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA).

In phase two, the overarching narrative is one where adaptation and mitigation are understood as a merged policy agenda. This is referred to as a climate-resilient green economy (CRGE) policy response and is reflected in development planning systems, which are often ad hoc in nature. Discourses and policy responses in this phase are shaped by a larger number of national-level policy actors.

In phase three (the phase that Ethiopia is entering), the overarching narrative is one where CRGE initiatives are understood as an integral part of

Table 1. Evolution of discourses and policy responses for a climate-resilient green economy

Discourses and policy responses				Actors	Policy space used	Point in the policy cycle	
Overarching narrative	Storyline	Discourse coalition	Policy response <small>(reflected in policy, institutional and financial frameworks)</small>				
Phase 1	Adaptation and mitigation are treated as separate narratives	NAPA and NAMA	Environment and climate scientists at UNFCCC and national level	Projectised policy responses (NAPA and NAMA)	International: UNFCCC negotiators	International: UNFCCC, IPCC	Conceptualisation
	Climate change treated as a stand alone issue						
Phase 2	Adaptation and mitigation agendas are merged (co-benefits are sought between adaptation and mitigation)	CRGE	Plural coalitions around plural discourses Coalitions are flexible — not committed to one particular discourse as understanding of climate change issues is still evolving	Discourses reflected in all areas of development planning systems, eg CRGE Strategy, New CRGE institutional arrangements such as CRGE Committees and Units, and CRGE Facility. Planning systems still ad hoc and mostly draw their mandate from political will rather than legislation CRGE policy responses conceptualised and implemented in parallel/alignment with regular development planning	International and national actors At national level actors shaping discourses expand to include parliamentarians, prime ministers office and line ministries	International and national stand alone climate change policy spaces, eg bilateral dialogues with development partners and climate change forums	Conceptualisation and moving towards implementation
	Climate change still treated as a stand alone issue						
Phase 3	Climate change responses expected to be integrated into development planning responses (co-benefits are sought between CRGE and development) Climate change an integral part of development planning	Climate responsive national development plan	Single coalition is expected to emerge	Discourses reflected in regular development planning systems, eg national development plans and regular development budgeting and planning systems. Planning systems will draw their mandate from legislation CRGE responses are an integral part of development projects, eg Ministry of Agriculture will identify projects that will achieve 20% agricultural growth in a zero carbon and climate resilient way. This will be implemented through regular development channels.	Domestic actors play a key role Actors shaping discourses expand to include a central role for National Planning Commission and mainstream departments of central and line ministries	Regular development planning cycle	All phases

Storyline	Meaning	Policy actors	Policy response
Separate	Adaptation and mitigation are separate issues, with no linkages	Some government ministries	NAMA and NAPA
Sequential	Climate resilience and green economy are viewed as separate policy agendas. Sequential implementation of one agenda is necessary to unlock the potential of the other agenda.	Few development partners and international organisations	Development of a Green Economy Strategy followed by the sequential development of sector-specific Climate Resilient Strategies
Complementary	Climate resilience and green economy are viewed as separate policy agendas but are implemented side by side to safeguard (complement) the benefits of each other.	Some government ministries, research institutions and development partners	CRGE Vision
Co-benefits	Climate resilience and green economy are viewed as a single policy agenda. CRGE initiatives are expected to deliver adaptation and mitigation benefits.	Some government ministries and agencies and international organisations	Sector reduction action plans (SRAPs)

development responses. Discourses and policy responses in this phase are likely to be articulated and implemented by national-level policy actors within regular development planning systems.

Priorities for planning a CRGE agenda will shift as a country moves to a different phase. But at each stage it is important to have a shared understanding of the policy goal and approach so as to make good decisions as new situations arise. These guiding narratives will shape how the agenda moves into implementation.

Supporting consensus and shared understanding

Our research suggests that Ethiopia is currently in phase two, where policy responses aim to merge climate resilience and the green economy agenda, while also moving into phase three of climate change planning, where policy responses aim to embed a CRGE agenda within the development agenda. In the context of phase two planning, interviewees⁶ identified that policy actors support multiple storylines around implementing a merged CRGE agenda (Table 2). Some actors understand climate resilience and the green economy as separate policy agendas that need to be implemented in parallel and/or sequentially to achieve optimal outcomes. Other actors view them as a single policy agenda that simultaneously delivers adaptation and mitigation benefits.

Policy guidance mirrors these multiple narratives, with policymakers taking both a sequential approach to the development of green economy and climate resilience strategies and a co-benefits approach, as outlined in the approach to Sectoral Reduction Action Plans (SRAPs).⁷

As stakeholders support multiple storylines around implementing a merged CRGE agenda, there is no strong support for a particular mode of implementation and the momentum for implementation can be diffuse. Policymakers should prioritise building shared understanding and consensus on key ideas in order to support clear articulation of the CRGE agenda and help it move to focused implementation.

Using information and knowledge to support planning

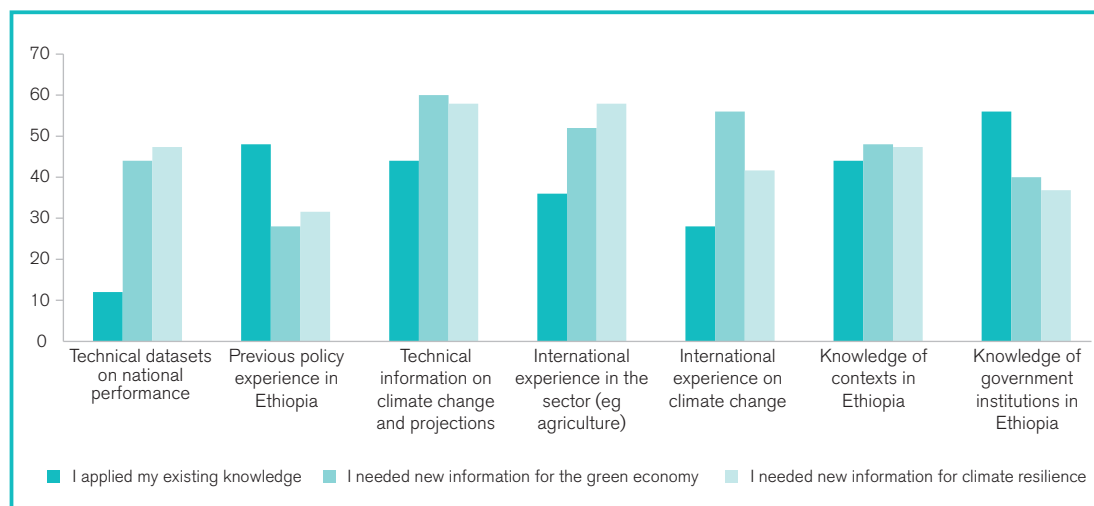
Given that climate change is a new policy agenda, the availability and flow of information is key to developing a common understanding among stakeholders that will guide the articulation and implementation of climate change policy responses. This section of the briefing draws on the online survey.

In Ethiopia, policymakers relied on existing information to prepare policy responses related to climate resilience and the green economy, but substantial new technical information was also needed. Figure 1 (overleaf) shows the areas where respondents needed more information for policy development, and demonstrates that similar sources were needed for both green economy and climate resilience processes. International experience on climate change was a key area for new information, as well as technical information on climate change projections.

Compared with green economy strategy, climate resilience planning has needed more regular commissioned research, information from formal committees and use of published research. Both planning processes relied on formal committees and informal exchanges with colleagues,

Table 2. Storylines framing the implementation of climate-resilient green economy responses

Figure 1. Information needed for CRGE policy planning in Ethiopia



highlighting the importance of existing social networks in information transfer.

It is important that policymakers not only have the information that they need, but also can access background knowledge on other areas if necessary. We therefore asked respondents to identify their regular sources for background information on the strategy development process of the Green Economy Strategy and the Climate Resilient Sectoral Strategies. We found several key organisations emerging as information hubs for CRGE planning, including key federal ministries, such as Environment and Forests, Agriculture and Water Irrigation, and Energy, as well as technical consultants. Technical consultants also provided a connection function supporting the flow of information between different actors who did not necessarily directly communicate.

This coordination and knowledge management role is increasingly recognised as important and is often in the mandate of a coordinating ministry. These informal knowledge networks should be embedded into development planning systems to support more sustainable flows of information for long-term planning, and also to ensure that

high-quality information on new and emerging policy areas is easily accessible to all who need it.

Conclusions

Ethiopia is at a crucial stage of CRGE planning and has taken many innovative approaches to this agenda. To ensure continued success into implementation, policymakers should be more aware of the overall approach they are planning within, and seek to build consensus and shared understanding of how key elements will be brought into implementation. This is a new agenda requiring new information, which should be more readily available to support better planning. Finally, to ensure the agenda's longevity, policymakers must share information using networks that are supported and embedded in national development planning.

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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.



Notes

¹ Fisher, S et al. (2014) Bringing together the low-carbon and climate resilience agendas: Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Rwanda. IIED, London <http://pubs.iied.org/10099IIED> / ² Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2010) Growth and Transformation Plan Vol.1 119–120. / ³ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2011) Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy. / ⁴ Fikreyesus, D et al. (2014) Public Policy Response to Climate Resilient Green Economy in Ethiopia. IIED, London. <http://pubs.iied.org/10066IIED> / ⁵ Roe, E (1994) Narrative Policy Analysis: Theory and practice. Duke University Press, Durham and London / ⁶ A range of actors have been interviewed from government ministries, civil society, private sector, multilateral and bilateral agencies and development partners / ⁷ The Sector Reduction Mechanism guides the development of SRAPs. Guidance is aimed at supporting implementing entities in preparing investment plans that deliver the twin objective of reducing emissions and vulnerability to climate change. Latest guidance encourages the development of mainstreamed CRGE investment plans, thereby encouraging the achievement of triple wins – development, emission and vulnerability reduction. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. 2014. Climate Resilient Green Economy Facility Operation Manual (final draft).