

A Government Group Network for Climate Change Mainstreaming Into Development Planning

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1. Background

Climate change is a global problem – but adapting to the impacts of climate change needs to happen at the local level. Recognising this, government officials from Asia and Africa have formed a group to share and exchange knowledge on how to include climate change in development planning. The *Government Group Network for Climate Change Mainstreaming* is a community of practice of government staff working on climate change planning and budgeting at both national and local levels. The group intends to create a knowledge-sharing platform around mainstreaming climate change into planning. This platform will be used to engage with the international community and their national counterparts, as well as to facilitate networking among group members who face common challenges when aiming to achieve sustainable development.

The group has evolved into a formal network of planners engaged in designing and implementing public policy responses to climate change with specific goals. The group started its journey in November 2011 with the mission to mainstream climate change into countries' national, local and sectoral development plans, projects and programmes. When the initiative started eight countries were involved and to date representatives from up to 14 countries have participated in the group's activities: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Laos, Myanmar, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda and Zanzibar. The growth of the group indicates the increased awareness of governments that climate change is a critical issue and that interaction across countries is a positive thing.

The group participated in the last three annual International Conferences on Community-based Adaptation (CBA). This has been an excellent way of keeping up to date with the latest research and practice on climate change adaptation. In November 2011 the International Center for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) (based in Dhaka) and the

International Institute on Environment and Development (IIED) organized a short training course on 'Planning, Implementing and Mainstreaming Adaptation in Government Programs for Government Officials from Developing Countries'. Since climate change is a new theme for most government officials, there is a need for training on how to plan, implement and ultimately mainstream climate change into national and sectoral development plans and programs. The aim of the short training course was for participants to leave the course with greater knowledge, networks and continued support from experts to feel sufficiently knowledgeable, confident and empowered to return to their workplaces and initiate activities. During that short course participants agreed to work together on a joint paper on the topic "Mainstreaming climate change into development policies and plans".

Subsequently, the authors involved attended the Sixth International Conference on CBA (CBA6) in Hanoi, Vietnam in April 2012, and took part in a four-day writeshop to draft the agreed upon joint paper following the end of the conference. During CBA6, a group of these authors formed the group. The following year in April 2013 the group participated in CBA7 and presented a framework paper on mainstreaming climate change into planning. The timing and relevancy was particularly significant since CBA7's theme was "Mainstreaming Community Based Adaptation in National and Local Planning".

The group developed a strategy document to outline its vision and action points to be achieved for 2013-14. The planned activities focused on networking, learning and the development of knowledge products—all of which have been achieved. In March 2014 the group attended a writeshop in Ethiopia and prepared five policy briefs on the topic of climate finance. These policy briefs were presented in CBA8 "Financing Local Adaptation" in Nepal in 2014 and by July 2014 the group had produced 11 knowledge products targeting various audiences. All the publications produced thus far by the group can be found at <http://pubs.iied.org/> (keyword: group).

BOX 1. OUTPUTS TO DATE:

- Number of knowledge products produced by the group: **11**
- Number of meetings: **6** (2 Strategy meetings, CBA7 & CBA8; 2 write-shops; 2 Training courses)
- Presentations: **3** (18th Conference of the Parties, CBA7, CBA8)

2. Objectives

The objectives of the group are as follows:

1. Creating a platform for sharing knowledge and experience
2. Promoting networking among group members who face common development challenges for sustainable development
3. Communicating and disseminating knowledge

3. Vision

Mission Statement: Climate change is mainstreamed into National and Sub-national development plans, projects and programmes for Sustainable Development.

4. Strategy

4.1. Thematic Areas

The group will follow key thematic areas in planning within the context of facing complexity and uncertainty posed by climate change. Within that context the group has identified thematic areas where we will be focusing in future to tackle the additional burden generated from climate change.

Mainstreaming Climate Change: Mainstreaming climate change into development planning that can be fed into the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process.

Financing Climate Change: Developing climate financing mechanisms that can be fed into finance negotiations, including the design of the Green Climate Funds (GCF) and Adaptation Funds (AF)

Ensuring Effectiveness: Exploring and tracking progress of effectiveness of climate sensitive actions across the countries.

Increasing Sensitization: Endeavouring to work with other government officials in their respective countries to help reposition climate change within the political agenda so that it becomes a higher priority.

Climate Change & Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's): This will be a new thematic area that the group might explore over the next two years.

4.2. Structure and Engagement modality

The structure and engagement modality will focus on sharing experiences and learning cutting edge approaches to climate change planning from each other. In addition, members will produce and disseminate knowledge products that will provide a government perspective to climate change planning. Below is a sequence of activities that the group will embark on with technical support from IIED. The key activities are tentative and will be conducted based on available resource allocation for achieving the vision and mission. The proposed activities will enable the group to prioritise tasks effectively.

Core Group:

The core group is composed of those government representatives that continue to be consistently and pro-actively involved since 2011 (currently standing at 6). Thus far the government representatives who

have taken part of the group's activities have been from Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia, Kenya, Gambia and Zanzibar and it has included three women and five men and we foresee that the group could expand to up to 8-10 countries. The core group's key functions will include the following:

Annual meetings: The group will meet annually to share general experiences on how climate change issues are being addressed in the individual countries involved, however, with a particular emphasis on identifying innovative approaches. The meeting will be held alongside an annual international event such as the CBA conferences and the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) among others. The meeting will also provide a recurring and regular opportunity to identify and firm up the next steps to move forward.

Showcasing practices: The group will showcase the good practices taking place at the global, national and local levels—in particular focusing on climate finance—through a variety of mediums and tools.

Virtual Communication: To ensure communication on a more frequent basis than the annual meeting virtual communication will be used to share knowledge. The group will share experiences through social media, such as Twitter, blogs and other articles engaging and interacting with interested parties, gaining their views and answering related questions. This will also provide the group with a platform to address one-off important events that might occur at other times of the year.

Research and Study: The group will regularly carry out focused research work to increase the stock of knowledge and evidence on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, which will contribute to the effort of mainstreaming climate change issues in Asia and Africa. This research will be disseminated through the production and publication of papers, reports or policy briefs. The knowledge and evidence generated will help identify new applications of methods and tools learnt so far. The specific topics the group will focus on are yet to be determined.

BOX 2. PARTICIPATION OF UNFCCC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY IN GROUP STRATEGY MEETING

Ms. Christiana Figueres, the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, joined the group's 2014-2015 strategy meeting that took place in Kathmandu during CBA8. She gave valuable insight on how to maintain the group's momentum and enthusiasm regarding our future priorities. Ms. Figueres noted and respected the female leadership within the group and the involvement of countries with varying levels of development and industrialization. She also highlighted the importance of the fact that the group has a cross-sectoral approach by having members from a diverse range of ministries and departments, such as planning, finance, water, agriculture, environment, forests and disaster management.

Ms. Figueres emphasized that the group should established a link with the global negotiations to create synergies among global, national and local challenges faced by the countries due to environment degradation and climate change. This was an important recommendation as previously the group was focused only on the national context and planning process. In fact, after the meeting we discussed and pledged to engage within the global arena where negotiations are taking place. Moreover, we are keen to continue and further expand the network with the industrialized nations. It is our position that all countries have much to learn from each other

Wider Group:

The wider group has been composed of other countries that have been peripherally involved and, along with other interested parties, have joined the group at international key events. The hope is that these instances will serve as opportunities exchange, both learning from these additional participants and feeding these lessons into the work being carried out by the core group, as well as serving to disseminate group findings.

National Group:

Each country representative will form a national group consisting of 5-10 fellow government officials from various government Ministries and Agencies. The main aim will be to establish a strong link of exchange and communication with the national UNFCCC process and sensitize those involved in the negotiation process. The national group will meet on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

Advisory Group:

Composed of experienced and international players, the advisory group will support and mentor the group in establishing links with a wider network of stakeholders. Currently representative from IIED, ICCCAD and Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) have taken part and others are welcomed to join.

4.3.Key Activities:

- ✓ **Action learning events:** The group will facilitate at least one action-learning event every year. These will be capacity-building opportunities and will enable colleagues to share and document experience on relevant policy questions and well as develop content to produce knowledge products.
- ✓ **Production of targeted knowledge products:** The group will produce knowledge products to disseminate shared learning. These will target national and international policy makers and the dissemination method will include policy briefs, blogs, and presentations during formal and inform dialogues, amongst others depending on the target audience and focus of each product.
- ✓ **Networking at the country-level with negotiators:** The national groups will network and establish a link with their country representatives involved in the UNFCCC process to raise awareness and sensitize those concerned. The groups will also work with other government officials to raise climate change's profile in the national political agenda, so that it becomes more of a priority.
- ✓ **Engagement with the UNFCCC negotiation process:** The core and national groups in coordination with the Advisory group will develop material to engage directly with the UNFCCC negotiation process. One such way will be through the dissemination of knowledge products during side events and GCF, AF and Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) meetings.
- ✓ **Dissemination at CBA conference events:** The CBA conferences will serve as a key platform from which the group will present their findings, disseminate their outputs and continue to build a community of practice through networking. Side events, such as open meetings, during CBA conferences will allow for more in depth engagement and feedback involving a diverse variety of practitioners and experts.

4.4.Proposed Mechanisms for Technical Support

Depending on members' availability and available funds the group will aim to participate in the following capacity-building opportunities:

- **ICCAD's Training Programme**—participation in short courses relevant to the group's mission.
- **Country visits**—country-exchange visits where climate sensitive approaches or initiatives are taking place.
- **Peer-to-peer training**—learning from peers in a variety of contexts such as workshops or international conferences.
- **Online learning course**—participation in courses relevant to the group's mission.
- **Post-graduate studies on climate change**—the group will encourage and support any group member's initiative to pursue advanced studies (such as PhD or Master) on issues related to the group's mission, by providing any needed information and technical assistance for enrolment.

5. Action Plan for 2014-2015

Action	Timeframe		Remarks
	2014	2015	
Annual Group Meeting	Before UNFCCC/COP 20 (Dec 2014)	Before UNFCCC/COP 21 (Dec 2015)	Seeking financial support
Side events relevant to COP	UNFCCC COP	UNFCCC COP	Seeking financial support
Publish country experience	Before CBA9 (April 2015)		Seeking financial support
Share experience in CBA9 in Kenya		April 2015	Seeking financial support
Social media engagement	Monthly basis	Monthly basis	
Research	Throughout	Throughout	Seeking technical and financial support
Publish research paper/report		Prior to August 2015 (in the lead up to UNFCCC/COP)	Seeking financial support
Country visits		2015 Q1-Q2	Seeking financial support
Online learning course	Throughout	Throughout	Seeking financial support
Seek advanced studies in climate change	Throughout	Throughout	Seeking technical and financial support

