

## Finding the right angle: Introducing climate compatible development to local political agendas

### Key findings

1. **Put climate change risks on the development agenda of all political parties.** Cross-party consensus ensures that the commitment of local government administrations to climate compatible development will endure, despite political changes.
2. **Identify and leverage the links between climate change and development.** The reality is that climate change impacts development and in fact, promoting climate compatibility is often indispensable to driving and consolidating development.
3. **Highlight the contribution of climate mitigation and adaptation action toward sectoral goals, to 'sell' climate measures better.** To find more allies, it is helpful to emphasise how tackling climate change can help achieve sectoral goals. This 'packaging' exercise can improve the chances of climate compatible development's taking root.
4. **Recruit climate 'champions' as messengers for climate compatible development, locally and nationally.** Climate champions can share local perspectives, needs and experience with other cities as well as with higher levels of government, which helps showcase and scale up successful local initiatives.
5. **Design climate initiatives to benefit disadvantaged social groups.** Climate compatible development initiatives – if designed with gender and local, social challenges in mind and implemented strategically – can help improve the rights and position of women and marginalised groups in society.

The CDKN-ICLEI Subnational Learning Programme on Climate Compatible Development explored how to frame local climate issues better – so that policies are more likely to be adopted and implemented. Learning partners from organisations in South and Southeast Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean synthesised their experience into these top five points.

For climate compatible development to succeed locally in any sustained way, climate change must be an established part of the political agenda – and to last beyond electoral terms or changes in political administrations. This is possible with **commitment across political parties**. In Uruguay, all political parties represented in the national congress have signed an agreement backing the national policy of promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency. This joint commitment provides local governments with a reliable legal and financial framework to act in their jurisdictions. Today, most of Uruguay's energy comes from renewable sources – a positive outcome of this concerted approach. In Madurai, India, the DHAN Foundation has been working for decades to raise awareness among and mobilise the city's residents to tackle climate risks. This has created a bottom-up demand across the city to put climate action on the local political agenda.



A 'Nathivalam' (water walk) in Madurai, India

Making climate risk management an integral part of local policy and action is a challenge: other needs and priorities may prevail, personnel changes and lack of support are common. **Finding different, innovative entry points – at first, not immediately climate-related** – to promote climate compatible development promises more enduring success and lays the foundation for better policies. These entry points may lie in specific economic sectors or in subnational policy processes beyond the city scale (e.g. a metropolitan region or river basin authority). The most desirable entry points can become clear by:

- **Identifying community-specific vulnerabilities.** In Belize, coastal tourism was threatened by rising sea levels, making it necessary to define the tourism sector's priorities and leading to an Integrated Coastal Zone management plan with strong climate adaptation components. In both West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, which is reliant on tourism, and in Sialkot, Pakistan, a centre for manufacturing, unreliable energy supplies were the driver for climate compatible development. Stakeholders identified renewable energy development as a way of strengthening energy security.
- **Understanding the development needs of locals, including government staff, citizens, businesses and organisations.** In Bolivia, upland communities were seeking economic alternatives, which provided the underpinning for a large forest conservation initiative. Natura Bolivia's Watershed scheme enables downstream water users to provide alternative means of income such as beekeeping and fruit growing supplies to upstream land managers, in exchange for environmental conservation activities.
- **Analysing local perceptions of solutions.** In Nepal, understanding the experience and preferences of farming households led LI-BIRD to develop tailored, climate compatible crop choices for each community. For instance, they work with local communities on cultivating cardamom on marginal, sloping land. Cardamom is a much sought-after commodity, and the use of marginal land for cultivation stabilises the land and improves carbon sequestration.

A publicly available **medium- to long-term roadmap** setting out the steps for getting climate compatible development onto the local policy agenda makes it easier for different economic actors to envisage, situate and commit themselves to the process. In Madurai, India, the DHAN Foundation helped create an Action Plan for Blue-Green Infrastructure with a timeframe to 2031 – the same timeframe as the city's master plan. In Bogor, Indonesia, the Urban Low Emission Development Strategies (LEDS) project worked hard alongside the municipal government to mainstream low emission development into the city's medium-term development plan. This has allowed the municipal government to allocate funds a rapid transit bus system and the switchover of buses from diesel to gas fuel.

**Climate champions can help advertise the benefits of climate action**, engage key stakeholders and showcase progress. They are highly effective when they are identified with the target audience themselves – using the 'right'

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**Further reading:** The case studies on Bogor and West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia; Belize; Bolivia; Madurai, India; Nepal and Pakistan, which contributed to this 'CDKN Essential' may all be found on [http://cdkn.org/cdkn\\_series/inside-story/](http://cdkn.org/cdkn_series/inside-story/)

#### Nationally Determined Contributions: An impetus for local climate action?

Local climate leaders draw on national climate policies, financial incentives and resources the impetus for local action. For instance, Indonesia's national regulations on feed-in tariffs framed an assessment of the economic potential for locally-produced renewable energy in West Nusa Tenggara. In Madurai, the DHAN Foundation leveraged existing state and national government programmes to legitimise climate compatible plans. State government officials endorsed and helped set up the Vaigai Restoration Trust, which works to revive the city of Madurai's river and boosts climate resilience. The question is: now that more than 180 national governments have submitted national commitments or 'Nationally Determined Contributions' to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, Paris, December 2015) and the Paris Agreement has entered into force, how will local climate leaders use these 'NDCs' to mobilise support and generate results on the ground?

language helps. Renowned individuals from the business world, for example, are often best equipped to convince their peers in the private sector. They can help align local government visions to the needs and interests of the target audience. In Sialkot, Pakistan, learning partners Ecofys and PITCO partnered with the local Chamber of Commerce, which was persuasive in showing local companies the potential benefits of installing photovoltaic panels. However, it is best not rely too heavily on such advocates alone: policy changes and institutional capacity building are still indispensable to sustain projects and implement policies.

Climate action can also **foster changes in gender relations and improve the lives of women and socially-excluded groups**. In so doing, greater social equality sustains positive climate outcomes. In Nepal, LI-BIRD identified rice and duck farming as a potential climate smart agricultural intervention for farmers from an indigenous tribe. This farming technique increased the Tharu people's rice production, reduced the need for manure, provided popular duck meat and, above all, meant less weeding for the local women. Women now have more time for social interactions and enjoy an improved quality of life. Projects and programmes that strive to change men's and women's roles and responsibilities through climate compatible development may prove – in the long-run – to have a substantial, holistic and long-lasting impact.