Struggling to mainstream climate issues?

Lessons learnt from CDKN's knowledge brokering experience

Climate & Development Knowledge Network

Challenge 4

Subnational actors lack guidance and support to implement climate change frameworks set at the national level

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This document was written by Lucia Scodanibbio, CDKN Learning and Knowledge Brokering Lead. The experiences summarised in this series refer to the collective work of a much larger team of CDKN colleagues and partners, who generously shared their knowledge brokering lessons and approaches to mainstreaming climate change issues through interviews and joint learning sessions. Thanks to the following colleagues for their contributions and insights: Arsema Andargatchew and Robi Redda (Ethiopia); Chris Gordon, Prince Ansah and Amanda April (Ghana); Edna Odhiambo (Kenya); Margaret Angula and Cecil Togarepi (Namibia); Revocatus Twinomuhangi (Uganda); Claudia Martinez and Patricia Velasquez (Colombia); Gabriela Villamarín (Ecuador and Latin America); María José Pacha (Latin America); Sandra Isola and Jessica Huertas (Peru); Nivedita Mani (India); Kamal Devkota, Kaustuv Neupane and Geeta Sandal (Nepal); Bedoshruti Sadhukhan (South Asia); Lisa McNamara (Global).

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Quinoa farmer in Peru. *SPDA*

Introduction

Background

Since 2010, the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) has supported decision-makers in designing and delivering climate-resilient development in focal countries in Africa, Latin America and South Asia through a combination of knowledge, research and advisory support. Our approach has been to facilitate locally owned and led processes, working in partnership with governmental and non-governmental actors at multiple scales.

Through this work we have become aware of the important, often invisible, role that 'intermediaries' or 'brokers' play in linking knowledge producers with knowledge users, and in managing complex processes for effective decisions and actions on climate change. In 2018, we shifted our attention to focus on knowledge brokering to help accelerate and amplify climate action. We work closely with stakeholders to promote evidence-based decision-making by fostering learning, collaboration and leadership through capacity strengthening and integrating diverse types of knowledge.

Along the way, CDKN has sought to document our learning and that of our partners to better understand how knowledge and evidence of climate change can inform and translate into policy and action. This reflection process has investigated different tools and approaches for enhancing the use of knowledge in decision-making, the barriers encountered in facilitating change, and the lessons that may be useful for others who are navigating similar challenges.

The lessons showcased in this document initially emerged during a series of learning exchanges that brought together CDKN's partners in Asia and Africa to discuss the ways in which they had sought to mainstream climate issues in decision-making processes. They identified core challenges that they had come across during these processes and brainstormed different solutions and approaches to overcome them. A series of detailed interviews with CDKN's different focal country partners followed, to identify, document and share some of the strategies and approaches they had used.

As a result of this learning work, we identified seven **challenges** to mainstreaming climate issues across governance scales and sectors, including with national to local government decision-makers and community members on the ground. These seven challenges have been used to structure this series. Each challenge has a number of **pathways** and **case studies** that demonstrate the knowledge brokering approaches that were used, as well as **key takeaways** that exemplify the main lessons learned in each of the case studies. This series is not intended as a definitive guide about climate mainstreaming, but we hope that others may gain some tips about knowledge brokering approaches and tools that could help as they seek to integrate knowledge about climate issues into their own contexts.

SPECIFICALLY, IT IS HOPED THAT THE LESSONS PRESENTED HERE CAN:

- Influence researchers and decision-makers about the importance of knowledge brokering
- Enable learning exchanges with other knowledge brokers in the global South
- Encourage donors to think differently about the design of future programmes, to ensure sufficient time for impact and openness to being adaptive as new demands emerge

What is knowledge brokering and who are knowledge brokers?

Knowledge brokering is the process of moving knowledge into action. Knowledge brokers link producers of knowledge and users of knowledge to facilitate the generation, dissemination and eventual use of that knowledge.[1] The range of activities they are involved in can be understood along a spectrum that goes from working with information flows to seeking to bring about systemic change (see figure below). Whilst knowledge brokers have often focused on making knowledge more relevant and accessible (the left-hand side of the spectrum), the scale and urgency of the climate crisis today calls for knowledge brokering practice to move towards innovation brokering (on the right side of the spectrum).[2]

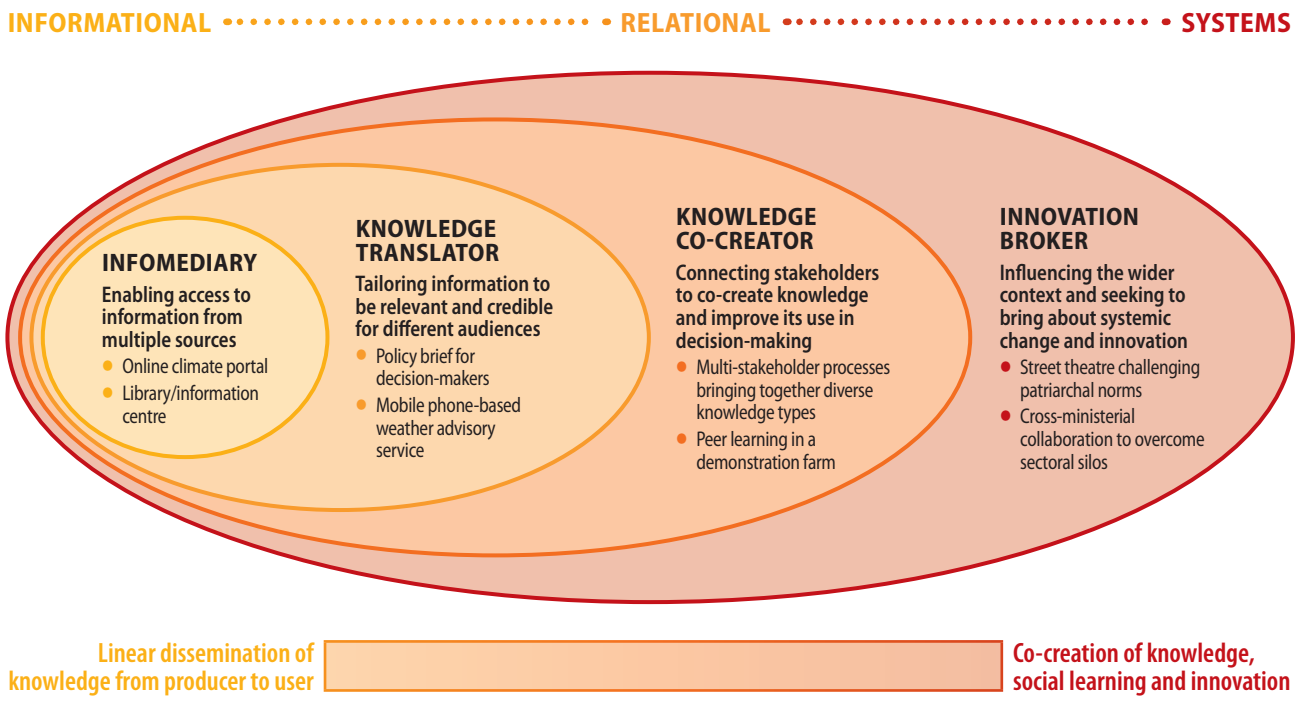


FIGURE 1 Spectrum of knowledge broker roles, adapted from Harvey et al. (2012)[3] and Shaxson et al. (2012).[4]

This series is structured as follows:

CHALLENGE 1 **Key stakeholders lack sufficient information about the significance and urgency of climate change.**	To respond, knowledge brokers need to build a critical mass of tailored and accessible knowledge, highlighting the extent of climate change impacts on different sectors or groups. Knowledge, however, is not sufficient by itself, and needs to be combined with a range of engagement strategies, including to collaboratively develop responses to the challenges being faced.
CHALLENGE 2 **Climate change is not sufficiently high on political agendas or part of institutional mandates.**	To respond, knowledge brokers need to invest time and effort in understanding the governance landscape. They also need to be creative at finding different ways of aligning their messages with government policies, visions and mandates.
CHALLENGE 3 **Climate change issues are mostly considered environmental ministries' responsibility and collaboration across sectors is rarely seen.**	To respond, knowledge brokers can assist by creating or building on existing platforms for different stakeholders to discuss climate issues and strengthen relationships.
CHALLENGE 4 **Subnational actors lack guidance and support to implement climate change frameworks set at the national level.**	To respond, knowledge brokers can provide support through existing vertical government and governance structures; they can mainstream climate issues into other related, better-decentralised sectors; or they can collaborate with strategic institutions to advance the climate mainstreaming process.
CHALLENGE 5 **Limited capacities and resource allocation prevent the integration and implementation of climate change policy.**	To respond, knowledge brokers need to think carefully about the medium of knowledge transfer beyond outputs. They can do this by co-organising training and engagement activities jointly with stakeholders and promoting learning and understanding about climate resilience from on-the-ground experience.
CHALLENGE 6 **Gatekeeping and bureaucracy can act as bottlenecks and delay progress on projects.**	To respond, knowledge brokers need to know their context well, using multiple tactics while maintaining flexibility. They also need to work both with government actors with continuity in the system and in partnership with other key actors to overcome challenges.
CHALLENGE 7 **Local communities lack sufficient support to integrate climate issues into their actions.**	To respond, knowledge brokers can assist by connecting local groups to different sources of knowledge and to intermediaries that can enhance access to specific resources.

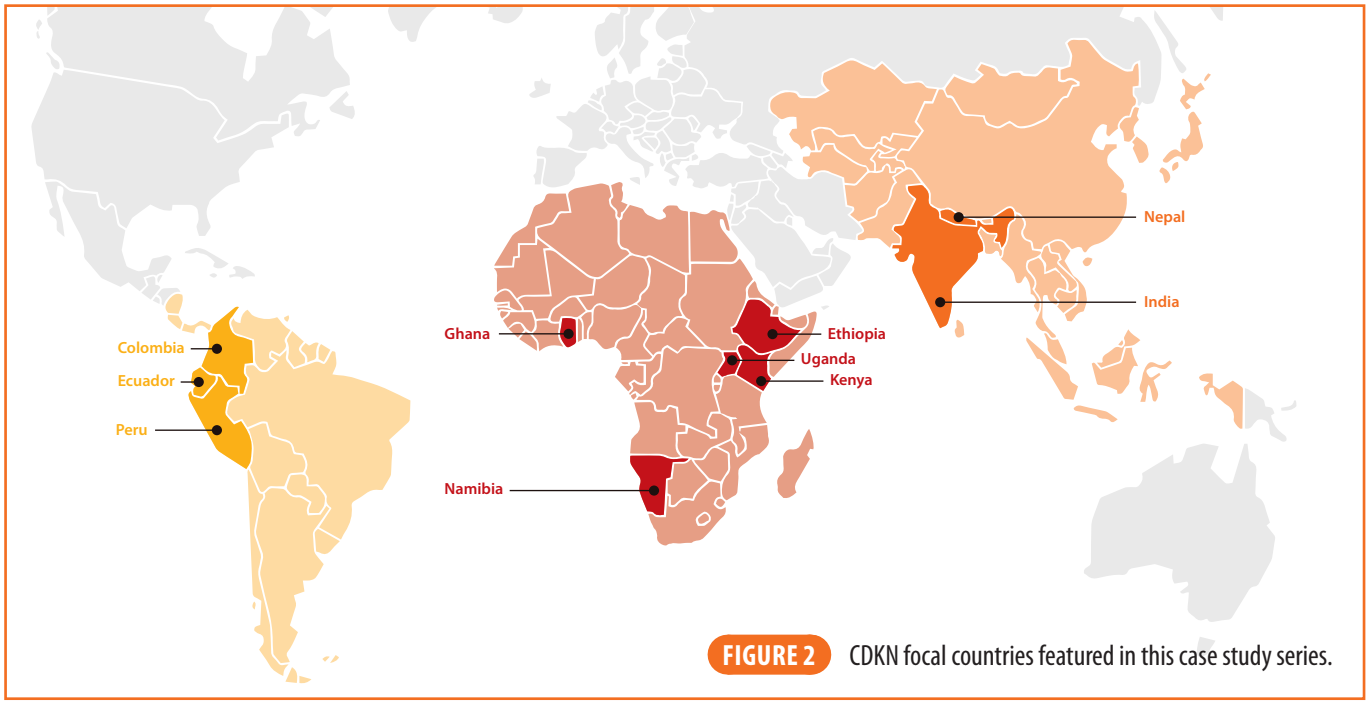


FIGURE 2 CDKN focal countries featured in this case study series.

Challenge 4

Subnational actors lack guidance and support to implement climate change frameworks set at the national level

CASE STUDIES

PATHWAY A

Provide support through existing vertical government and governance structures

COLOMBIA
Guiding **Colombian** local governments to include climate actions in their development plans

PERU
Supporting the implementation of subnational climate action in **Peru**

PATHWAY B

Mainstream climate issues into other related, better-decentralised sectors

INDIA
Learning from **India's** experience of mainstreaming climate issues through disaster management structures

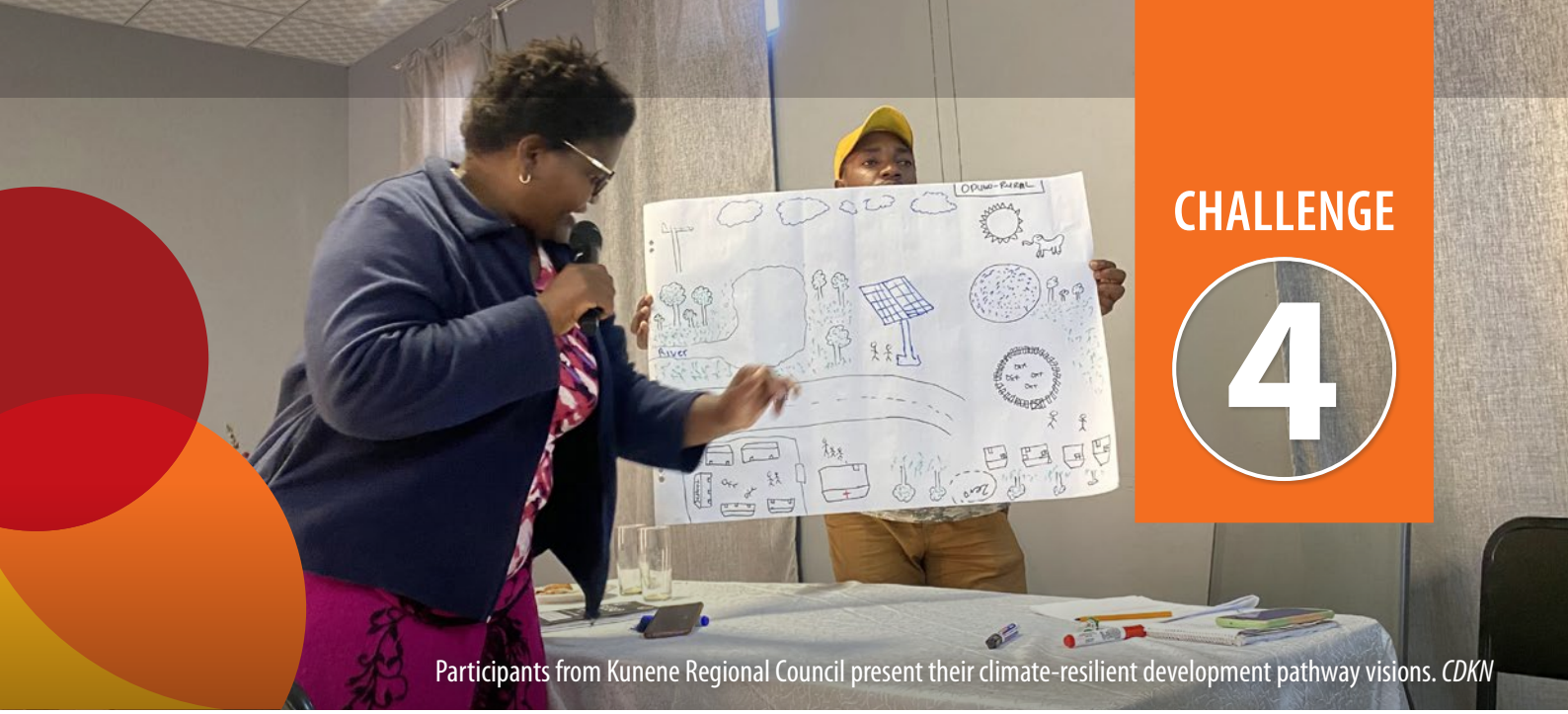
NAMIBIA
Using existing structures to mainstream climate issues subnationally in **Namibia**

PATHWAY C

Collaborate with strategic institutions that can advance the climate mainstreaming process

REGIONAL
Leveraging trusted relationships: Collaborating with **Latin American** non-state actors to enhance influence with governments

INDIA
Choosing one's partners wisely to further the peri-urban agenda in **India**

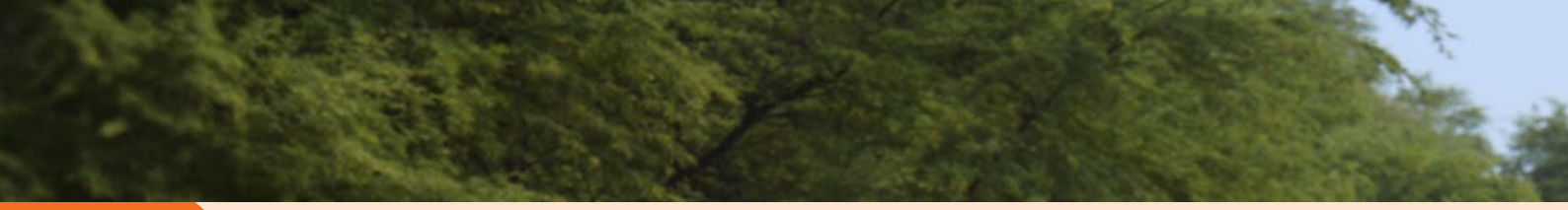


Participants from Kunene Regional Council present their climate-resilient development pathway visions. *CDKN*

CHALLENGE 4

Subnational actors lack guidance and support to implement climate change frameworks set at the national level

Legislative and policy frameworks on climate issues are generally developed by national authorities and focus on country-level needs and commitments. Lower governance scales, such as district or city level, where climate-related issues need to be implemented, often lack guidelines, directives or mechanisms to guide authorities in taking steps to address climate issues. Although urban institutions may understand the importance of addressing climate impacts – and may have even developed climate plans – they often face barriers to operationalising and implementing these, due to the absence of top-down directives, as well as constrained resources and capacities. Knowledge brokers can assist in developing guidelines to support subnational authorities implement climate actions, or in fostering collaborations with sectors that are already well decentralised and can help mainstream climate issues in their existing structures. Partnering with a range of actors to further climate-related issues at different levels can also be a successful strategy.



PATHWAY
A

Provide support through existing vertical government and governance structures

CASE STUDIES

COLOMBIA

Guiding **Colombian** local governments to include climate actions in their development plans

PERU

Supporting the coordination and implementation of subnational climate action in **Peru**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Developing user-friendly and dynamic guidance, tools and examples on how to include low carbon and climate-resilient management strategies in planning instruments can be a mechanism to support local governments to implement national climate change policy and legislation.
2. Aligning the Colombian guide for empowering subnational actors for climate action with the country's nationally determined contribution commitments was an important strategy for enhancing their implementation at the municipal and territorial levels.

1. Developing guidelines to help Peruvian regional governments to assess climate risks, and plan, implement and monitor their activities, supported ~~the implementation of~~ climate action at subnational government level.
2. Supporting the regional implementation of multilateral environmental agreements on biodiversity, desertification and climate change helped reduce fragmentation, clarify responsibilities and identify synergies among the conventions.

PATHWAY

A

Provide support through existing vertical government and governance structures

Existing government structures at subnational level need to mainstream climate issues in their development and planning actions. To achieve this, they need guidance and directives that can help them to understand the climate challenge, the national legislation tied to this issue, and what they can do to develop mitigation and adaptation measures at their level. Often, the success of local actions depends on how effective the government decentralisation process is, and whether it has been accompanied by adequate resource allocation and strengthening of capacities.

Man herding cattle in Peru. *SPDA*

COLOMBIA

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Developing user-friendly and dynamic guidance, tools and examples on how to include low-carbon and climate-resilient management strategies in planning instruments can be a mechanism to support local governments to implement national climate change policy and legislation.
2. Aligning the Colombian guide for empowering subnational actors for climate action with the country's nationally determined contribution commitments was an important strategy for enhancing their implementation at the municipal and territorial levels.

View more case studies on **Colombia** in Challenges 3 and 5

CASE STUDY

Guiding Colombian local governments to include climate actions in their development plans

In Colombia, more than 50% of greenhouse gas emissions are due to activities taking place at subnational level, including agriculture, deforestation and land use change (e.g. tied to livestock pastures). To meet its global obligations, the national government recognised the need to bring climatic concerns, commitments and actions down to the territorial and municipal levels, while also mainstreaming these within different sectors of the economy. One of the biggest challenges was how to sensitise the newly-elected local government leadership across the 1,113 Colombian municipalities every five years, to ensure that climate actions would be included in their development plans. Influencing these instruments was essential, as only what they contain gets implemented at territorial level. However, the absence of locally relevant guidance and information remained a clear gap.

In this context, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development teamed up with the Colombian CDKN team at E3 – Ecología, Economía y Ética – to co-develop a **guide for empowering subnational actors for climate action**. The aim was to provide user-friendly and dynamic guidance, tools and inspiring examples that would help mayors and local governors to include low-carbon and climate-resilient management strategies in their planning instruments.

The first part of the guide introduces the concept of climate change, risks and existing legislation in Colombia to address these. This is followed by a series of steps that can be undertaken to mainstream climate issues in regional development, including accessing climate finance and monitoring and evaluation. Finally, some resources are provided in terms of potential partners and further material that can be used to make progress on these issues. On its completion, the guide was launched personally by the Minister and Vice-Minister of Environment, in workshops across the country organised in partnership with the Autonomous Regional Corporations of Colombia.

In 2020, Colombia increased its climate ambition by committing to reduce emissions from 21% to 51%. This updated target included an outline of local governments' responsibilities – covering both mitigation and adaptation measures – to help achieve the country's nationally determined contribution (NDC) goals. In response, the guide was updated in 2021 to support decision-makers in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and in designing and implementing climate change mitigation and adaptation actions aligned with the new NDC targets. The updated guide presented the revised NDC goals to leaders of departments and municipalities, offering step-by-step guidance on how to incorporate the NDC into their development plans, along with examples of territories that successfully integrated the NDC into their Comprehensive Territorial Climate Change Management Plans.

The guide was launched with the Director of Climate Change and Risk Management and the subdirectory of the National School of Environmental Education (SAVIA) – part of the Ministry of Environment – in a virtual event held on the **YouTube channel of the Ministry**.

To contribute to the institutionalisation and long-term use of this resource, all materials and a digital interactive version of the **guide** are available on the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development's platform.

▲ Deforestation and land clearing for agriculture and livestock grazing are among the leading contributors to Colombia's greenhouse gas emissions. *SPDA*

PERU

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Developing guidelines to help Peruvian regional governments to assess climate risks, and plan, implement and monitor their activities, supported ~~the implementation of~~ climate action at subnational government level.
2. Supporting the regional implementation of multilateral environmental agreements on biodiversity, desertification and climate change helped reduce fragmentation, clarify responsibilities and identify synergies among the conventions.

View more **Peru** case studies in Challenges ① ② ③ and €

CASE STUDY

Supporting the coordination and implementation of subnational climate action in Peru

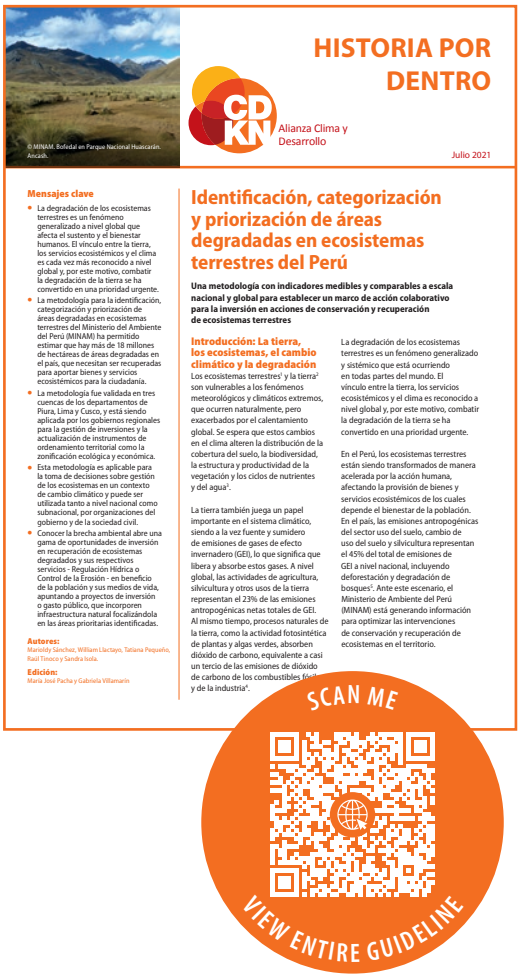
Peru has 24 regional governments at subnational level, which are responsible for all aspects tied to land management in their jurisdictions. To implement these actions, they present budget proposals with associated outcomes to the Ministry of Economy and an indication that they have the human capacity to implement the work. They are then held accountable for these outcomes and are supported by guidelines and on-demand support from the national government. Regional environmental authorities support the work on the ground.

According to the Framework Law on Climate Change, the National Climate Change Strategy and the NDC, regional governments are responsible for implementing mitigation and adaptation actions that contribute to Peru's international obligations. These are outlined in Regional Climate Change Strategies that need to be reflected in regional operational, strategic, development, budgetary and investment plans. To support regional governments in elaborating these plans and implementing integrated climate change management actions, the Ministry of Environment provides technical support and orientation after regional (human and monetary) resources are commited. In 2021, the Ministry further developed methodological guidelines to assist them to formulate or update their strategies through different phases, including:

i. analysing the territory (including climate risks and sources of greenhouse gas emissions)
ii. planning (setting objectives, and adaptation and mitigation measures)
iii. implementation (through elaboration of action plans)
iv. monitoring and evaluation.

The CDKN team supported the process by ensuring that the proposed guidelines were consulted and developed in a participatory manner at a subnational level.

Concurrently, the Ministry of Environment supported a series of dialogues between national entities responsible for various aspects of land degradation and the related multilateral environmental agreements (desertification, climate change and biodiversity) to highlight the links between these three conventions and to improve the clarity of reporting requirements for regional governments. Fragmentation and unclear responsibilities, as well as confusion over which aspects of land degradation should be reported to which national focal point made it difficult for subnational governments to comply adequately with their responsibilities. For example, land degradation is overseen by both the Ministry of Agriculture, due to issues of forestry and land use change, and the Ministry of Environment because of landscape management. Key actors held several dialogues to increase clarity on these different topics. Participants included representatives overseeing the three conventions as well as officials from the Directorate of Land Use Planning, which determines permissible land uses based on the degree of land degradation. Together, they developed comprehensive guidelines to help identify and delineate degraded land areas, specify their location, and determine eligibility for public restoration funding, including the appropriate funding sources. A **user-friendly version of these guidelines** was produced for decision-makers with the support of CDKN. These guidelines increase clarity for subnational governments when they apply for national-level funds, encouraging them to show how their proposed activities lead to synergies between national climate change, land neutrality and biodiversity commitments.



▲ Landscape reserve in the Cotahuasi sub-catchment and valley. *James Posso/PROMPERÚ*

PATHWAY
B

Mainstream climate issues into other related, better-decentralised sectors

CASE STUDIES

INDIA

Learning from **India's** experience of mainstreaming climate issues through disaster management structures

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Including climate and vulnerability considerations into Gorakhpur's district disaster management plan was a successful strategy to strengthen capacities across the district government to integrate climate adaptation and resilience issues into local planning and disaster management.
2. Co-designing and facilitating a series of iterative multi-stakeholder workshops – known as shared learning dialogues – with the District Disaster Management Authority enhanced understanding of the drivers of vulnerability, the implications of climate change on departmental planning and potential resilience strategies across a range of district and village-level actors. The dialogues' outcomes informed the production of co-owned climate-smart departmental plans and the overall district disaster management plan.
3. Fostering ownership and trust through a bottom-up process that involved different line departments, obtaining high-level buy-in and hiring a dedicated staff member in the disaster management authority were crucial strategies for success. Having a credible partner with a long-term presence in the area in the driving seat also helped strengthen trust.

NAMIBIA

Using existing structures to mainstream climate issues subnationally in **Namibia**

1. Raising awareness of climate change issues through training activities and dialogue between relevant national and subnational authorities is paving the way to integrate climate issues into subnational government structures in Namibia.
2. Identifying suitable avenues to decentralise climate issues is important. In Namibia, disaster risk management structures – active down to the village level – were used for this purpose. A national government strategy also exists to integrate climate change adaptation with disaster risk response, though it remains unimplemented.
3. Decentralising climate issues requires persistence and resourcefulness, including exploring different avenues and continuing discussions whenever opportunities arise, such as during workshops or bilateral meetings.

PATHWAY

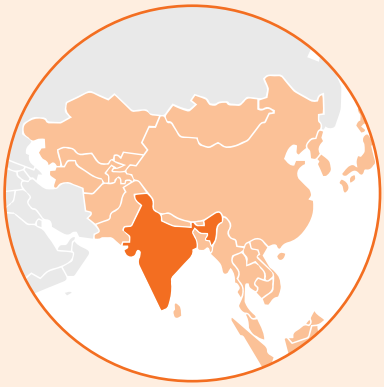
B

Mainstream climate issues into other related, better-decentralised sectors

By analysing the governance and policy landscape, knowledge brokers can identify existing well-decentralised structures into which climate issues could be mainstreamed. In many cases, disaster risk reduction structures have representation at multiple governance levels, from national to local. This provides an opportunity to address climate issues as part of their mandate given that there are strong links between disaster management and climate adaptation. For mainstreaming to be successful, there is a need for substantial engagement and sensitisation of the concerned stakeholders at different levels, to discuss how to operationalise the process.

Flood defence structures in India reduce the impacts of disasters. Credit

INDIA



KEY TAKEAWAYS

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View more **India** case studies in Challenges 2 5 and 7

CASE STUDY

Learning from India's experience of mainstreaming climate issues through disaster management structures

In India, the disaster management structure is well decentralised and clear, with the National Disaster Management Act of 2005 allocating disaster management authorities at the national, state and district levels. According to this act, District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMA) are mandated to produce yearly District Disaster Management Plans (DDMP) in collaboration with line departments that hold the budget and authority to implement actions on the ground. Until a few years ago, however, DDMA would develop the DDMPs in isolation – despite their authority to convene all departments at the district level. The plans mainly focused on post-disaster relief and reconstruction, such as in response to a flood. Starting in 20[illegible] CDKN project supported the Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG) and its partners to promote a more systematic approach to including climate and vulnerability concerns into Gorakhpur's DDMP. This resulted in GEAG assisting the district to produce a climate-smart DDMP, which in the process strengthened capacities across the district government to integrate climate adaptation and resilience issues into local planning and disaster management.

Early in the project, line departments were eager to incorporate climate concerns into their planning but lacked practical knowledge on how to do so. As a result, initial efforts focused on jointly analysing the vulnerability of Gorakhpur's key systems – such as health, transport, water supply and housing – to flooding under both current and projected climate scenarios. This process also helped uncover gaps in existing planning frameworks and identify institutional and operational barriers to integrating climate considerations. One crucial element of success was the use of shared learning dialogues, co-designed and facilitated with DDMA. This series of iterative workshops involved stakeholders from different sectors (from frontline functionaries to ordinary citizens) and significantly deepened the awareness of district and village-level officials about the drivers of vulnerability, the implications of climate change for departmental planning and potential resilience strategies.

Involving DDMA staff, both within the institution and across departments, fostered cross-sectoral coordination and ownership of the emerging insights. The process led to jointly developed recommendations to address identified gaps, which informed departmental planning documents and shaped the overall DDMP, refined through a second round of shared learning dialogues.

Various other factors contributed to the success of this process. The approach was initially scaled up to other flood-prone districts in the state, then extended to all 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh, as mandated by the State Government. It was eventually adopted at the national level through continuous engagement, networking and information-sharing workshops – including the screening of a documentary-style learning resource, developed with government actors across different levels. Owing to GEAG's long-term presence in the area and credible research and project initiatives, government departments trusted their work. Trust was further strengthened by the bottom-up nature of the process, which actively involved government departments in assessing their exposure to climate and disaster risks and in co-developing the response plans. The increasing frequency and intensity of floods over time and the consequent impacts on people's livelihoods and infrastructure further increased their sense of urgency. High-level buy-in and leadership at the state level and drawing on synergies with other concurrent initiatives also contributed to its success. To increase coordination and streamline the process, project funds enabled the placement of a dedicated DDMA staff member to promote the daily integration of climate issues into disaster management activities, collect data and respond to departmental needs in developing the plan.

As a result, the Gorakhpur model of integrated planning was transformed into a training module by the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) and is integrated into national-level training programmes for disaster management. NIDM disseminated the module to over 600 district governments across India, which were mandated to adapt the approach to their agro-climatic and ecological contexts. In 2015 and 2016, GEAG collaborated with two district authorities in the states of Orissa and Uttarakhand to assist them in developing climate-smart plans tailored to their respective climatic challenges: cyclones and flash floods in Orissa, and landslides in Uttarakhand. Cross-learning dialogues between disaster authorities from these two states and Gorakhpur's DDMA facilitated experience-sharing and broadened perspectives on multi-hazard planning.

INSIDE STORIES
on climate compatible development

Climate & Development Knowledge Network

May 2014

Key messages

- The District Disaster Management Plans created as a result of India's Disaster Management Act (2005) can be an effective mechanism for promoting climate-sensitive planning at district level.
- Integrating climate concerns in District Disaster Management Plans can be aided by using the 'Shared Learning Dialogue' process with various government departments at district level. This requires proper facilitation.
- The 'Shared Learning Dialogue' process is critical to developing the capacity of various departments to understand, appreciate, plan and respond to climate risks.
- Climate projections must be appropriately interpreted and presented in a way that fosters understanding of their implications for development programmes across government departments.

Integrating climate change concerns into disaster management planning: The case of Gorakhpur, India

Gorakhpur District is recognised as one of the most flood-prone districts in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, India. The data over the past 100 years show a considerable increase in the intensity and frequency of floods, which are now recurring every 3–4 years. Gorakhpur District is home to 4.4 million people, most of whom live in rural areas.[1] Roughly 20% of the population is affected by floods, and in some areas, flooding has become an annual occurrence. All of the district's blocks[2] are highly prone to recurrent floods (see Figure 1) causing huge loss of life, health and livelihoods for the poor inhabitants, and extensive damage to public and private property.[3] For example, the flood of 1998 impacted 1.4 million people and 16,000 houses, and agriculture losses amounted to roughly US$15 million.[4]

An action research programme managed by START and supported by CDKN is currently addressing many of these issues in Gorakhpur. Jointly implemented by the Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG), the Institute for Social and Environmental Transition (ISET) and the National Institute of Disaster Management, the programme aims to effectively incorporate climate change considerations into disaster management planning within Gorakhpur District. This case study describes how the programme was developed, what factors have contributed to its success, and evaluates how a climate-mainstreaming programme such as Gorakhpur's might inspire other local governments in a similar position.

A more systematic approach

India's National Disaster Management Act (2005) provides for the creation of District Disaster Management Authorities, which are entrusted with developing and implementing a District Disaster Management Plan in consultation w… all line departments. Accordingly, the Gorakhpur District Disaster Management Authority has prepared a District Disaster Management Plan. At present, the Plan is focused mainly on how agencies can coord… …ster, such as … and …

Authors:
Shiraz A. Wajih, Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group
Shashikant Chopde, Institute of Social and Environmental Transition (ISET)

SCAN ME
VIEW ENTIRE GUIDELINE

▲ Flooding in Gorakhpur. *SET International/Sushil Singh*

NAMIBIA

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Raising awareness of climate change issues through training activities and dialogue between relevant national and subnational authorities is paving the way to integrate climate issues into subnational government structures in Namibia.

2. Identifying suitable avenues to decentralise climate issues is important. In Namibia, disaster risk management structures – active down to the village level – were used for this purpose. A national government strategy also exists to integrate climate change adaptation with disaster risk response, though it remains unimplemented.

3. Decentralising climate issues requires persistence and resourcefulness, including exploring different avenues and continuing discussions whenever opportunities arise, such as during workshops or bilateral meetings.

View more **Namibia** case studies in Challenges ① ② and ⑥

CASE STUDY

Using existing structures to mainstream climate issues subnationally in Namibia

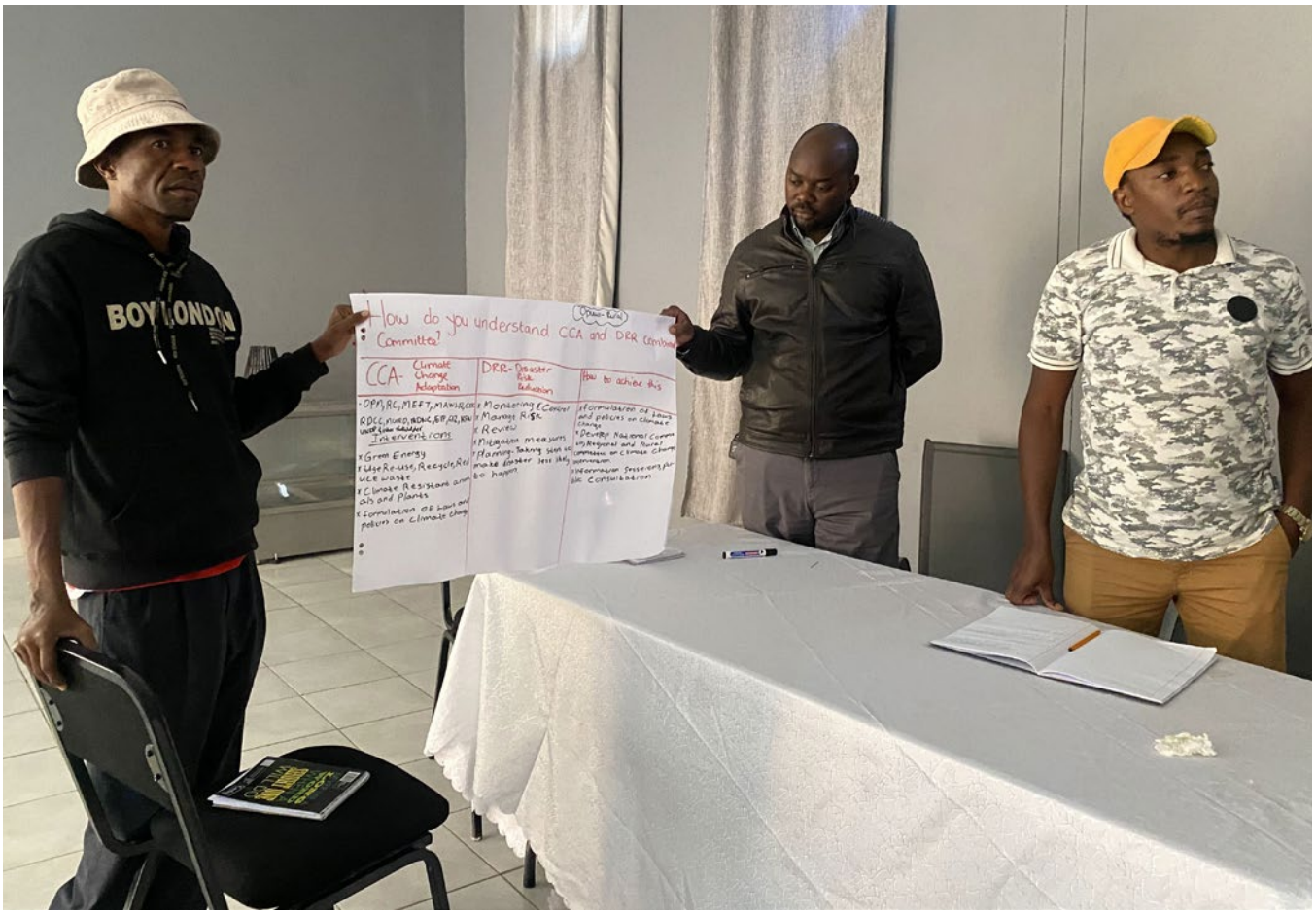
In Namibia, support was needed to mainstream gender-responsive and socially differentiated climate action into rural development governance systems, as well as in projects and community engagement activities at the local level. To achieve this, a decentralised platform was needed at subnational level to coordinate and integrate climate change adaptation into development planning and to strengthen vertical linkages between the Ministry of Environment's Climate Change Subdivision and the Regional Councils.

Since 2020, the CDKN team conducted a series of training events for regional government staff to raise their awareness about the urgency of addressing climate impacts in Namibia. Several meetings between the national Ministries of Environment and of Rural and Urban Development (responsible for policy decentralisation) and the Regional Councils were also facilitated to integrate climate change adaptation action into the existing work of the Disaster Risk Management Committees. This recognised the interconnectedness of climate change, disaster management and development in Namibia, as well as the cross-cutting nature of these issues. Not only are Disaster Risk Management Committees already functional and institutionally active, with structures at Constituency and village levels, there is also an existing strategy to merge climate change adaptation and disaster risk response, coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister within the Disaster Risk Management Unit. Although this strategy was never implemented (or known) subnationally, it provides for institutionalising climate change adaptation within disaster risk reduction.

Since late 2021, workshops to develop climate-resilient development pathways for 12 of the 14 regions of Namibia have been conducted and their Regional Councils have shown support to decentralise climate change adaptation into their existing Disaster Risk Management Committees.

The linkages between disaster risk management and climate adaptation have become clearer, with plans to strengthen coordination with regional development committees, given that they have a broader mandate for climate-resilient development and long-term preparedness, while disaster risk management focuses more on responding to events like droughts and floods.

The CDKN Namibia team has also initiated the review and operationalisation of the outdated strategy, increasing the urgency for its implementation, and public awareness around it. Discussions are still underway to operationalise it and find ways to enhance the coordination between regional departments as well as national and regional governments to ensure that socially differentiated climate action is mainstreamed effectively into cross-sectoral development planning.



▲ Since 2021, workshops to strengthen regional capacities to develop and implement regional climate change plans have been undertaken in 12 of the 14 Namibia regions. *CDKN*

PATHWAY

C

Collaborate with strategic institutions that can advance the climate mainstreaming process

CASE STUDIES

REGIONAL

Leveraging trusted relationships: Collaborating with **Latin American** non-state actors to enhance influence with governments

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Collaborating with existing networks working on different aspects of climate issues can serve to enhance collaboration among them and strengthen their capacities, while also helping to increase climate ambition across diverse stakeholder types in Latin America.
2. Establishing a seed fund to support collaborative, innovative activities can be a mechanism for action through sharing good practices on knowledge management, bridging the science-to policy gap and supporting advocacy actions.

INDIA

Choosing one's partners wisely to further the peri-urban agenda in **India**

1. Collaborating with the National Institute of Urban Affairs enabled the Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG) to contribute to the inclusion of an indicator recognising the value of peri-urban ecosystems in the guidance being developed for climate-smart resilient green urban habitats.
2. Partnering with the School of Planning and Architecture helped GEAG equip future urban planners and architects with knowledge about the importance of peri-urban ecosystems and to advance this agenda through the advocacy efforts of the school's director.
3. Having a champion in a leadership position who understands the issue and actively advocates for it, supported by their team, enhances the success of a partnership.

PATHWAY

C

Collaborate with strategic institutions that can advance the climate mainstreaming process

Collaborations with strategic, like-minded institutions can help to enhance understanding of policy mainstreaming strategies and mobilise support by creating a critical mass of partners that can help to advance the climate change agenda. While partners can hail from academia, civil society, government or the private sector, an important element is that they share an interest in the issue so that they can raise its profile across their networks. Finding synergies with such organisations is essential to ensure mutually beneficial partnerships, as is the presence of a champion who advocates for the issue and opens doors for it both internally and with external stakeholders.

Medical professional looking at samples through a microscope in Peru. *SPDA*

REGIONAL

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Collaborating with existing networks working on different aspects of climate issues, can serve to enhance collaboration among them and strengthen their capacities, while also helping to increase climate ambition across diverse stakeholder types in Latin America.
2. Establishing a seed fund to support collaborative, innovative activities can be a mechanism for action through sharing good practices on knowledge management, bridging the science-to-policy gap and supporting advocacy actions.

View more **Regional – Latin America** case studies in Challenges ① and ⑤

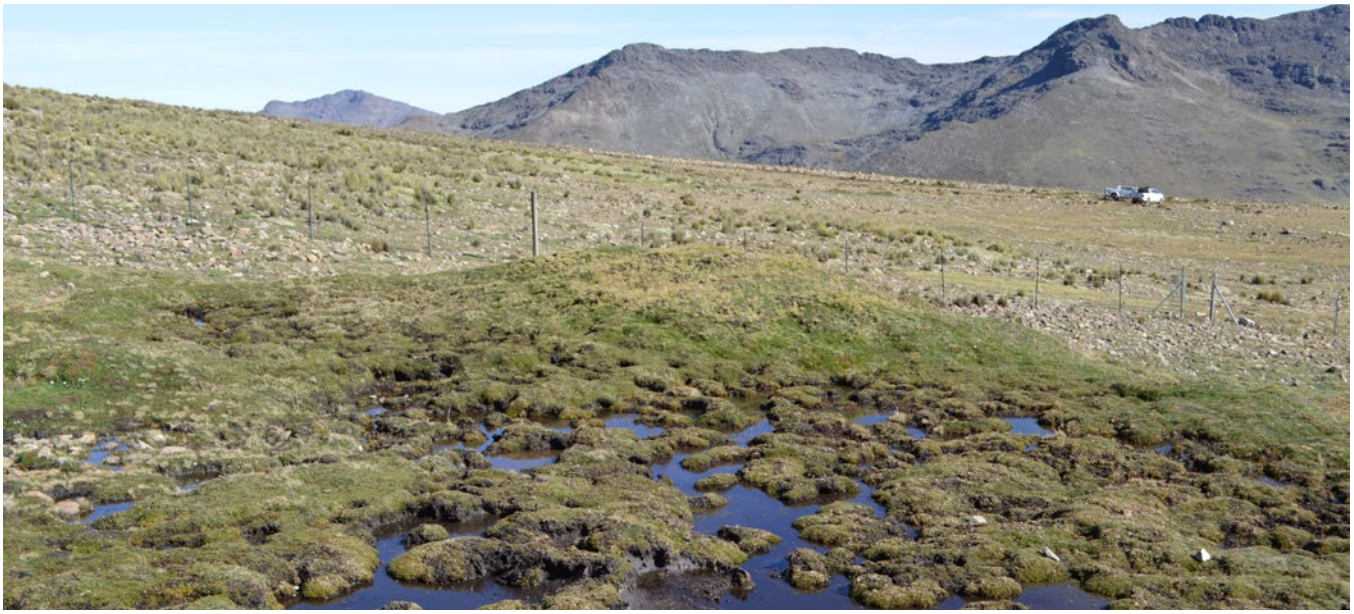
CASE STUDY

Leveraging trusted relationships: Collaborating with Latin American non-state actors to enhance influence with governments

In Latin America, a range of networks is involved in advancing the climate change agenda, including through a focus on cities, municipalities and local governments, adaptation, low emission development, youth, climate finance, lobbying, ecosystems, and communications. In 2019, to build on and enhance the efforts of individual networks and drive greater climate ambition in the region, CDKN identified 18 networks working on climate issues and launched a Climate Knowledge Hub (Clik Hub). The idea was to strengthen the members' knowledge management capacities, given that a 2018 survey by the **Accionando Redes para la Estabilidad Climática** ('Actioning Networks for Climate Stability') initiative identified limited capacities for knowledge management as a barrier to these networks' effectiveness and impact. Collaborating with such networks could expand one's reach and impact as a preliminary estimate indicated that these 18 networks collectively engaged around 1,850 journalists, 2,000 young people, over 400 city mayors across the region, and approximately 1,800 individuals from government, civil society and academia, among others.

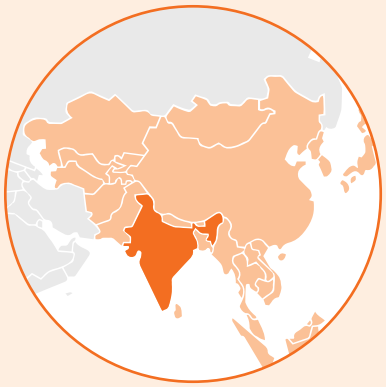
ClikHUB
Red de conocimiento para la acción climática

In line with Clik Hub's aim to promote shared learning and collaboration among its members on effective knowledge management, advocacy and bridging the science-to-policy gap at different levels, a seed fund was allocated to support four innovative ideas that would bring at least two Clik Hub members together. In addition to co-designing and de[illegible]ing a **course on climate communications**, the initiative led to the creation of a **range of knowledge products** aimed at broadening influence and impact across the networks' partners and followers. For example, a partnership between two networks working closely with local governments in Peru and Chile resulted in the compilation of 19 **inspiring practices of nature-based solutions** implemented in cities across the two countries. This effort not only documented and systematised lessons, success factors and challenges, but also helped build the case for scaling such initiatives. Furthermore, it facilitated peer exchange on climate adaptation among local government leaders through two meetings that were held in late 2019 and early 2020. Here, a group of mayors from Peru and Chile were identified as *Green Cities* champions.



▲ High altitude wetlands and peatlands, like the Bofedal Yanasenega in Peru, are vital nature-based solutions that help secure water supplies for nearby communities and cities. *FFLA*

INDIA



KEY TAKEAWAYS

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View more **India** case studies in Challenges 2 5 and 7

CASE STUDY

Choosing one's partners wisely to further the peri-urban agenda in India

To advance the peri-urban agenda in India, Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG) initiated several strategic partnerships to sustain momentum beyond its project timelines and funding limitations. In addition to **partnering with the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM)**, GEAG formalised a collaboration with the Climate Centre for Cities at the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), which leads urban planning and promotes resilient, sustainable city development. GEAG was invited to lead the Gorakhpur assessment under the Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework, which undertook baseline assessments in 96 cities to develop guidance about climate-smart actions for resilient green urban habitats. GEAG contributed the inclusion of an indicator recognising the value of peri-urban ecosystems in such assessments, grounded on the principle that a city cannot be considered smart unless it is resilient. These methodologies, best practices and guidance are intended to assist cities across India in advancing their climate-smart efforts.

To equip future urban planners and architects with an understanding of the importance of peri-urban ecosystems for urban resilience, GEAG partnered with the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) of Bhopal to develop a **capacity building toolkit**, to integrate peri-urban resilience concepts into the School's studio programme. As a respected knowledge institution, whose director is a proactive advocate of peri-urban issues – including at ministerial level – the partnership has enabled continued advancement of the peri-urban agenda across multiple platforms and venues.

Through a range of collaborations around the peri-urban agenda – including with donors, academic institutions and civil society organisations – GEAG realised that success often hinges on the presence of a champion within the partnering institution, particularly within the constraints of short-term projects. In the case of NIDM and SPA, for instance, key individuals in leadership positions who understood and supported the peri-urban agenda enabled the work to gain traction, with the necessary backing of lower-tiered staff. In contrast, the absence of such champions, combined with short project timelines, often led to ad-hoc and largely ineffective partnerships. Similarly, an institution's openness to new ways of working, fresh ideas and emerging issues – rather than rigidly adhering to established operational mandates – proved to be critical to a successful partnership.

The work is still in progress. While efforts and advocacy have helped in building a local understanding of peri-urban issues at the city level, formal implementation remains a challenge because of the absence of any top-level government orders in this regard. To better understand the peri-urban challenge in India, read more on this **CDKN brief**.


POLICY BRIEF

Climate & Development Knowledge Network

February 2021

Key messages

- Natural ecosystems in peri-urban areas, along with the goods and services they provide, are critical not only for people living in these areas, but also for those in adjacent cities.
- Peri-urban areas face unique challenges – from rapid urbanisation to the ambiguous nature of their boundaries and administrative status. These challenges often lead to the neglect of ecosystems during planning.
- Cities fulfil many of their natural and human resource requirements from peri-urban areas. Moreover, ecosystems such as open spaces and agricultural lands in peri-urban areas promote resilience in a city.
- India's National Urban Policy Framework of 2020 puts the onus on states to plan for the development of urban and peri-urban areas. States should work together with peri-urban stakeholders to plan for inclusive development that appreciates the significance of peri-urban ecosystems.
- An integrated approach to management of peri-urban areas can potentially bridge the rural-urban divide and integrate planning at the district level, bringing together multiple stakeholders for decentralised, local governance.

Author:
Simant Verma, ICLEI South Asia

Peri-urban ecosystems: The potential for a planned approach in India

With India's rapid rate of urbanisation[1] (Figure 1), people are settling on the peripheries of cities where relatively more affordable services, such as housing, cheap land and commercial goods and services, are available. Natural ecosystems play an important role in these spaces in enhancing climate resilience and sustainable urban development. However, these ecosystems are typically neglected to give way to mainstream development, and this results in significant consequences related to environmental degradation.

This brief examines the importance of peri-urban ecosystems and outlines possible policy responses in India to preserve and manage these areas to contribute to sustainable and climate-resilient development. While the brief provides a general overview of peri-urban areas in India, we acknowledge that approaches to these areas need to be sensitive to the dynamics of that particular context.

While there is no consensus around the definition, peri-urban areas are generally characterised as regions of transition from rural to urban areas, where the features of both often blend together. For example, these areas tend to have diverse land-use patterns, ranging from agriculture and forestry to residential and industrial uses. They are also marked by patterns of migration where rural populations first settle on the peripheries of cities, and then move into the urban area[2] where the demand for affordable labour in services and manufacturing industries is higher.

Due to unclear administrative boundaries and associated governance challenges, peri-urban areas and their ecosystems are often neglected, and this tends to affect livelihoods and the environment.[3] With limited access to modern infrastructure or a supply of clean water and sanitation facilities, these areas face increased vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.[4]

Rapid urbanisation and governance challenges in peri-urban areas

The ambiguity over peri-urban boundaries creates various challenges. Given their expanding nature, these areas often fall between different administrative boundaries, and sometimes even beyond them. As

Image: Unplanned houses in front of high-rise residential buildings in the outskirts of Mumbai, India

SCAN ME

VIEW ENTIRE CDKN BRIEF

▲ Peri-urban ecosystems often lack clear directives and government protection, as illustrated by ongoing construction in a peri-urban waterbody in Gorakhpur. *GEAG*

Endnotes

1. Bielak, A. T., Campbell, A., Pope, S., Schaefer, K. and Shaxson, L., (2008), 'From science communication to knowledge brokering: The shift from science push to policy pull.' In *Communicating Science in Social Contexts: New Models, New Practices*, edited by Cheng, D., Claessens, M., Gascoigne, T., Metcalfe, J., Schiele, B. and Shi, S., pp. 201–226, Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Springer.

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Different types of beans in Peru. *SPDA*

THIS SERIES IS STRUCTURED AS FOLLOWS:

CHALLENGE 1 Key stakeholders lack sufficient information about the significance and urgency of climate change.

CHALLENGE 2 Climate change is not sufficiently high on political agendas or part of institutional mandates.

CHALLENGE 3 Climate change is mainly seen as environmental ministries' responsibility, with little cross-sector collaboration.

CHALLENGE 4 Subnational actors lack guidance and support to implement climate change frameworks set at the national level.

CHALLENGE 5 Limited capacities and resource allocation prevent the integration and implementation of climate change policy.

CHALLENGE 6 Gatekeeping and bureaucracy can act as bottlenecks and delay progress on projects.

CHALLENGE 7 Local communities lack sufficient support to integrate climate issues into their actions.

ABOUT CDKN

The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) works to improve the well-being of the most climate-affected people in the global South, especially marginalised groups, through transformative climate action. CDKN is managed by SouthSouthNorth, in partnership with Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (FFLA) and ICLEI South Asia, and co-funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

We work in partnership with public, civil society and private sectors to mobilise knowledge, leadership and capacity in the global South in support of locally-owned and -led climate action.

Please visit: www.cdkn.org

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