

Considerations for climate related interventions in Ghana

Practical guidance for decision makers – May 2011

Introduction

In 2010 the Government of Ghana has started the development of the National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF) to coordinate climate change related interventions across Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The first milestone of this policy framework is the discussion document 'Ghana goes for green growth' (MEST, 2010), presented at a national discussion forum in Accra in November 2010, and later at COP16 in Cancun, Mexico. This concise document explains why climate change matters to Ghana, covering adaptation, low carbon development and social dimensions. It identifies seven pillars that need to be strengthened and developed to support climate change policy. Moreover, the document is the government's invitation to all stakeholders to engage in the ongoing debate on where Ghana should head with regard to climate change, and 'what is needed for the journey'.

Many climate change related initiatives involve the national government in one way or another. This policy brief presents considerations for government decision makers and development partners, when pursuing and selecting such initiatives. It assumes that action on climate change will need to be stepped up over the next years, and that international support will play an important role, but national political leadership and wide-based engagement and understanding is as important. The choice of sector, technology, region, or policy instruments will *not* be addressed here as this choice is under discussion and dependent on the ongoing national, participatory process. Moreover, this policy brief recognizes that the choice of climate initiatives is not completely open and free, but often influenced by factors such as donor preferences, resource availability or 'windows of opportunity' in which an intervention is useful (e.g. during infrastructure preparation and building).

Climate change initiatives in Ghana

Ghana is an attractive country for donor and development organizations. Compared to other countries in the region, it shows strong economic performance and good governance. Ghana has been active in the field of climate change for many years, with a history of initiatives and programmes dating back to the early 1990s. Moreover, Ghana for a long time has played an active role in the African group and on diverse thematic areas in the international climate negotiations.

Würtenberger *et al.* (2011) present an overview of the most prominent climate initiatives in the country. Development partners (DPs), including bilateral and multilateral organizations, fund a range of small to medium sized projects (from 10 000 to more than 100 000 USD), and there are a number of large GEF and World Bank financed projects. The majority of the initiatives fall into three thematic areas: general adaptation, forestry, and energy (see Figure 1).

Some projects have led to effective implementation, like the placement of 6 million efficient light bulbs in Ghanaian households, while other projects encounter serious barriers such as stakeholder opposition (in the case of public transport reform) or energy price regulation (in the case of renewable energy).

Most of the government knowledge and expertise on climate change resides with the implementing agencies rather than the Ministries. The climate change unit in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) historically has strong links to the international climate community, while experts in the Energy Commission and the Forestry Commission have a more national focus. The National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) consists of 20 people representing MDAs, civil society and development partners. It convenes irregularly and the time that each of the NCCC members can dedicate to it is limited by their regular occupation. The advisory role of the NCCC is currently not pro-active. At the

policy (Ministerial) level, climate change is the responsibility of MEST, but currently there is no staff fully dedicated to climate change.

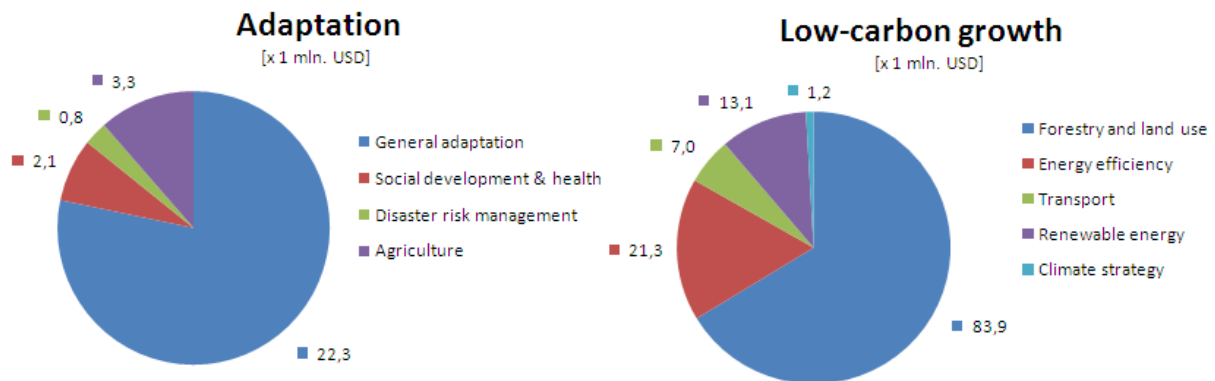


Figure 1: Climate initiatives 1995-2010: 155 mln. USD. ¹
Source: Würtenberger *et al.* (2011)

Looking into the near future, several issues are relevant for determining priorities on, and identifying guidelines for climate change interventions. The NCCPF discussion document is a useful basis to guide a broad stakeholder dialogue that will result in a sense of prioritization and positioning in time (i.e. a roadmap). With the international climate negotiations progressing slowly, the large majority of the climate related support is expected to be bilateral (i.e. country-to-country) and a lesser amount would come through UN organizations and multilateral development banks.

To meet the adaptation challenge, experts agree that climate will need to be mainstreamed into every government decision. Similarly, to capitalise on the opportunities of low carbon development, the involvement of the private sector is crucial (and in the case of Ghana will have to be stepped up). Local experts indicate that the uncoordinated way climate change initiatives are currently pursued in Ghana, will probably not be sufficient to respond adequately to the adaptation and low carbon development challenges. From interviews with experts involved in the development of the NCCPF, the following concerns arise frequently.

1. Although a few individual experts do have a good overview of climate related activities in their field of expertise, the **information seems to be inaccessible to a wider group of stakeholders**. Government and donor representatives have expressed concern that they were not sufficiently informed about climate change initiatives relevant to them. Furthermore, when expertise is not shared more widely, single individuals leaving their position within an institution may seriously impact the knowledge and capacity available. To improve continuity, capacity building should ideally focus on building ‘systems’ rather than building capacity only with individuals.
2. Upon finalising projects, **reporting the results in high quality, well disseminated outcomes does not always materialize**. Instead, papers and reports get ‘stuck’ in a draft stage and are not widely distributed. This slows down the process of exchanging insights and knowledge, and as a consequence initiatives are poorly connected and not followed up on. Also, success stories are not widely showcased or considered for replication.
3. Workshops are a widely used way to exchange insights and share knowledge, but the **workshop effectiveness can be improved**. Frequently participants are invited to join workshops without preparation or clearly defined output, and without follow-up. At best, many workshops don’t reach their full potential and at worst, meetings may end in unfocused brainstorming.
4. International climate support is available, and potentially on a much larger scale than what has been channelled into Ghana thus far. However, **donor requirements on coordination,**

¹ Note that many projects included here are important to climate change, but do not necessarily have an explicit climate change ‘lens’. Also, only initiatives for which data was available are included.

transparency and monitoring are expected to become stricter. When more than one country is eligible for support, the choice is likely to be influenced by factors like these. Furthermore, donors typically represent countries and their taxpayers, who more than ever require accountability and strong governance. NB: Donor funding windows of opportunity are narrowing as funds are currently being committed.

New initiatives: selection and design

In the next years to come, the number of climate change related activities is expected to increase steadily. Most of these initiatives require government involvement, and to avoid too much strain on the scarce government (human) resources, it makes sense to wisely choose initiatives, and to look closely at how they are designed. The challenge is to coordinate without necessarily controlling, and to ensure that all initiatives contribute to building the seven supporting pillars to achieve favorable outcomes on low carbon development, adaptation and on social issues.

Climate change policy – seven supporting pillars
Governance and coordination
Capacity building
Research and knowledge management
Finance
International cooperation
Communication
Monitoring and reporting

Source: MEST, 2010

As noted above, the final selection of climate change initiatives oftentimes depends on factors such as donor preferences, resource availability or ‘windows of opportunity’ in which an intervention is useful. There are however some guidelines that may be useful when selecting, or steering initiatives. Note that not all of these guidelines will need to be met at all times – e.g. private sector involvement is not always needed. Pragmatically, the ease of implementation may be a driver for choosing one initiative over another.

The following considerations can help select and shape initiatives in a way that is most constructive for Ghana, and takes into account the challenges for stepping up support in the near future:

- **Strategic alignment:** Does the initiative align to the strategic priorities of the government’s activities on climate change? Does it contribute to the seven pillars and/or three outcomes presented in the NCCPF?
- **Connection to the real economy:** Does the effort have an effect (or does it involve) the real economy? Will the initiative show how climate change is relevant to the specific sector(s)? Is the initiative set up, such that stakeholders participate because it is in their own interest to do so? Initiatives that connect directly to real economic activity can contribute to awareness and engagement.
- **Coordination and output:** At the start of the initiative, is there an overview of available knowledge and similar projects? Does the initiative build on previous work? Will its outcomes be disseminated to be built upon by follow up initiatives? The challenge for government is to coordinate and connect initiatives, without the need to control everything. Having multiple initiatives on the same topic is not bad in itself, but duplication of work should be avoided.
- **Capacity building and continuity:** is there a capacity building component to the initiative, and is the aim the transfer and sharing of technology, skills and competencies? How is continuity guaranteed (in terms of capacity building and defining follow up research questions)?
- **Stakeholder engagement and awareness:** does the initiative contribute to increasing awareness, or does it promote engagement of a specific group of stakeholders? Are all relevant stakeholder groups considered?

- **Ease of implementation:** How many (different) stakeholders are involved? Is there a win-win situation? What is the expected lead-time until there are results? If data, capacity or awareness and buy-in are a problem, it might make sense to start with an initiative that is relatively easy.
- **Involvement of the private sector:** is the private sector involved in the initiative? Is the initiative based on a sustainable business model, that can continue after (initial) government intervention is discontinued?

Transparency and data: are the assumptions underlying the analysis of the initiative fully transparent and accessible? Is data collection and analysis part of the initiative? Will the data of the project be published **and become available to** a wider audience? Collecting and publishing data both broadens the evidence base and improves the acceptance of the initiative's outcomes.

Potential next steps

This policy brief identifies how Ghana can improve its capacity to address climate change, by strategically choosing and designing initiatives. To fortify Ghana's position on climate change in the short run, the following is worth considering:

- **Pursuing international support on climate change.** Ghana can become an early mover on *Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs, e.g. on REDD+)*, on *monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV)* or by producing a *Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS)*.
- **Pursuing a *Climate Innovation Centre (CIC)*.** A CIC can promote coordination on climate change without the need for 'top down' control. It can have various functions and be a good vehicle to involve and engage the private sector. There is no need for a CIC to be government hosted, and currently various models are under consideration in countries such as Kenya and India.
- **Broaden human capacity at the national government.** Ideally a core operational team of three or four people would be formed between MEST and MoFEP, with (full) time allocated to work on climate issues. Such a policy team can complement the executive EPA climate change staff and the experts in different commissions. Note that this is not a replacement for the NCCC, whose role is more strategic and advisory.



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