

Climate Change and Development

Climate change poses a significant and complex challenge to social and economic development in Zimbabwe. Increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as droughts, and gradual increases in average temperatures, and declines in precipitation, will adversely affect key sectors of the economy. This is largely because natural resource based sectors like agriculture, energy, tourism, forestry and water, which are sensitive to climate change, contribute a significant proportion to the country's GDP. Importantly, 70 percent of the population derive its livelihoods from agriculture, with a significant proportion living in dry-land areas that are drought prone. In short, climate change threatens the country's development objectives.

However, development choices that the country makes, under the MTP, may contribute to increased emission of green house gases (GHG), thereby contributing to climate change. For instance, the development of thermal power station, and the further exploitation of huge coal reserves, will increasingly need to be compliant with conditions stipulated for clean energy.

It is within this context that there is need to not only respond to the challenges that climate change poses to social development and economic growth, but also to develop climate-smart policies. To this end, the Mid-Term Plan places climate change concerns at the centre of development strategies, plans and programmes in all sectors of the economy, particularly agriculture, energy, water, forestry, mining and tourism. This will ensure the sustainability of current strategies for social and economic development as well as their compatibility with international best practices on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

As previously stated in section 12.1.5, the development of a National Climate Change Strategy and Policy, under the MTP, will partly ensure that these twin objectives can be attained. This will also ensure that the country embarks on a low-carbon growth path.

Challenges and Constraints

One of the major challenges in developing a National Climate Change Strategy and Policy, that informs and supports the current development thrust, is the existence of an uncoordinated policy and institutional framework governing climate change issues. Added to this is the existence of multiple and diverse organisations working on climate change. To this end, policy responses to the country's development challenges and its links to climate change has tended to be fragmented, and concentrating on single issues without much coordination between the Government and other stakeholders, and more importantly, across sectors.

The fact that climate change policy is implied rather than stated poses a development challenge as implied positions do not provide clear guidelines on how broad development strategy and programmes contribute to, or undermine, climate change adaptation and mitigation. Further, lack of sufficient funds and technical capacity to undertake policy relevant research, and conduct any long term planning, undermine the development of a national climate change strategy and policy.

However, the global prominence of climate change issues provide opportunities for Zimbabwe to work in partnership with global and regional partners in developing a National Climate Change Strategy and Policy that contributes to the MTP goals on economic growth and poverty reduction.

Policy Objective

- i. To promote climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in social and economic development at national and sectoral level

Policy Targets

- i. Development of a National Climate Change Strategy and Policy by end of 2013
- ii. Development of National Action Plan for Adaptation and Mitigation by end 2012
- iii. Increase the integration of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies in economic and development activities and policies at national and sectoral level by end 2012

Policy Measures

- i. Facilitate the formulation of a National Climate Change Strategy and Policy
- ii. Facilitate the strengthening of institutional and policy framework for addressing climate change
- iii. Support the integration and implementation of climate change and adaptation strategies in economic and development activities at national and sectoral level
- iv. Promote the use of evidence-based approaches to policy planning and programming related to climate change and development
- v. Promote broad-based participation in the formulation and implementation of a national climate change Strategy and Policy
- vi. Create awareness of National Climate Change Strategy and Policy