

A new Initiative for Climate Compatible Development

by Caroline Cassidy¹, Climate and Development Knowledge Network

The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) was launched by the UK government in March 2010 and aims to *provide demand-led research and advisory services and channel the best available knowledge on climate change and development to support policy processes in developing countries.*

Introduction

'We do have an enormous capacity in human resources, in institutions and knowledge [to achieve climate compatible development]. What we haven't done is to put them in order – to be able to collect that information and also recognise that there are some gaps that need to be filled.'

*Yolanda Kakabadse,
CDKN Latin America Network Director*

Following the failure of last year's United Nations Climate Conference in Copenhagen to come up with binding commitments on emissions targets or climate spending, and with little outcome from the recent Cancun Conference, there is a growing acceptance that addressing climate change is no longer simply about debate. It is now about decisive action. Policy-makers around the globe want to build long-term strategies for human development that are compatible with the challenges of climate change.

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This article brings together information taken from CDKN's website, brochure, and strategy documentation, as well as interviews with Global and Regional Heads.

The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) is positioned to support decision-makers in developing countries to design and deliver what we call 'climate compatible' development.

Climate Compatible Development

The urgent need to check greenhouse gas emissions presents decision-makers with new opportunities for low carbon development, nationally, regionally and globally, and also many challenges. Some economic sectors are far more carbon-intensive than others, some are relatively easier to switch to a low-carbon pathway, and some are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Developing country decision-makers are examining how to support climate-proof investments: investments that prevent climate change from getting much worse, but which also endure the inevitable climate change expected this century. At the same time they are assessing how to continue to reduce poverty, and maintain progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Achieving the right balance can be described as 'climate compatible' development, the concept at the heart of CDKN's work. CDKN is founded on the belief that human development and poverty reduction can and should be integral to societies' plans to mitigate against and adapt to climate change. The Network sets out to help societies to adapt to this inevitable change, while harnessing the growth opportunities.

In recognition that this approach must operate across economic sectors to be successful, and that

each country's situation varies over time, climate compatible development must be (a) country-specific, (b) cross-sectoral and (c) based on medium and long-term, scenario-driven development planning.

CDKN: the launch of climate compatible development

CDKN aims to work alongside developing country decision-makers to help them produce scenarios and plans for climate compatible development. CDKN is supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and managed by an alliance of six organisations: Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano, INTRAC, LEAD International, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), PricewaterhouseCoopers (who lead the alliance) and SouthSouthNorth. These diverse organisations combine global reach and expertise in development and climate change, across the public and private sectors: a mix that is crucial to CDKN's approach.

CDKN operates across three continents with regional hubs in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean and a global team based in the UK. The full team includes climate scientists, researchers, economists, consultants, knowledge management specialists, project managers and regional directors. The Network focuses on four different areas: research, technical assistance, knowledge sharing and partnerships.

The main objectives are (a) to link climate and development in research, dialogue and policy-making; (b) to provide research that is highly relevant to policy-making, and enable decision-makers to access high quality research; (c) to respond to the specific needs of developing country decision-makers and work in partnership with governmental and non-governmental leaders.

How CDKN works at country level

CDKN has the flexibility to provide support in different forms and at different stages of the policy process. This includes:

- **Defining the vision and framework:** a stakeholder process to develop and agree a national or regional vision or policy
- **Developing the underlying evidence base:** including emissions inventories, scenario planning, risk assessments, mitigation and adaptation policy economic and investment analysis and market and technology responses in priority sectors.
- **Addressing institutional requirements:** includes capacity building and strengthening existing areas cross sectorally
- **Developing an investment plan and financing options:** includes analysis of costs e.g. technology; evaluating public and private climate financing options from an international, regional and national perspective.
- **Implementing and monitoring:** includes monitoring impact
- **Supporting international engagement:** includes participation in high level international policy processes

Importantly, CDKN's work happens across government and across sectors. For example, the Network does not just work with environment ministries, but also with policy-makers across natural resource, health and housing, industrial and labour policy areas as appropriate.

Partnerships and knowledge sharing – the joint 'pillars' of climate compatible development

Defining climate compatible development pathways is a major challenge given the uncertainties, complexities and political sensitivities involved. No one organisation or network has all the skills and experience required, and the knowledge needed is widely dispersed and much of it very technical in nature. Pooling knowledge and experience, and creating effective mechanisms so lessons can be learned and shared, are going to be vital in addressing the challenges ahead.

Partnerships

CDKN works in partnerships across all its work streams, drawing on local expertise wherever possible,

and combining it with the best experience from around the world. It will build on existing networks and capacities, where they exist, rather than setting up new structures from scratch. The aim is to help enable innovation and avoid unhelpful duplication.

Mapping existing initiatives and capacities is a priority in each region, so CDKN can identify who are the key players and where the gaps are. In many cases, the Network acts as a facilitator, identifying where the most pressing demands are at country level, and bringing together the organisations that are best-placed to address them. This partnership approach helps foster and share innovation, and helps to build capacity and long term collaborative relationships.

Partnerships could be with developing country researchers and research institutions working at the interface between climate change and development; developing country think-tanks and civil society organisations focused on influencing policy and informing practice; policy-makers working in the climate change and development area; or private sector organisations and entrepreneurs. Some examples of key programmatic areas of work in CDKN partnerships are:

1. Mapping climate and development initiatives

Mapping and analysing the work being undertaken on climate and development around the world, so that CDKN can collaborate effectively with others and share knowledge widely with partners, to aid in their strategic planning and programme design.

2. Bringing people together

Making links with a diverse range of potential partners, in order to build a global learning network and expand the CDKN Roster of Experts:

- Counterpart programmes and initiatives
- Funders and development agencies
- Multi-lateral agencies and regional institutions



Longer dry seasons and changing rainfall patterns in Africa this century will affect agricultural productivity in many areas. Better scenario-planning and support for farmers to spread their risk could help households adapt, and protect their livelihoods. (Photo: Antony Robbins, Overseas Development Institute)

- Research institutions and think tanks
- Consultancies and private sector organisations
- Development practitioners and CSOs
- Networks and communities of practice

3. Partner support and capacity development

Working with others to facilitate better coordination and cooperation between the numerous programmes and initiatives working at the interface of climate change and development. CDKN is also seeking to facilitate new connections between partners and strengthen initiatives to create impact.

The Network will work with existing programmes, networks and coalitions to develop capacity through technical support, facilitated dialogue and knowledge exchange. These groups will include:

- Developing-country researchers and research institutions.
- Developing country think tanks and civil society organisations focused on influencing policy and informing practice.
- Policy makers.
- Private sector organisations and social entrepreneurs.

CORDEX-Africa

A CDKN partnership is currently underway in Southern Africa. In July this year CDKN took part in 'Education, Capacity Building and Climate Change: A Collective Strategy for Africa', a meeting in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, to share practice and develop a coordinated approach to climate change research, education and outreach in Africa. The forum was organised by Global Change System for Analysis, Research and Training (START), an international capacity building NGO focusing on research and technical education. Over the years, the organisation has developed an extensive and influential network of African universities, research institutions and CSOs working in the climate change research and capacity building space. Following the forum, CDKN has formed partnerships with START, the University of Cape Town and World Climate Research Programme to set up an Africa-led capacity building programme: CORDEX-Africa. The programme is aimed at scientists from across the African continent focused on regional climate modelling, analysis, interpretation, and outreach. One of the main aims is to help increase dialogue between scientists and policy makers and with Northern-based research institutions, think tanks, and Vulnerability Impacts and Adaptation (VIA) practitioners.

Knowledge Sharing

Supporting more effective knowledge sharing among the many players engaging in the climate and development 'space' is a key objective for CDKN. Again, a partnership approach will be adopted, linking with, supporting and connecting together existing knowledge initiatives rather than attempting to create the definitive 'one-stop-shop' web portal or all-embracing network. CDKN will be using a range of communication channels to get CDKN messages across, putting particular emphasis on conveying solid, evidence-based knowledge in clear, non-technical language that can be understood by policy makers and other non-specialists. This includes an producing an array of publications; a high quality website (www.cdkn.org) that connects to and from other online sources and uses social media tools; policy dialogue events across the three regions; and resources in regional

languages. Partnership initiatives already in the pipeline include a set of news articles on climate and development themes from InterPress Service (IPS) and ThomsonReuters, and a series of policy briefs produced in collaboration with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

Early Engagements

CDKN's initial engagements across the three regions include work for Ghana, Pakistan, Nepal, Colombia, El Salvador, the Caribbean, the African Development Bank and Rwanda:

The Caribbean

Earlier this year the CDKN received a request from Caricom (the Caribbean Community) through the Caribbean Community Centre for Climate Change to build an Implementation Plan for the 'Caribbean Regional Framework for Achieving Development Resilient to Climate Change.' The plan will identify and prioritise activities; develop an investment programme; and propose a governance regime and a monitoring and evaluation system. It has the potential to be a 'one-stop' mechanism for large-scale coordinated climate change financing in the region.

The African Development Bank

CDKN worked with Vivid Economics, an economics consultancy with expertise in climate finance, to provide urgent technical support to the African Development Bank (AfDB) to enable it to contribute to the UN's 'High-level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing' (AGF). Historically, Africa has contributed the least to greenhouse gas emissions, yet it stands to be hit hardest by the effects of climate change. Many parts of the continent will suffer a drastic fall in agricultural productivity, while its people will be increasingly exposed to water stress, coastal flooding, and a possible major expansion of vector-borne diseases such as malaria. Currently, Africa receives insufficient funding for its short-term development, adaptation and mitigation needs. Following this partnership, CDKN and Vivid Economics analysed the AGF's final report on climate financing, to pull out key opportunities and challenges for each

of the world's major developing regions: Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean; and a group of particularly vulnerable nations: the Small Island Developing States. The findings, along with other recent CDKN analyses and policy briefs, are all available on CDKN's website (www.cdkn.org).

Rwanda

And finally in Rwanda, CDKN was asked for support by the Government in developing a climate-resilient pathway for the future. CDKN's rapid response service was mobilised to work with the Government to develop the project request. The project will develop a National Strategy on Climate Change and Low Carbon Development. CDKN is partnering with the Smith School of Enterprise and Environment at the University of Oxford, which specialises in climate change policies, to deliver this work.

Conclusion

CDKN seeks to address key strategic issues for developing countries by bridging existing gaps, integrating current research and expertise, and strengthening knowledge architecture to translate evidence into effective policy-making.

CDKN's Executive Chair, Simon Maxwell, used the example of Vietnam in a presentation he gave at a recent CDKN event. 'Climate change is a major issue on the agenda in Vietnam, especially in terms of flooding of the Mekong, a phenomenon that will get worse and could significantly affect rural households and livelihoods. The country is fast developing; however, as a result it is already close to emitting the 2 metric tonnes of CO₂ per capita, which is the limit recommended by the Stern Report and Copenhagen. The challenge for leadership here and in many developing countries is transformation: how do you manage the dynamic evolution of the economy and society over the medium term, and factor in climate change?'

Overall, CDKN is realistic about the complexities of climate compatible development, but believes that there are some important questions that need to be asked and answered: How is a country developing

without climate change? And then how will climate change affect this development in the medium and long term, sector by sector? What kind of policies and institutional framework is needed and how do you construct these strategies for effectiveness? These are kind of questions that CDKN and its partners will be examining, and hope, to help developing countries to answer.

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