

Kenyan roundtables support cross-sectoral climate-change work

VakaYiko grant helps the African Centre for Technology Studies to strengthen the links between climate policymakers, researchers and think tanks

During 2014 and 2015, the Climate Resilient Economies programme of the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) has been running quarterly Kenya Climate Science, Technology and Policy roundtables with funding from the VakaYiko project. Ms Winnie Asiti and Dr Cosmas Ochieng of ACTS discuss the roundtables and their impact on climate change policy and practice in Kenya.

Background

The Kenya Climate Science, Technology and Policy Roundtables project aims to help bridge the gap between research and policy making on climate change in Kenya and to strengthen the links between Kenyan climate policymakers, researchers and think tanks. It seeks to disseminate the knowledge gained through this process through policy briefs, a roundtable documentary, and case studies on effective mechanisms for facilitating the use of research evidence in climate change legislation, policy formulation and implementation in Kenya.

The project was developed as a response to the sectoral and fragmented nature of climate change policy in Kenya and the fresh drive to facilitate a coherent, integrated and cost-effective climate change framework by a number of stakeholders led by civil society, parliamentarians and the Ministry of Environment. In 2013, a climate change bill approved by Parliament was denied Presidential Assent due to lack of sufficient 'public consultation'

among other considerations, including sufficient consultations with the scientific/research/expert community.

In 2014, Parliament reintroduced the Kenya Climate Change bill. The revision of the bill saw a new round of public consultations involving policymakers, climate scientists and civil society groups. These consultations produced an environment receptive to efforts to strengthen the capacity of policymakers for effective use of evidence in climate change policy. ACTS took advantage of this opportunity to feed into the ongoing debates by a) examining the degree to which research evidence would inform and influence the debate and passage (or lack of passage) of this legislation, and b) creating the Kenya Climate Science, Technology and Policy Roundtable to help inform the process through research-based dialogue and policy making.

Kenya has a multiplicity of actors engaged in climate policy, research and practice. These include the Ministry of Environment; members of Parliament; private-sector players under the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA); universities; and civil society, encompassing the Kenya Climate Change Working Group (KCCWG), the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) among others. Climate-policy actors also include international organizations such as the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The quarterly roundtables bring together these stakeholders and use research evidence to facilitate dialogue on harnessing climate science, technology and innovation for climate change and adaptation in Kenya.



Professor Shem Wandiga of ICCA-University of Nairobi speaking at one of the Kenyan Climate Science, Technology and Policy Roundtables



Roundtables provide a crucial platform for dialogue and learning

The roundtable series is distinctive because it seeks to encourage dialogue and communication across 'silos' by bringing together different stakeholders, using the window of opportunity provided by the ongoing climate policy debate. ACTS has held four roundtables in total, bringing together a wide array of stakeholders who have been able to share what has worked in specific contexts, with participants learning from one another and drawing parallels with what has worked elsewhere. Each roundtable has attracted over 40 participants.

The first roundtable focused on science, technology and innovations in influencing the policy making process in Kenya. This highlighted the fact that policy making is a complicated non-linear process where consultation with all relevant stakeholders is imperative.

The second roundtable focused on ecosystem-based adaptation, community-based adaptation and nature-based adaptation in Kenyan climate change policy making. There was a consensus that these approaches are interrelated and in application at various levels even though they are not expressly outlined in either the bill or the policy. In practice, different players interpret and apply these concepts

"Innovation is not just technological, [it] can also be in terms of policy, or managerial innovation or organizational innovation."

Dr Cosmas Ochieng, Executive Director, ACTS

differently, which generates knowledge that may inform future local or national policies responding to climate change.

The third roundtable discussed the extent to which Kenya's interventions are anticipatory and/or reactive; linkages between science and technology bodies that would aid in mitigation (and/or adaptation); and inclusiveness in Kenya's climate-change bill and policy. Stakeholders agreed that interventions are mostly reactive, sometimes without proper coordination between agencies. This means that those who need to act on climate information such as county governments take a long time to act, lack necessary expertise or are resource-constrained among other challenges.

The fourth and final roundtable in this series focused on climate finance, specifically on mobilization from both international and domestic sources; utilization in terms of efficiency and monitoring; and the policy environment. The need for innovation and new skills in interactions with stakeholders in mobilizing climate finance both at the local and international level and across sectors was emphasized. Participants also made

a call for research in investment differentiation, considering different sectors as well as on social entrepreneurship models which work to safeguard vulnerable communities. These have to be documented and disseminated for replication and upscaling. The session concluded that research and action at grassroots, county and national level, complemented by tracking and monitoring, is needed to generate ideas and an evidence base for increased climate finance flows.

The roundtables have been a valuable learning experience for ACTS and partners, especially in putting together sessions that maximize on inputs within a limited timeframe. They have enabled ACTS and other stakeholders in the climate change sector in Kenya to share research evidence across different disciplines, sectors and interests groups, and use this evidence to try to improve climate research, policy and practice in Kenya. ACTS has gained crucial insights into the process of policy making itself; how ideas move in and out of that process; how research is consumed by policymakers; and other factors beyond research that influence policy making. Different stakeholders have been able to share what has worked in specific contexts and the rest of the participants have been able to learn from this and draw parallels with what is working elsewhere. This model emphasizes evidence-informed policy making as well as individual and cross-sectoral learning. For example, the project has highlighted the recognition of the role of indigenous knowledge in the climate change bill and policy as best practice. This draws from the past collaborative experiences

"Inasmuch as climate change is a global issue, adaptation is local and therefore utilizing community-based adaptation and making that become the norm rather than the exception is the first step towards building community capacity and empowering them to unleash the potential that lies in these communities."

Dr Richard Munang, Head of Climate Change, ROA, UNEP



in weather forecasting between the Nganyi community, which possesses immense indigenous knowledge on forecasting, and the Kenya Meteorological department with its team of scientists.

The roundtables have also strengthened ACTS' ability to convene evidence-based multi-stakeholder consultative dialogues. They have allowed ACTS to expand and strengthen its networks and partnerships beyond its traditional partners (e.g. research, government) to include the private sector, youth and other county governments. Importantly, ACTS has been able to identify areas of collaboration, for instance working with the Institute of Climate Change Adaptation (ICCA) at the University of Nairobi, which is dedicated to climate change adaptation issues in its research and teaching activities.

Although there was strong commitment to hold and participate in these roundtables, one of the challenges was coordinating everyone's availability. In the face of this challenge, ACTS adapted the sessions to suit participants, by having short and focused discussions. This format proved to be very popular with most stakeholders who were therefore able to commit their time and resources to participate. This not only encouraged participation but also helped ACTS to organize meetings with clearly defined objectives and discussion topics with opportunities for follow up if needed. The structure of the roundtables and the need to coordinate everyone's availability could be seen as a challenge but turned out to be an opportunity; since the topics debated often need exhaustive discussions and are difficult to cover in two hours, the participants were incentivized to meet and engage with each other after the roundtables and to explore ways to continue working together. Participants also made use of other platforms in order to continue



Dr Alice Kaudia, Environment Secretary and Distinguished Policy Fellow, speaking at one of the roundtables

discussions, including email and collaborative activities.

Using a combination of complementary approaches to build capacity

For this project, ACTS decided to adopt a combination of two complementary approaches to capacity building. Whilst roundtables provide an excellent platform for different stakeholders to share ideas, discuss vital issues and network, when it comes to putting these shared ideas into practice another approach is beneficial. ACTS therefore organized a job-shadowing scheme whereby two ACTS Scientists (Dr George Mwaniki and Dr Philip Osano) shadow two Distinguished Policy Fellows for the duration of one year. The two Distinguished Policy Fellows attached to this programme are Dr Alice Kaudia, Environment Secretary from the Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, and Dr Wilbur Ottichilo, Member of Parliament for the Emuhaya constituency and sponsor of the original climate change bill. These key policymakers are also able to access ACTS' research facilities and services while they continue with their daily jobs of formulating

and implementing climate change legislation. The Policy Fellows and Scientists are working together to co-produce two papers on evidence-informed policy making in climate legislation and policy in Kenya. Both the Fellows and the Scientists value this process and are documenting their experiences as a way of promoting learning and further engagement.

The Policy Fellows and Scientists meet regularly and participate at



About ACTS

The African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) is a leading intergovernmental policy research think tank working on issues of science, technology, innovation and sustainable development in Africa. Its mission is to strengthen the capacity and policies of African countries and institutions to harness science, technology and innovation for sustainable development. For more information see www.acts-net.org.

the Kenya Climate Change Science, Technology and Policy Roundtables, where they share their knowledge and ideas and most importantly get to hear first-hand from different stakeholders on what areas should be prioritized. Discussions between them have resulted in better understanding of how, for instance, evidence can be effectively packaged for different types of stakeholders (e.g. brief summaries for lawmakers and technical reports and data for ministries and government departments as well as counties to act upon).

The job shadowing process and roundtables therefore complement each other, providing a forum for continuous engagement and sharing of ideas and reinforcing the knowledge co-production aspect of the project. The more long-term job shadowing process provides an opportunity for the Policy Fellows and Scientists to apply the knowledge gained in the roundtables and elsewhere as they work on climate change policies. At the core of the design is the scheme's ability to transmit knowledge and expertise between the Policy Fellows and Scientists, building trust for long-term collaboration.

Looking forward: using roundtable learnings to create networks and work collaboratively

ACTS is keen to share the knowledge gained from both the roundtable series and the job shadowing scheme. Two papers titled 'Evidence in the climate change policy process in Kenya' and 'Evidence based policy making process: A case study of the development of the Kenya Climate Change Policy and Bill' will result from this process. A 20-minute audio-visual documentary on key lessons learned during the project is currently underway and will provide

The VakaYiko consortium is a three-year project managed by INASP and funded by DFID under the Building Capacity for Use of Research Evidence (BCURE) programme. As part of the project, grants have been awarded to seven organizations in low and middle income countries to build capacity for research use through projects that enhance our understanding of how policymakers can be supported, through practical measures, to make more effective use of evidence. These organizations are the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines, the Center for Public Policy Alternatives (CPPA), the Gender Centre for Research and Training (GCRT) in Sudan, Jimma University in Ethiopia, Politics & Ideas in Argentina, and the Universidad del Pacifico in Peru. For more information see www.inasp.info/en/work/vakayiko.

a summary of the project. ACTS will be working on incorporating information garnered to promote evidence-based policy making at the country level as well as in the development of the implementation plans at different levels. It is hoped that the documentary and reports from the roundtables will continue to inform and influence players as they seek to address climate change challenges.

In the face of a problem as complex as climate change, strong collaboration between different stakeholders is needed and as a result of this project ACTS has been able to create new networks for further collaboration. Partners include the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Kenya National Assembly, the Ministry of Environment, the Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) Program, the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), CARE International and Intasave-Caribsave. A number of collaborative opportunities are emerging, including requests by participant organizations to co-host similar roundtables in the future as a contribution to the series. The trust and partnerships developed during this project led to ACTS being nominated to chair the climate change pillar of the National Data for Sustainability forum, and it is

expected that these partnerships will continue beyond the end of the project. ACTS has also had the opportunity to organize side events at the upcoming Paris Climate Change Conference (COP 21), one of which will involve a session sharing ACTS' experiences from the policy roundtables.

The Kenya Climate Change bill has since passed the National Assembly and is currently before Senate. A draft climate change policy awaits gazettment by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural resources (MEWNR). ACTS submitted verbal and written comments to the ministry and these were incorporated into the final bill. Another result of this has been the increased appreciation by stakeholders that research is a key aspect in policy formulation. It is important for actors to continue dialoguing and sharing outcomes from their projects, especially success stories and best practices that contribute to better policy and planning. ACTS is keen on continuing with the work started in this project as the policy moves from the formulation stage to the implementation stage. We are currently exploring opportunities to continue the roundtable series and job shadowing scheme"

