

Regional Conference

Mechanisms for effectively financing local authorities to support adaptation to climate change in the Sahel:

Lessons learned and opportunities for scaling

24 and 25 April 2019, Bamako, Mali

Hôtel de l'Amitié

ANALYTICAL REPORT



May 2019

Acknowledgments

This report was written as part of a project entitled Decentralising Climate Funds (DCF), which was implemented in Mali and Senegal with the financial support of the British Government (UKAid) through the BRACED programme. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of DFID.

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Introduction

From 24 to 25 April 2019, the Government of Mali hosted a regional conference in the Hotel de l'Amitié in Bamako on the following theme: Mechanisms for effectively financing local authorities to support adaptation to climate change in the Sahel: Lessons learned and opportunities for scaling.

Organised by the Agence Nationale d'Investissement des Collectivités Territoriales (ANICT), in partnership with the Decentralising Climate Funds (DCF) consortium, made up of Near East Foundation (NEF), Innovation, Environnement, Développement en Afrique (IED Afrique), and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), the Conference is part of regional, national and international efforts to engage stakeholders around the problems of climate change, local governance of climate-related issues, and the mobilisation of financial resources to help populations adapt to climate change and become more resilient—particularly in the least developed countries.

Decentralising Climate Funds (DCF) is a project implemented in Mali and Senegal to deal with the challenges posed by climate change in Kaffrine Region, Senegal, and Mopti Region, Mali. The action research project was implemented over four years (2015-2019). It provided evidence that local communities can become more resilient to climate change when decentralized governance frameworks and institutions are reinforced, contributing to more inclusive and effective planning that reflects local adaptation priorities and the delivery of funds to the grassroots level.

Box 1: Decentralising climate funds in Mali and Senegal

Decentralising Climate Funds (DCF) is a research-action and advocacy project supporting communities in Mali and Senegal to become more resilient to climate change through access to locally controlled adaptation funds. Resilience investments are identified and prioritised by local communities through a participatory process that is inclusive of women. Planning and funding mechanisms are embedded in local and national systems. We share the data collected locally on this experience with local, national and international audiences, to encourage greater decentralisation of climate funds. This project is part of the BRACED programme, which is funded by the Government of the United Kingdom and is implemented by Near East Foundation (NEF), Innovation, Environnement et Développement en Afrique (IED Afrique), and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

The Conference brought together more than a hundred participants, including representatives from about ten different countries and a great diversity of stakeholders (representatives from institutions of the Republic of Mali, administrative entities, local authorities, technical and financial partners, decentralization specialists, researchers, students). This diversity of participants allowed for very rich contributions to the discussions.

I. Conference objectives

The Conference's general objective was to permit the various groups of stakeholders to share their experiences and learning in order to identify viable strategies that Sahelian countries could adopt to promote climate-resilient economic development.

Specifically, the conference aimed to:

- Present the challenges and opportunities related to national policies for funding adaptation to climate change.
- Exchange information on successful experiences in funding local adaptation in Senegal, Mali and East Africa.
- Encourage key national, regional, and international partners in Mali, Senegal and in the sub-region and beyond to consider the way forward and the political and financial commitments needed to translate the experience of the DCF pilot into transformative and sustainable change on a large scale.

In this respect, the conference was an opportunity to exchange on evidence-based data and ground-breaking experiences, opportunities and challenges in funding climate change adaptation policies in Africa and to explore the options and modalities to scale up experiences nationally.

Box 2: Principles for implementing the decentralisation of climate funds



II. Format of the Conference

The opening ceremony was presided by the General Secretary of the Ministry for Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, in the presence of the representative of the Department for International Development (DFID), the country director of NEF Mali (consortium leader), and the National Director of ANICT.

The Conference was organised in a format which combined presentations in plenary meetings and expert panels. Discussions focused on the following key themes :

- “Challenges facing Mali and opportunities created by adapting to climate change – the key role of local authorities” (keynote presentation followed by an expert panel);
- “Feedback on the experiences on the decentralised management of climate funds in the Sahel through the Decentralised Climate Funds project in Mali and Senegal”;
- “Sharing of experience on initiatives implemented in Mali, Kenya and Tanzania”;
- “Opportunities and challenges in scaling up experience on funding local adaptation to climate change”;
- “The experience of local authorities in strengthening resilience to climate change”;
- “Access to climate funds and funding of climate resilient development”;
- “How to seize the opportunity to decentralise the funding of climate adaptation policies change at the national level? Towards a roadmap.”

Participants took an active part in the various sessions, particularly in strategic plenary and panel sessions on the last two themes. To facilitate this, discussion groups were set up and moderated by “discussants” designated among elected officials, civil society representatives, members of committees specialised in the adaptation to climate change, and specialists from the Green Climate Fund.

III. Outcome of the Conference

The outcome of the Conference can generally be divided in three parts: findings, lessons learnt and recommendations.

Findings

Conference participants noted the following issues, challenges and opportunities:

- It is currently very difficult for communities in the Sahel to access funding for climate change adaptation. Indeed, in spite of opportunities and commitments made by technical and financial partners, only a small proportion of global funds mobilised reach the most vulnerable communities at the local level (about 10%);
- The reasons for this include a lack of awareness of the various sources of funding, the complexity of the conditions and procedures to access funds and a lack of collective strategies to mobilise resources developed by local authorities;
- Local stakeholders focus a lot of their attention on the Green Climate Fund, but there are many innovative sources of funding which are easier for local authorities to access;
- Institutional frameworks which support the decentralisation of climate funds exist in the countries concerned. Under these frameworks, the process of accreditation of ANICT in Mali, and the creation of a multi-stakeholder platform in Senegal can both contribute to institutionalise the model of decentralised funding initiated by DCF;
- Funding of climate change adaptation policies must take into account the urgent need to fight food insecurity, poverty and long-term development needs in the fight against climate change;
- The transfer of climate adaptation skills from the central State to local authorities is effective in both countries. It allows local authorities to play an increasingly central role in development finance, on the condition that financial resources are also transferred;
- The implementation of DCF provided evidence of a more efficient mechanism, which could be used by the State to fund decentralised resilient development in the face of climate change;
- Communities prioritise investments that offer immediate and substantive economic advantages and strengthen the local economy, livelihoods and basic services – contributing to sustainable relationships, understanding and trust.

Main lessons learnt

In connection with these findings, conference participants shared the following experiences:

- Better knowledge of territories and local actors, combined with valuing local knowledge, is key to successful implementation of national climate adaptation strategies;
- Capacity building for local actors is necessary and will allow them to develop bankable projects that could benefit from climate funding opportunities;
- Public policies that ignore or undermine local adaptation strategies tend to produce impacts on local livelihoods that are even more negative than climate change;
- As climate adaptation in the Sahel is first and foremost local, it is essential to find efficient mechanisms for channelling climate funds directly to communities;
- Any initiatives to decentralise climate funds must try to synergize decisionmaking at various scales and across local territories.
- Building the capacities of local actors, in particular those of local authorities' staff, is a pre-requisite to effective governance of climate funds;
- It is necessary to find actors committed in the fight against climate change and the decentralisation of climate funds, to give local authorities a central role in the initiative and in carrying out climate change adaptation and mitigation projects;
- Community institutions can narrow the gap in planning between communities and governments by introducing local knowledge and perception;
- Performance criteria chosen specifically to fit local contexts and approaches not only guarantee quality, but also lead to better performance and ensure that investments are suited to community priorities in adapting to climate change.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were adopted at the end of the Conference:

1. Embed climate adaptation funding in local authorities' regular budgets, rather than in a sectoral approach;
2. Ensure the expansion of planning across national contexts; nearly half of communes still lack development plans at the end of the mandated timeframes for their development;
3. Focus on learning and capacity building, more than on investments. Mastering processes, approaches and lessons learnt are among the most important dimensions;

4. Put local authorities at the heart of national adaptation strategies by establishing a sustainable mechanism to help them build capacities and finance climate adaptation;
5. Develop cooperation and solidarity between local governments and financial structures by implementing projects which transcend administrative and national boundaries;
6. Develop a clear strategy to scale up the DFC;
7. Promote local knowledge and know-how and build actors' capacities through tailored training programmes suited to regional specificities;
8. Provide alternative green technologies which can facilitate the transition to a climate-resilient, low carbon economy;
9. Integrate climate change into local authorities' economic, social and cultural development planning and budgeting;
10. Ensure mobilization of domestic and external resources;
11. Create an operational and sustainable climate-funding scheme building on experience in decentralising climate adaptation funds in Senegal, Mali, Kenya and Tanzania. For central governments and relevant technical ministries, facilitate the sharing of lessons and opportunities to scale-up this experience.
12. Associations of locally elected officials must advocate among their members, the State and technical financial partners to support the mechanism's scale-up; to this end, they should first adapt their local planning systems;
13. Regional institutional engagement (BAD, CEDEAO, UEMOA, CILSS, among others) should be put in place and carried out by relevant ministries, so that successful models of decentralised funding of climate change adaptation can be taken into account in climate finance mechanisms;
14. Help local authorities access existing funds by making access procedures simpler, for example by developing a guide to access to climate funds in Senegal or translating the forms of the Green Climate Funds into French.

IV. Conclusion

Over two days of intense debates and exchange, the Bamako Conference allowed participants to strengthen their understanding of the experience with decentralised climate funds in Sahel and about sources of funding at the disposal of local authorities. It also permitted them to highlight the challenges and opportunities associated with expanding the roles and responsibilities of local authorities in managing climate funds.

Key messages and recommendations of the discussions, which drew from the experience of local government and local knowledge, constituted an important first step for elected representatives in terms of learning and awareness-building on the place and role of local authorities in climate change governance.

For ANICT and its partners, the Conference is an important step in understanding and managing the challenges which come with mobilising climate funds, and above all in building technical and operational capacities necessary to directly access and manage green funds.

Annex

All documents pertaining to the conference are available here:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1DIKJ202BGLhbGmsuqaO2-nrwY8UXzX1H>