Climate-sensitive community strategies and local planning

Formal planning systems need to place much greater emphasis on local knowledge and insights to ensure that climate adaptation measures strengthen local livelihoods and resilience. The tools used in participatory resilience-building approaches are adapted to local contexts and can be embedded in formal local planning systems, enabling endogenous insights and knowledge about climate adaptation and resilience-building strategies to be institutionalised in local government decision-making systems.

Summary

Sahelian states and communities have long employed adaptation strategies to create societies that are resilient to climate extremes, variability and other shocks, but they have been particularly hard hit by climate change since the 1970s. Variable rainfall has exacerbated droughts and land degradation across the region (NEF/IIED/IED-Afrique Consortium, 2014).

In this context, it is appropriate for development policies, programmes and projects to support initiatives to improve local livelihoods and thus strengthen people's resilience to the adverse effects of climate change and other shocks. However, it is important to consider whether these measures reflect the interests and needs of the communities concerned. Do strategic documents reflect valuable local knowledge? Do planning documents take sufficient account of climate change?

This paper will share some of the lessons learned from the Decentralising Climate Funds (DCF) programme's methodology for assessing resilience to climate change, and demonstrate how certain tools can contribute to paradigm change and facilitate better climate governance at the local level. We consider DCF's methodological approach in relation to the broader issues of decentralisation, participatory local development and the use of climate information to guide strategic choices.

Introduction

The DCF programme in Senegal and Mali makes funding available to local governments and community-based organisations so that they can invest in locally identified and prioritised public good investments that will help communities adapt to the effects of climate change. DCF is a pilot programme that seeks to strengthen current planning systems and use local adaptation strategies for better and more climate-sensitive local development planning.

This paper will share the lessons learned from the methodological approach developed for the DCF resilience assessments in Senegal and discuss the most effective tools for integrating climate change into planning frameworks. The aim is to help improve the national guide to local planning used by territorial authorities and to make local knowledge a central element of climate-sensitive planning processes.

The following points will be considered:

- Limitations of the current planning system and its lack of connection with community strategies
- Putting local communities at the heart of the planning process
- Tools for resilience analysis
- Lessons learned
- Conclusion

Limitations of the current planning system

In Senegal, decentralisation provides a formal framework for local people to express their views and participate in local development. It helps bring citizens closer to decision-making processes and ensure that communities are managed in their best interests (Balengana, 2010). As such, it is an ideal framework for citizen-controlled public action with planning documents that take account of local climate adaptation strategies. Locally identified and prioritised

adaptation options usually provide relevant responses that can build resilience and better enable communities to deal with the uncertainties of climate variability.

Unfortunately, local governments have limited capacity to incorporate climate considerations and local adaptation strategies into their planning systems (Keïta and Koulibaly, 2017). Due to financial constraints, investments in social sectors such as education or health are prioritised without considering links to resilience. Integrating disaster prevention or climate risk management into planning processes may not be regarded as a priority. Moreover, local governments lack the resources to integrate meteorological information in local planning systems. They also may take little account of vulnerable sectors of the population, such as women and children, who are worst affected by the negative impacts of climate change. Strategic documents on local-level climate adaptation could be vastly improved by taking greater account of local knowledge and understanding of the context, but this is often overlooked.

Putting local communities at the heart of the planning process

This is the context in which the DCF project operates in the Kaffrine region of Senegal. It is a pilot action-research programme that aims to build local people's resilience and reduce their vulnerability to climate extremes and other shocks, by improving local authorities' institutional capacity to manage climate funds and finance public good investments identified and prioritised by the communities concerned.

In its initial phase, the project conducted resilience assessments to comprehensively study vulnerability and the conditions for resilience to climate change in targeted communities. The resilience assessments focused on women and youth in order to better target project interventions and ensure that they offered an inclusive reflection of local priorities.

This procedure used a participatory approach and tools that were adapted to the local context. These tools can also be incorporated into local planning systems so that the community's views and knowledge about climate adaptation and resilience strategies can be institutionalised in local government decision-making systems.

Definition of resilience

- Resilience is the ability of a system to cope with stress and shocks. BRACED defines resilience to climate change as "the long-term capacity of a system or process to deal with extreme meteorological events and climate change while continuing to develop."
- As there is no single model for building resilience, it is essential to define who or what needs to be made resilient and the kind of future shock or change that needs to be accommodated. Therefore, indicators of resilience to climate change are specific to the situation, not generic.

We suggest that the three complementary tools described below can be used to integrate resilience to climate change into local planning guides. These tools enable local communities to share their experiences and are sufficiently light and practical to be incorporated into existing planning systems. The three tools are:

- A dashboard for institutional analysis
- A vulnerability matrix for risk analysis
- A diagnostic table to identify adaptation priorities

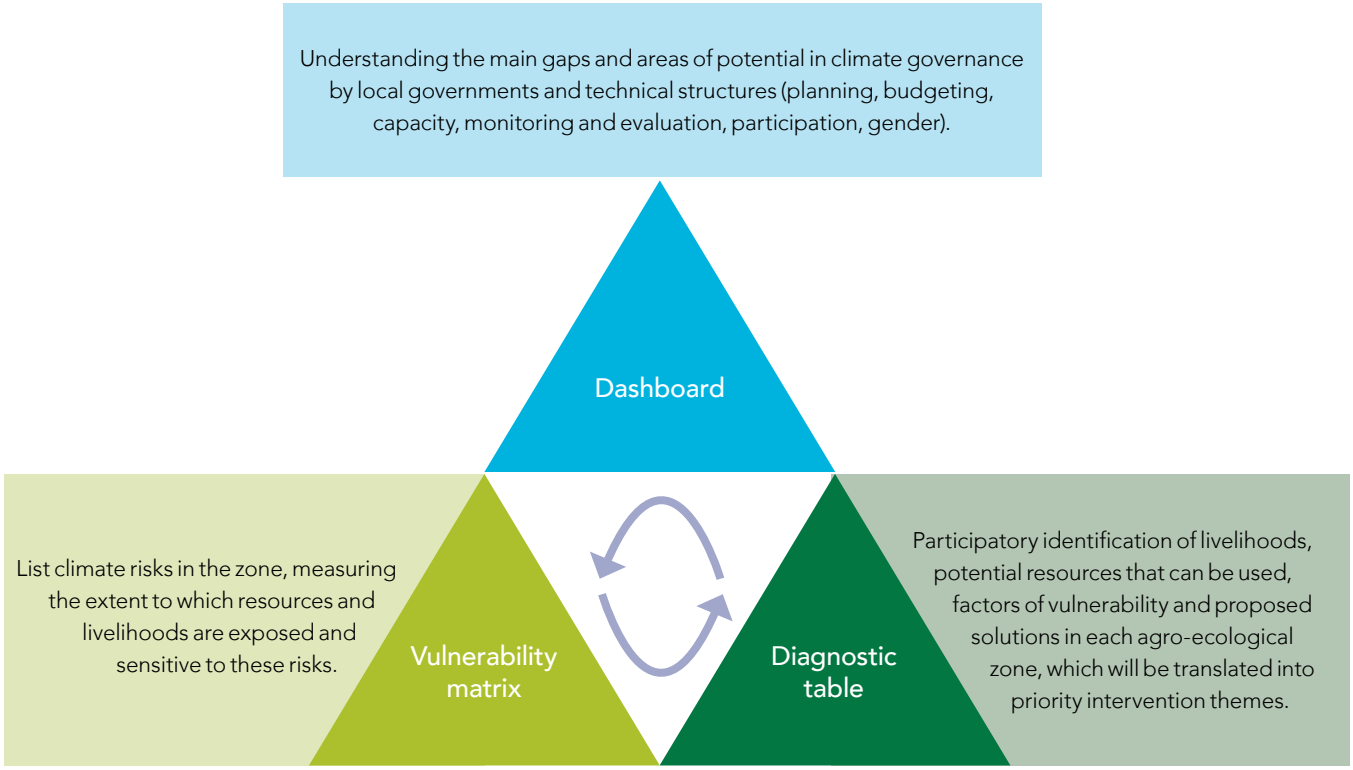
Short description of the tools

A participatory resilience assessment using these tools was conducted in the Kaffrine region of Senegal in 2015. Findings on its results and the relevance of the methodology used to support local government planning and decision making are presented in a separate DCF working paper.

The tools for resilience studies were also tested to assess their added value for decentralisation and climate governance.

The **dashboard for institutional analysis** covers all aspects of territorial climate governance (finance, planning, monitoring and evaluation, etc.). It is a simple, inexpensive and reasonably rapid tool that can supplement the national guide to local planning, consider aspects of the institutional environment and identify the capacities that local actors need to influence the process of planning for adaptation to climate change.

Figure 1: Tools for resilience analysis



The **vulnerability matrix** helps identify the climate extremes and other shocks encountered in the locality, and the extent to which existing natural resources and livelihoods are vulnerable to these climate extremes.

The **diagnostic table** helps identify the types of intervention that can make local people and production systems more resilient to climate extremes and other shocks. Putting local communities at the heart of the process ensures that their own adaptation strategies are taken into account, fulfilling a key condition for effective citizen control of public action as defined in the national strategy for decentralisation.

The advantage of all these tools is that they usually require a range of actors to gather the necessary information, and can add real value to territorial climate governance by contributing to more effective local adaptation planning and climate-sensitive budgeting.

Main lessons learned

The importance of indigenous knowledge in climate-sensitive local planning.
Observations have shown that local planning processes usually involve simple community consultation rather than genuine and effective popular participation. The emphasis seems to be on identifying local needs rather than a real desire to support local adaptation strategies. If they are to build more resilient communities and production systems, formal planning systems need to incorporate climate change and put indigenous knowledge (with all its insights on the local context) at the heart of climate adaptation. The tools proposed in this paper are highly relevant because they not only correct the lack of emphasis on participation in the national planning guide, but also offer a clear opportunity to incorporate climate change into planning processes.

The need for a collaborative procedure in climate-sensitive planning.
Climate change is a crosscutting issue, and therefore requires an integrated approach to generate sustainable solutions. By bringing together different actors at different levels with different types of information, the proposed tools combine various sources of knowledge (indigenous and conventional, each with their own strengths and weaknesses) that can be used to get a much more objective picture, interpretation and understanding of the issue, balance the information and use it to plan more effectively for the benefit of local populations.

The need to build local capacities to adapt to climate change.
Until now, local planning processes took insufficient account of the information derived from local land practices, living environments or sectoral guidelines. The local executive and communities involved in local development actions were trained by state technical structures (for agriculture, livestock, water and forests, regional development agencies, etc.) that are ill-equipped to deal with climate change. Effective action in this domain requires strong institutions

with competent staff at every level to properly coordinate interventions, establish links with other sectors and address the crosscutting issue of climate change. By considering the institutional aspects and competences of local government and technical structures, the proposed tools facilitate more detailed institutional assessments and contribute to better governance of adaptation initiatives.

Conclusion

The resilience assessment approach takes account of local development issues, particularly decentralisation and climate change, in order to get a clear picture of the levels of vulnerability and conditions for resilience in local communities and resources. The approach aims to correct some of the deficiencies in local government-run development processes, using specially adapted tools to gather relevant information on resilience to climate change. Assessments start with participatory studies to identify the characteristics of production systems and livelihoods in different agro-ecological zones, followed by exercises to determine the vulnerability of natural resources and livelihoods, levels of poverty, food security, etc., and the institutional environment within local governments. The added value of the proposed tools lies first in their ability to complement the national guide to local planning by integrating climate change into the planning process; and second in opening the way for citizens to inform public actions, as the tools require a genuinely participatory approach rather than the community consultation previously favoured by local authorities.

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The project

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