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Policy brief

Climate change governance in Tanzania: challenges and opportunities



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Headline issues

- Climate change is not high on Tanzania's development agenda
- Climate governance would be strengthened by improved coordination, information flows and resource allocation
- Situating climate change within narratives of sustainable development or green growth may be beneficial to development and resilience

Summary

Since 2015 climate change policy has taken a back seat in Tanzania's political agenda. Instead, the Government has prioritised rapid industrialisation and infrastructure development.

Governance challenges impede Tanzania's ability to integrate its responses to climate-related issues into national and sectoral policies, and to design, implement and enforce policies. There is weak coordination between peers and levels of government, limited scientific and policy information, and insufficient capacity and resources.

Tanzania needs to take further action in order to address climate change adequately. Adopting a narrative of 'green growth' may be a more effective way to advance resilience, and eventually support a transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy, while increasing access to electricity.

Tanzania would also benefit from: creating regular, topical, cross-ministerial forums; strengthening formal and informal 'low cost' channels of communication; strengthening flows of information upwards, potentially facilitated by civil society organisations; and creating an open database of available research and experts, mapping responsibilities and expertise.

Policy briefs provide analysis on topical issues, presenting specific recommendations to inform ongoing policy debates. Drawing on the Grantham Research Institute's expertise, they summarise either our research findings or the state of knowledge about a particular issue.

This policy brief has been written by **Michal Nachmany**.

“The 2015 general election brought about a renewed focus by the Government on industrialisation, primarily based on fossil fuels”

Introduction: aims and methods

This policy brief is aimed at policymakers and development partners who wish to better understand the governance challenges and opportunities relevant to climate change policymaking in Tanzania. Based on in-depth interviews with policymakers, civil society experts, academics and development partners in the country (see Box 1), it outlines the key governance challenges that Tanzania faces in the implementation of its climate policies, describes the drivers of and barriers to climate-relevant policy processes, and concludes with policy recommendations.

Aligning climate change with national priorities

Climate risks are exacerbating already intense pressures on natural resources, as is rapid population growth. To address these risks, Tanzania has developed (mainly before 2015) a diverse policy

infrastructure, governing various environmental and climate-related issues. In addition, it has developed a portfolio of national climate policies and incorporated climate considerations into various policies. (For a full list of climate policies, see Pardoe et al. 2017.)

However, the 2015 general election brought about a renewed focus by the Government on industrialisation, primarily based on fossil fuels. Our interviews with multiple actors revealed that the place of climate change in the national agenda has dropped significantly. Whereas previously climate change was identified as a key policy issue (evident in the multiple policies that incorporated it), interviewees attested that it is no longer regarded by the President’s office as an issue of importance. While both mitigation of greenhouse gases and adaptation to climate change are addressed in policy documents, interviewees primarily highlighted issues relating to adaptation (e.g. climate-resilient agriculture) and

Box 1. Research scope and data source

The data for this brief was acquired primarily through 29 semi-structured interviews, each approximately one hour long, with 41 key informants (see below). Some of the interviews had more than one interviewee. The interviews took place in Dar es Salaam, Arusha and Morogoro during September and October 2017. Zanzibar was excluded from the research because the island has independent policies and governance structures.

Interview questions focused on policy and governance processes, dynamics among actors, and key challenges and opportunities to develop and implement climate policy in Tanzania and engage with international climate negotiations.

Affiliations and numbers of interviewees:

- Government ministry and agency officials – 20
- Civil society organisation representatives – 10
- Members of Parliament – 3
- Academics – 3
- Others (development partners, private sector, local government officials) – 5

Note: Interviews were not carried out in the capital, Dodoma, because although Parliament resides there, and at the time of the interviews the Government was in the process of relocating there, most parliamentarians and government officials still conducted their affairs predominantly from Dar es Salaam.

rarely mentioned mitigation. Tanzania's historic emissions are low, but they are increasing significantly and this is set to continue driven by fossil fuel-based power generation and population growth.

The renewed strategy of rapid industrialisation and heavy investment in infrastructure, without considering opportunities for low-carbon, resilient development, may lock the country into a high-carbon path and jeopardise its development due to increased climate-related impacts. However, the main concern raised by interviewees with regard to industrialisation was not rising emissions but rather the shift of focus away from sustainable development.

Even within line ministries, climate considerations are viewed as a subset of broader agendas – climate change is often regarded as only one way to consider issues such as development, poverty alleviation, food security and land management. High levels of uncertainty over future projections of rainfall (Conway et al., 2017), and the long-term horizons used for predicting climate change, can make the political assessment of climate change a low-priority issue.

Many of the interviewees felt that framing issues as being about climate change was sometimes a 'marketing' technique, especially for engaging with development partners. For example, applying the label 'climate-smart' to agriculture, which means little to farmers, has enabled the Ministry of Agriculture to engage more effectively and convincingly with development partners: interviewees confirmed that many respond more positively to projects that are framed around climate change.

Opportunities for addressing governance challenges

While there is an elaborate policy infrastructure in place, institutional infrastructure is somewhat lacking for systematically addressing climate change. Even well-established institutional arrangements suffer from governance¹ challenges such as fragmentation, poor coordination, and under-resourcing, which prevent them from fully fulfilling their functions.

The focal point for climate change is the Division of Environment in the Vice President's Office (VPO), which is a prominent ministry reporting directly to the Vice-President. The VPO coordinates climate policy and handles Tanzania's international climate engagement, including responsibility for the formulation and implementation of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).²

However, the VPO has a small climate team as part of the Division of Environment. It is common for the responsibility for climate change to be bound together with other environmental issues: environmental units in the line ministries are in charge of multiple environmental issues, including climate change, but none is designated solely as climate-change-specific. For example, this is true of the Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries; Energy; Water and Irrigation; and Natural Resources and Tourism. Our interviews revealed that this has been framed by the Government as a conscious decision to not create an 'artificial distinction' between issues. Treating climate as one of multiple environmental issues means that it remains sidelined in planning processes.

“The main concern raised with regard to industrialisation was not rising emissions but rather the shift of focus away from sustainable development”

1. We adopt a broad definition of 'governance', to encompass the creation and conduct of institutions. These include organisations (governmental and non-governmental), formal rules and policy frameworks, and informal norms, processes and practices that prescribe behavioural roles for actors, constrain activity and shape expectations (Ostrom, 1986; Kooiman, 1993).

2. The Paris Agreement on climate change stipulates that countries submit intended national goals and actions in a document referred to as a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which should be implemented through domestic climate change policies and actions.

“Certain topical issues are managed between multiple functions and line ministries, with limited regular communication between them”

An overview of the intricate structure of sub-national institutions is not within the scope of this study, but in brief: the President’s Office – Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) is the function in charge of linking the national and local levels and environmental officers are trusted with conveying needs arising from the local level to the line ministries and in turn implementing national-level policies in local governments.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) in the area of climate change and development have grown in number and action. Many of them work at the grassroots level, filling a gap that the ministries and their subnational structures cannot due to capacity issues. Many CSOs are coordinated by two main umbrella organisations – Forum CC and the Tanzania Natural Resource Forum. Both forums are regularly invited to contribute to policy processes, initiate and carry out research, implement projects and engage in advocacy activities.

Government officials openly acknowledge civil society’s role in providing pertinent information to government, and leading on pilot projects. However, CSOs are not guaranteed a seat at the table in all policy processes. For example, they have not been included in the National Adaptation Plan team, nor were they involved in the updating of the INDC³ to an NDC.

Coordination is limited between peers and levels of government

Coordination among different actors and functions is probably the most significant challenge to the design and implementation of climate policy, cited by almost all state interviewees. These challenges appear both horizontally – among

peers, and vertically – between levels of government. They are underpinned by both structural and procedural issues.

Certain topical issues are managed between multiple functions and line ministries, with limited regular communication between them. For example, strategic questions with regard to water allocation fall within the responsibility of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Energy (concerning hydroelectric power generation). Managing strategies for allocation, as well as tactical responses to demands and incidents, requires close collaboration between multiple actors.

Another prominent example is the use of energy. The Ministry of Energy oversees electricity production and distribution but approximately 90% of the primary energy used in Tanzania is derived from biomass, which is overseen by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. The Rural Electrification Agency, overseen by the Ministry of Energy, plays a role in bridging the transitions from non-electric to electric energy. However, in both these examples, both strategic and regular interaction among actors is limited, informed by competing agendas, cumbersome communication protocols between peers, and stress on resources limiting meetings, travel and time.

In terms of vertical coordination, policy design appears very much as a top-down process. While information flows in both directions – from local level up to the line ministries and back down – it is limited by structural constraints and a reliance on PO-RALG officers, who are often not topical experts. This is further complicated by limited capacity and lack of resources,

3. In anticipation of the Paris Agreement, countries made an Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC).



Mwamanongu Village water source (Meatu district, Shinyanga region), Tanzania, where water most often comes from open holes dug in the sand of dry riverbeds, and is invariably contaminated. Fresh water is likely to become increasingly scarce with climate change. Water levels is one of the areas in which scientific information is currently lacking, as highlighted by our interview respondents.

Photo: Bob Metcalf

among both PO-RALG and line ministries, to engage the grassroots level in policy processes, and by lack of budget for the line ministries to implement programmes. This disconnect is acknowledged both by national-level actors and at the local level (mainly represented by civil society organisations).

Information is lacking

A lack of credible, timely information to support decision-making is another major limitation for policymakers. When asked about what information would be most useful, interviewees cited a need for both scientific information (e.g. on water levels, rainfall patterns, agricultural output levels) and policy options and recommendations. Some of them noted that policymakers have limited capacity to engage with purely academic outputs: they expressed a need to present research findings more concisely. Overall, policymakers appear to have little awareness of existing research on climate change from either Tanzania or the international research community.

While senior academics are often invited to participate in policy

consultations, their research agendas are not driven by policy needs, and connections between academia and the policy community are limited. Civil society is an important information provider, creating and curating knowledge from the grassroots level upwards. However, CSOs are frequently dependent on grants, often from international partners, which limits these outputs. Furthermore, numerous strands of information, offered by multiple organisations (often not synthesised among organisations) and not responding to explicit policy-driven requests, may result in unused publications.

Lack of capacity restricts collaboration and learning

Insufficient capacity and limited resources impede all actors' ability to carry out their functions efficiently and effectively. Budgetary constraints impact on the ability to host meetings and workshops, or to travel to them, reducing opportunities for collaboration and learning. As summarised by a government official: "We don't meet, because when we want to bring people

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“Forging a close alignment between the national and international processes is critical to creating credible pathways to meeting climate goals”

here... I have to pay travel, and *per diems*, I have to make sure that we eat. We will not spend here even [on] water.”

Many policymakers (from the VPO, line ministries, and Parliament) do not make many field visits to local areas, mainly due to time and financial constraints. This impedes their ability to understand the realities and monitor the implementation of policies and also makes vertical integration difficult.

Finally, documents are not widely translated from English into Swahili, limiting the ability to widely disseminate messages about climate-smart agriculture, for example, to local populations.

Strengthening the connection between national policymaking and the international process

The Paris Agreement requires that countries implement their NDCs through national laws and policies. In order to make international commitments feasible and compatible with the country’s needs, the NDC does not operate in a vacuum, and needs to be informed by the existing policy landscape. Forging a close alignment between the national and international processes is therefore critical to creating credible pathways to meeting climate goals. As described below, Tanzania has been active on both national and international processes, but would benefit from strengthening the link between them.

The Vice President’s Office, as Tanzania’s climate focal point, represents the country in international climate negotiations, and coordinates country reporting in line with the requirements of the United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. The VPO has coordinated the development of documents corresponding to the international climate process – it submitted a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) (2007), and launched a subsequent National Adaptation Plan Process (NAP) in 2015.⁴

The INDC was submitted in 2015, following a brief stakeholder consultation process coordinated by the VPO, which included line ministries, civil society, academia and the private sector. Working groups met several times and document drafts were circulated to the line ministries for review before submission. Parliament was not involved.⁵ Eventually, shortage of time led to the INDC reflecting in large part the 2012 National Climate Change Strategy. An update of the INDC is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2018.

Despite the existence of structured consultation and authoring processes, there have been mixed reports on their effectiveness: some line ministries were more involved than others, with officials from some ministries indicating they were barely aware of the INDC. Ministries that already had climate-relevant policies in place tended to be more involved and perhaps as a result the INDC was comprised mainly of existing policy intentions and actions. However, even within the ministries that participated more substantively in the INDC consultations, interviewees admitted that a lack of resources meant that they could not attend all meetings, and that they often did not have sufficient time to provide feedback or comment on document drafts.

Overall, the level of engagement with the international climate change discourse and community

4. Further details about Tanzania’s NAP process are available in GIZ (2017).

5. In April 2018, Parliament voted unanimously to ratify the Paris Agreement. Apart from the INDC, Tanzania has not submitted any Biennial Update Reports (as one of the world’s ‘least developed countries’, Tanzania may submit reports at its own discretion).

was perceived to be low among most of our interviewees. There is limited evidence that line ministries continued to be involved in any climate change activity stemming from the international level after the formulation of the INDC. In other words, little input from the negotiations and international initiatives such as the NDC Partnership has flowed back down to the ministries to influence practices or support further development of targets and policies.

A weak connection between national policymaking and the international process may mean development partners are less likely to give support to Tanzania and may also negatively affect the country's access to climate funding (see UNDP, 2016). However, a recent positive step in terms of climate finance was the accreditation of the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC) as the national implementing entity to the Global Adaptation Fund.

Outlook and policy recommendations

1. Adopting a narrative of 'green growth' may be a more effective way to advance resilience, and eventually support a transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy

While the current political economy in Tanzania does not regard climate change as a high priority issue, there seems to be a varying but overall good understanding in the line ministries that many of the issues with which they are trusted are heavily climate-related. When interacting with international actors (e.g. development partners), government and civil society organisations may benefit from framing climate-relevant projects

through an explicit climate-change prism: this may open up new opportunities for international funding and support, and generate a common language, thus fostering coordination between the line ministries. However, we suggest that efforts to advance climate-related policies within government may benefit from parallel narratives, such as green growth or the Sustainable Development Goals: a domestically or locally-focused, development-oriented narrative may gain more traction and face less resistance than the climate-focused ones.

2. Improving both structural and procedural approaches is advisable given that coordination challenges are a significant barrier to advancing issues.

Structurally, we recommend the creation and support of regular, topical, cross-ministerial forums that would systematically and holistically oversee certain topics (e.g. water or energy). The creation of forums alone would not address resource challenges, making regular meetings difficult. Therefore, in procedural terms, it would also be advisable to strengthen formal and informal 'low cost' channels of communication between existing (and future new) structures. This could be achieved, for example, via mobile messaging groups (e.g. using WhatsApp) between peers who often face similar challenges and would benefit from real-time, non-mediated communication as well as reduced response time for dealing with emergencies and crises as they arise. These groups could include, for example, policy officers from environmental units in different line ministries, or river basin officers.

Finally, in order to enable more effective coordination and stakeholder engagement in policy

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processes, coordinating bodies should allow more time for input into processes and for comments on draft policy documents.

3. Acknowledging the importance of strong vertical integration between the national and the local levels should be an intrinsic part of implementing policy.

Strengthening the flows of information, potentially facilitated by CSOs, who have a strong presence at the local level and usually a seat at the table in national policy forums, will result in more informed, evidence-based policy responses, while supporting local buy-in and enhancing legitimacy for policies.

4. In order to strengthen accessibility to and use of information, and to identify research gaps, we recommend creating an open database.

This would include available research and information on climate-related issues into which academics, policy researchers and CSOs (local and international) could feed relevant research. Policymakers could use this platform to publish their information needs. This could potentially be led by one of the leading universities in Tanzania in collaboration with the VPO. Additionally, and while not free of challenges (not least political resistance and personal data protection considerations), a database could be created of all climate-related functions in

government, CSOs, academia and beyond. This would map out areas of responsibility and expertise, enabling people to seek advice and support outside of their immediate or default network.

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