

WORKING PAPER



The institutional context for tackling climate change in South Asia

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ACTION ON CLIMATE TODAY

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South Asia is at the forefront of global efforts to tackle climate change. The region is disproportionately impacted by climate change, and governments are putting in place policies and investing in new technology to build the resilience of the economy and people.¹ However, the success of these initiatives in reducing the long-term risk of climate change depends on the institutional context.

The institutional context for tackling climate change refers to issues such as the level of institutional capacity, political will and available financial resources. These aspects define whether and why tackling climate change is a priority for governments and their ability to define and deliver effective adaptation strategies.

Measuring the institutional context for tackling climate change is important for identifying the opportunities and barriers for effective adaptation in a specific location. It can therefore shape the design of a possible intervention and explain why it has been a success, or not.

This paper provides highlights of the institutional context for tackling climate change across South Asia based on an assessment carried out as part of the Action on Climate Today (ACT) initiative (see Box 1). The assessment took place in late 2015–early 2016 at the national level in Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Pakistan, and at the sub-national level in six states in India (Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Maharashtra and Odisha). The methodology used in this assessment is summarised in Box 2.

The results from this assessment process are location specific, and it is difficult to draw regional conclusions. However, this paper explains some of the trends and commonalities across the different national and sub-national contexts, and highlights where some of the differences lie.

Box 1: About the Action on Climate Today (ACT) initiative

ACT is a five-year Department for International Development (DFID)-funded regional initiative which aims to transform systems of planning and delivery for adaptation to climate change. It is also attracting further climate change investment from the public and private sector. Managed by Oxford Policy Management, the initiative is working with governments in Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Pakistan, and in six states in India (Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Maharashtra and Odisha). Some of the activities include linking planning and budgetary frameworks on climate change, developing decision-making support tools and creating strong systems for transparency, accountability and feedback. In addition, the initiative is providing technical support to design and deliver targeted climate resilience measures, such as early-warning systems for natural disasters, climate-smart agriculture practices and urban flood planning.

¹ CDKN (2014). "The IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report: What's in it for South Asia". Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN).

Box 2: Methodology for Climate Change Context Assessment

Every year, the ACT team carries out an assessment of the context for tackling climate change in each of the national and sub-national locations. This provides valuable insights about the environment within which the initiative operates. This in turn informs the design and delivery of the initiative's strategy and activities. By repeating the process annually, ACT also monitors broad shifts in the governments' responses to climate change and, in some instances, highlights the initiative's contribution towards this. In each location, the process has followed a common methodology which is as streamlined and light-touch as possible.

The assessment is primarily qualitative and focused around a Key Informant Discussion of at least ten stakeholders from outside government, but who work closely with the government on climate change issues. These individuals also produce subjective ratings against some indicators. The opinions gathered from this group are then validated and refined against bilateral discussions with government officials, third party reports and documentation. Unlike a public financial management style of institutional assessment, this approach does not aim to provide an objective analysis, but uses expert opinion to explore some of the 'difficult to quantify' dimensions, such as political will and capacity. The results are not published and remain an internal working document.

The methodology for this assessment is published as a separate document.

This paper presents some of the common trends within each location against the key dimensions of the institutional context for tackling the impacts of climate change:

- Availability of accurate and relevant information on climate change and its impact on growth and development
- Awareness and understanding of key stakeholders on the risk of climate change for growth and development
- High-level political commitment to tackling climate change
- Stakeholder participation and influence in the climate change decision-making process
- Status of the policy framework for tackling climate change
- Institutional coordination for cross-sectoral action on climate change
- Mainstreaming of climate change in sector development planning
- Budgeting and finance for adaptation.

The rest of the paper discusses the results for each dimension in turn, providing some examples of whether and how countries and states differ in their institutional context.

Evidence base on climate change

A recurring explanation, from both government and civil society, for why there has not been sufficient action on climate change is a lack of evidence on how climate change will impact a specific locality and how to respond. **It is not clear whether additional research would lead to more or better action.**

The scope and strength of the evidence base on climate change is not uniform across the region. In some locations, such as Maharashtra, comprehensive vulnerability and impact assessments have been carried out covering both current and future impacts with some disaggregation at the local level. However, in Afghanistan and Chhattisgarh, the evidence base is fragmented and not complete. Except for Nepal, there has been no national or sub-national comprehensive assessment of the economic impact of climate change. All locations are constrained by relying on an insufficient number of weather stations for historical data and regional climate models with a resolution of 50 km x 50 km for future projections, which in these varied topographical areas limits the potential for useful local-level analysis.

Even the research and information which is available is not easily accessible. This limits the chance it will be read and acted upon by government. The majority of the reports on climate change are only available on the author institution's website. One therefore needs to know the report exists to be able to search for it online. Many academic institutions still publish only in academic journals, which are often not accessible to the public. There have been efforts to improve climate change knowledge management, particularly in India, at the federal level with government and civil society-led online portals housing both analysis and data on climate change (e.g. India Environment Portal, ENVIS). The situation is even worse in Afghanistan where most of the evidence has been commissioned by international donors as internal documents and it never gets published.

It is very difficult to judge the extent to which the research which exists gets acted upon, or even read, by decision makers. Most of the climate change policies and plans in the region include a chapter detailing the level of vulnerability of that location, but there is no obvious direct link between this evidence and the selection and prioritisation of adaptation options. There is also confusion between 'vulnerability' and exposure to climate change. For example, the Vulnerability Atlas of India mostly maps the degree to which different locations face different kinds of disasters, and does not give examples of the socioeconomic profiles that drive vulnerability.

There are reasons on both the supply and demand sides for why the level of research uptake is thought to be limited. The evidence that exists is sufficient to make a strong case to governments in the region that climate change poses a significant risk to development – such as the Economic Impact Assessment of Climate Change in Nepal and India's 4x4 Assessment of Climate Change Impacts. Beyond this, it is not usually targeted in a way to facilitate uptake. It is often part of a research project that has its own agenda, and is not directly linked to a current decision or issue the government is considering. A lot of the research comprehensively outlines the problem, but does not go into detail on possible adaptation options.

In many locations, particularly in Afghanistan, there is a limited culture of evidence-based decision making. However, in some locations it is common for the government itself to commission the research to inform a decision it must make. For example, in Maharashtra, the Energy Department in 2015 was actively seeking out data and analysis from the Water Department, academics and

civil society on water availability in different locations to inform the decision on whether, and where, to build a new coal-fired power plant.

These findings lead to a few key insights and recommendations. There is no evidence to suggest that new research commissioned to examine general climate change impacts will be helpful in inducing sustainable policy shifts. Instead, there is a clear need to opportunistically mobilise knowledge that exists in formats that are tailored for particular policy windows that may open from time to time across locations. There may be justification for generating fresh evidence in select cases where there is a clearly expressed demand for additional information for decision-making purposes and evidence of a knowledge gap.

Case study of a high-performing location

Maharashtra scored high in terms of the scope, accessibility and level of uptake of its evidence base on climate change. As a precursor to its State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC), a comprehensive vulnerability assessment (VA) was carried out, including district level analysis and household surveys in various climate change 'hotspots'. There has also been extensive research on the critical issue of water availability in the State. Although a lot of this research is not easily accessible to the government or the public (and the VA has not been made public), there is a culture of this research being used by the government within the decision-making process. In many cases, government officials commission pieces of analysis to inform their work. However, like all locations, the politics surrounding certain issues (e.g. sugarcane crops) often override the evidence on them. Overall, the case of Maharashtra can provide useful insights to other locations on methodologies for conducting robust VAs, using research to inform policy decisions and filling knowledge gaps in key sectors by commissioning additional research.

Awareness and understanding of climate change risks and opportunities

Different decision makers and stakeholders require different levels of awareness and understanding of climate change to be able to do their job effectively. An academic would be expected to have a very high level, whereas a senior politician would not need such a detailed level of expertise to make decisions, assuming they rely on evidence and the advice of others.

In general, politicians in the region understand enough about climate change to be able to make speeches and statements about it. For example, in September 2015 the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, declared he would prioritise climate change at the UN General Assembly, but then received widespread criticism for submitting a weak Intended Nationally Determined Contribution a few months later to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).² Similarly, government officials can produce or approve policy documents about climate change, although they rely heavily on consultants for the drafting. There is a large and growing number of experts, usually available locally from research institutions, non-

² <https://www.thethirdpole.net/2015/11/18/pakistan-offers-nothing-to-paris-climate-summit/>

governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector, that provide the necessary expertise to decision makers.

However, there are certain areas of confusion among decision makers, and even within the expert group. In particular, these areas of confusion concern the difference and connection between natural disasters and climate change. A single occurrence of flooding or drought is often either blamed on climate change completely, or the contribution of climate change is not recognised at all. Similarly, the role of some development actions (e.g. construction in flood zones) that turn an extreme weather event into a disaster tends to be undervalued. In those locations with a strong environmental conservation movement and history (e.g. Kerala) there is also a lack of clarity about what is different between this 'green' agenda and climate change. The many terms confused with climate change, such as sustainable development, green growth and resilience, are used interchangeably without any clear understanding of the differences.

There is also a tendency among decision makers to see climate change as a purely scientific issue, as well as something associated with an international debate. It is not always recognised as a development risk and connected to their political priority of reducing poverty and improving economic growth. While governments may talk competently about climate change in a broad sense, they are less clear about how to respond.

Framing debates not in terms of climate change, but the specific climate risks people face, such as droughts in Maharashtra, floods in Pakistan and storm surge in Kerala, is helpful. It ensures that the government can analyse a range of factors contributing to specific challenges, and appropriately prioritise possible solutions. In cases where climate change concerns are sacrificed for the imperatives of development, such as in the case of building on flood plains, it may be helpful to highlight the damage that the new developments/constructions are likely to suffer across different time horizons or the likely impact that they will have on flooding downstream. This would provide a way of correcting the policy direction. Finally, concise and comprehensive synthetic analyses of available data on links between natural disasters and climate (e.g. the International Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Extreme Events), as well as short knowledge products that explicitly highlight convergence and divergence in concepts that are commonly confused (e.g. sustainability, green growth and climate change), can help ensure improved understanding of key issues.

Political commitment to tackling climate change

All national and state political leaders in these locations deliver speeches that reference climate change and often pledge their commitment to tackling it. There is no public, high-level denial of its existence. As one stakeholder in Pakistan commented, "*...we now believe in climate change, but climate change is not a religion. We have to go beyond just believing in the science of something, to doing something.*"

In addition to policy statements, there are also concrete policies and plans for dealing with climate change in place, or being drafted, in all the locations that suggest it is a priority issue for the governments. However, at the national level, all these documents have either directly or indirectly responded to pressure, incentive or obligation from the UNFCCC. For example, National Adaptation Plans of Action were developed with the expectation of attracting finance. Indian State Governments had a similar top-down pressure from the central government for preparing their State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs), including the promise of funding. Many plans and policies, including those at the sectoral level, have also emerged as an output of a donor-funded programme. Although these plans tend to have been externally motivated, this does not necessarily prove a lack of political commitment. Many have certainly been supported and launched by political leaders with varying levels of government ownership.

There is certainly a high level of political commitment to tackling some of the specific climate change risks facing various locations, although this is usually framed as commitment to tackling floods or droughts rather than climate change itself. However, even for these, the real level of political will is shown when tackling climate change comes into conflict with other political priorities. For example, when a concern for flooding should prevent infrastructure being built in flood zones, or the risk of droughts should mean scaling back subsidies for sugarcane in water-scarce areas. With few exceptions, the so-called 'development' priority overrides the climate concern.

As explored in the preceding sections, there remains a perception that engaging with the impacts of climate change requires initiatives that are separate or exclusive to ongoing development programmes. This needs to be corrected. In situations where developmental and political priorities conflict with the imperatives for adaptation, timely technical advice on the deleterious impact (in the short, medium and long term) of privileging the former could be helpful in correcting the policy direction.

Participation and influence over decisions on adaptation to climate change

Given the cross-sectoral nature of tackling climate change, there are many stakeholders involved in the decision-making process. Stakeholder mapping at the national and state levels illuminates the different power relationships between the individuals and organisations (see Table 1). It highlights that while some individuals (e.g. senior politicians, unions and big business) may have high potential influence over a decision, they rarely participate in such decisions and, therefore, their actual influence is quite limited. Most decisions related to climate change are made within a designated nodal agency, usually an environment or forestry ministry or department. In all cases this agency is relatively weak, with very limited ability to enforce or even motivate other government actors.

The level of interaction between the government and civil society on climate change issues is mixed, primarily depending on the strength of civil society itself. In Afghanistan and Chhattisgarh, there are few local NGOs or research institutes working on the subject and, as such, there are

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rarely meetings or events held. At the federal level in India there are nearly weekly seminars, workshops or conferences held on climate change in New Delhi. In all cases, civil society tends to initiate such interactions and a government representative participates. Only in Pakistan and Nepal has a formal mechanism for regular interaction between government and civil society been put in place, although in both cases it is no longer active.

Citizen participation in policy formulation on climate change is limited in all locations. The normal mode of seeking the general public’s opinion is to invite civil society actors to participate in meetings. In Nepal and India, the governments have supported some initiatives to reach rural populations, using a mobile van and train, respectively, to hold conversations on climate change in different parts of the country. However, these are primarily tools for educating the public on climate change, rather than for gathering their views.

There is clearly no ‘one size fits all solution’ to enhancing the level of participation in decisions on adaptation to climate change. That said, it seems apparent that there is a clear need for NGOs in Afghanistan who have been focussing on a range of issues other than climate change to interact and engage with NGOs in India (especially those based in Delhi) that have more developed advocacy and operational programmes on adaptation. It also seems clear that the formal mechanisms that exist in Nepal and Pakistan need to be rejuvenated and, possibly, attempts made to tailor and replicate them across locations.

Table 1. Typical stakeholder mapping from across the region

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	Understanding and awareness	Priority and significance	Potential participation and influence	Actual participation and influence
Cabinet	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
Minister of Environment	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
Members of Parliament	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
Head of Planning Department	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
Secretary – Environment	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
Secretary – Line departments	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
Nodal officer CC	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
Senior/mid-level officials – Environment	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
NGOs (environment, agri)	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
Research institutes (environment, agri)	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
Large companies	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
Farmers’ unions	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
Media	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive
Donors	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive	Very comprehensive

KEY: ■ Very limited; ■ Limited; ■ Partial, ■ Comprehensive; ■ Very comprehensive

Policy framework for tackling climate change

Except for Afghanistan (where policy is under development) all locations studied have a cross-sectoral climate change policy and/or action plan, for example the National Climate Change Policy in Nepal and the National Action Plan on Climate Change in India. There is a lack of clarity on the expected purpose and role of these policy documents and whether they are a framework for mainstreaming climate change across sectors, or a set of priority adaptation actions with an eye to attracting climate finance.

In most cases, the adequacy of the policy framework is lacking. This is partly a result of the process followed to develop the document, which was usually led by consultants funded by donors with varied levels of government input and buy-in, and which did not follow a rigorous evidence-based process. In most cases, the policy document is not 'implementation-ready' and does not include details on sequencing and prioritising actions, responsible actors, budget and timeline, etc.

Although all the policy documents which exist have been formally adopted, the level of implementation is very limited. However, this is difficult to judge as only in a couple of locations (e.g. Odisha) has monitoring and reporting taken place. In many cases, the plans are an aggregate of existing or planned sectoral actions (e.g. expansion of irrigation) which have been included because of their potential contribution to adaptation. While these have been implemented, it has not been because of the plan.

Consequently, in the methodology for this assessment, the definition of implementation is whether the policy has been the catalyst for any new or improved action or investment in adaptation. For example, even if irrigation was being promoted previously, the relevant point is whether the policy has resulted in a change in the amount or type of irrigation, or how and where it is carried out. In several locations, particularly at the state level in India, the plans have been a catalyst for new discussion. They have brought different stakeholders together and supported the establishment of institutional structures. In only a few instances (e.g. India's Solar Mission) have the plans clearly resulted in additional investment. However, the National Adaptation Fund (NAF) is attempting to kick-start implementation of the SAPCCs through small project focused funding.

It seems evident that even when policy instruments to support adaptation are inadequate, still there remains a need to use these to initiate discussions with key government departments and to employ them strategically for drawing attention to the issue of adaptation. In certain cases, where a cross-cutting climate change policy is absent or where there is substantial individual interest from a government focal point from a sectoral department, it may be more useful to frame discussion around particular sectoral policies. These may provide a more immediate and impactful entry point for mainstreaming adaptation. Certainly, this has been the case in some ACT locations, such as Afghanistan, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. As such, climate change policies and sectoral policies can both act as entry points in different contexts.

Institutional coordination for cross-sectoral action on climate change

Tackling climate change is a challenge because it requires the involvement of virtually every sector and government line agency and, therefore, their effective coordination. The designated nodal agency is expected to facilitate this, but given that they do not have authority over other government ministries and departments, their effectiveness is limited. However, in the highly bureaucratic environment of the government, even a relatively weak agency can have influence if the responsible officer is particularly senior in terms of years in office. Their authority can also be boosted if they have the visible support of a politician or the most senior official (for example, the support of the Chief Secretary in Maharashtra and Assam has strengthened the ability of the respective Environment Departments to coordinate action across government).

In many cases, one positive legacy of developing the cross-sectoral policy framework on climate change has been the establishment of some form of coordination committee across the line departments. These were set up to guide the development of the policy document, and, in a few cases, they have continued once it has been adopted and taken on the charge of monitoring implementation. However, in most cases they have stopped meeting, or meet very occasionally and without these sessions resulting in any meaningful decisions.

Overall, it is clear that identifying individuals to act as champions for the mainstreaming agenda can be vital to provide the necessary fillip to this agenda. There is wide consensus on this across actors engaged in mainstreaming any agenda (including gender) in development policies, programmes and projects. Therefore, while being sharply focused on influencing institutional structures it is also vital for those advocating action on adaptation to focus on identifying empowered individuals who are likely to understand and support mainstreaming.

Case study of a high-performing location

Odisha scored high in terms of the adequacy of its policy framework for tackling climate change, and the level of implementation, monitoring and reporting. With support from DFID, the Chief Minister took personal charge of the process of developing their State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC). This ensured that senior officials in the line departments took the process seriously. For example, even though the guidelines from the central government stated that the plans should focus on adaptation, the State Government insisted on including a greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation action. Since its adoption, ownership within the line departments has not been maintained to the same level and there are questions about whether it has really influenced new and additional investment in adaptation. However, the State has been a forerunner in monitoring and reporting on implementation and has developed a second phase of the plan. The government has calculated that 4% of its total development budget for 2014–15 went to tackling climate change, of which 41% was focused on adaptation. Overall, the case of Odisha can provide useful insights to other locations on modalities of securing support from high levels of government for adaptation mainstreaming, approaches for monitoring and reporting on progress with adaptation, and determining domestic financial allocations for adaptation.

Mainstreaming of climate change in sector development planning

For both implementation of the policy framework, as well as generally mainstreaming climate change within development plans and budgets, sectoral line ministries are crucial stakeholders. Their capacities are mixed. Those at the front line of climate change impacts, such as the agriculture and water sectors, tend to have a better understanding of what action is needed and the resources and skills required.

In nearly all cases, the cross-sectoral policy framework on climate change is not a motivating factor for mainstreaming (in some cases it serves as an entry point for initiating dialogue). In many cases, the line ministries and departments are not aware of its existence, let alone their responsibilities for implementation. However, there are ad hoc efforts taking place to address climate change within different sectors, although these are often framed in terms of dealing with a specific risk, such as water scarcity. For example, in Maharashtra, the government has launched a flagship scheme on water conservation 'Jalyukt Shivar Abhiyaan', but without any direct link to long-term climate change. As such, initiatives are not guided by any long-term holistic vision of the State for tackling climate change. The cross-sectoral linkages are often being missed and the risk of maladaptation increases.

There are increasing efforts to engage with the line ministries and departments in climate change planning, often led by donor-funded programmes. Although there is strong interest in tackling some specific risks, particularly those connected with natural disasters and water availability, there is also initial scepticism about whether tackling climate change itself is within their remit, or the responsibility of their environment colleagues. In some states within India, this thinking is being overcome by establishing nodal officers within each of the line departments who have dedicated responsibility for climate change within their sector. Although this, in reality, is an additional charge for the officer, they are limited to acting like a 'post office' for receiving and distributing official mail from the Environment Department.

Overall, it is easier to find entry points for mainstreaming adaptation in climate-sensitive sectors, such as agriculture and water. In other vitally important sectors, such as urban development and water, which have a crucial bearing on the lives and livelihoods of poor and vulnerable populations, the imperative for mainstreaming is not as clear because the impacts of climate change are not as proximate and palpable. To enable comprehensive mainstreaming across these sectors, it is vital to collate information on impacts and collect practical examples of best practices for mainstreaming adaptation.

Budgeting and finance for adaptation

Insufficient financial resources are often used as a reason for inaction on climate change by the government. This is partly due to a misconception that adapting to the impacts of climate change is something additional or different from regular development activities. Although it could also

reflect a wish to attract additional finance from the various national and international climate funds.

An analysis of climate change expenditure shows that governments are already spending a considerable amount on both adaptation and mitigation. If a 'benefits-based' approach is used, which assesses the proportion of total benefits of a development programme or activity (e.g. irrigation project) that can be classed as contributing to tackling climate change, then current climate change expenditure is around 1% of gross domestic product (GDP). This figure is significantly higher if you count the entire development programme or activity as tackling climate change (an 'objectives-based' approach). Most efforts to track climate change expenditure have been led by donor-funded programmes and there is often a lack of interest in or some resistance to focusing on the use of domestic budgets.

There is considerable interest in attracting international climate finance. Even if the actual scale of the finance available is very small compared to domestic budgets, the fact that it is flexible is very attractive. In India, the central government established the National Adaptation Fund (NAF) to competitively fund state-level adaptation activities as part of SAPCCs. Despite only having a total annual budget of around £20 million, which divided between all the states is a fraction of what a typical development programme would receive, NAF has been a catalyst for motivating new discussion and action around the SAPCCs. This is because the central government put certain requirements on accessing the funding, such as the SAPCC being in place and having project proposals approved by a state-level coordination committee. Similarly, at the national level in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the potential to access funding from the Green Climate Fund has meant the governments have invested in their own internal capacity and established the necessary institutional structures, although in both cases with external support, including from ACT.

Although climate finance has had a positive result in terms of increasing political will for tackling climate change and improving some of the governance arrangements, it also runs the risk of 'projectising' the issue. The project proposals being put forward are essentially development projects that provide significant adaptation benefits. However, the entire cost of this project is being covered by the climate funds, rather than just the additional cost associated with 'climate-proofing' the development activity. This, therefore, works against the idea of mainstreaming climate change within existing development plans and budgets.

It is clear that national and international climate funds are vitally important in catalysing interest in adaptation and bringing relevant stakeholders to the table. However, it is important to ensure that the availability of these funds does not automatically lead to the 'sectoralisation' of adaptation into discrete projects and that the process of mainstreaming adaptation across development and financial plans continues unabated. This has been successfully done in countries, such as Nepal, that have received external climate finance, but which have also undertaken tangible steps towards mainstreaming through internal budget coding. A whole range of tested and tried methods/approaches, such as Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facilities, Climate

Public Expenditures and Institutional Reviews and sectoral mainstreaming tools, are now available to support a high level of seamless integration.

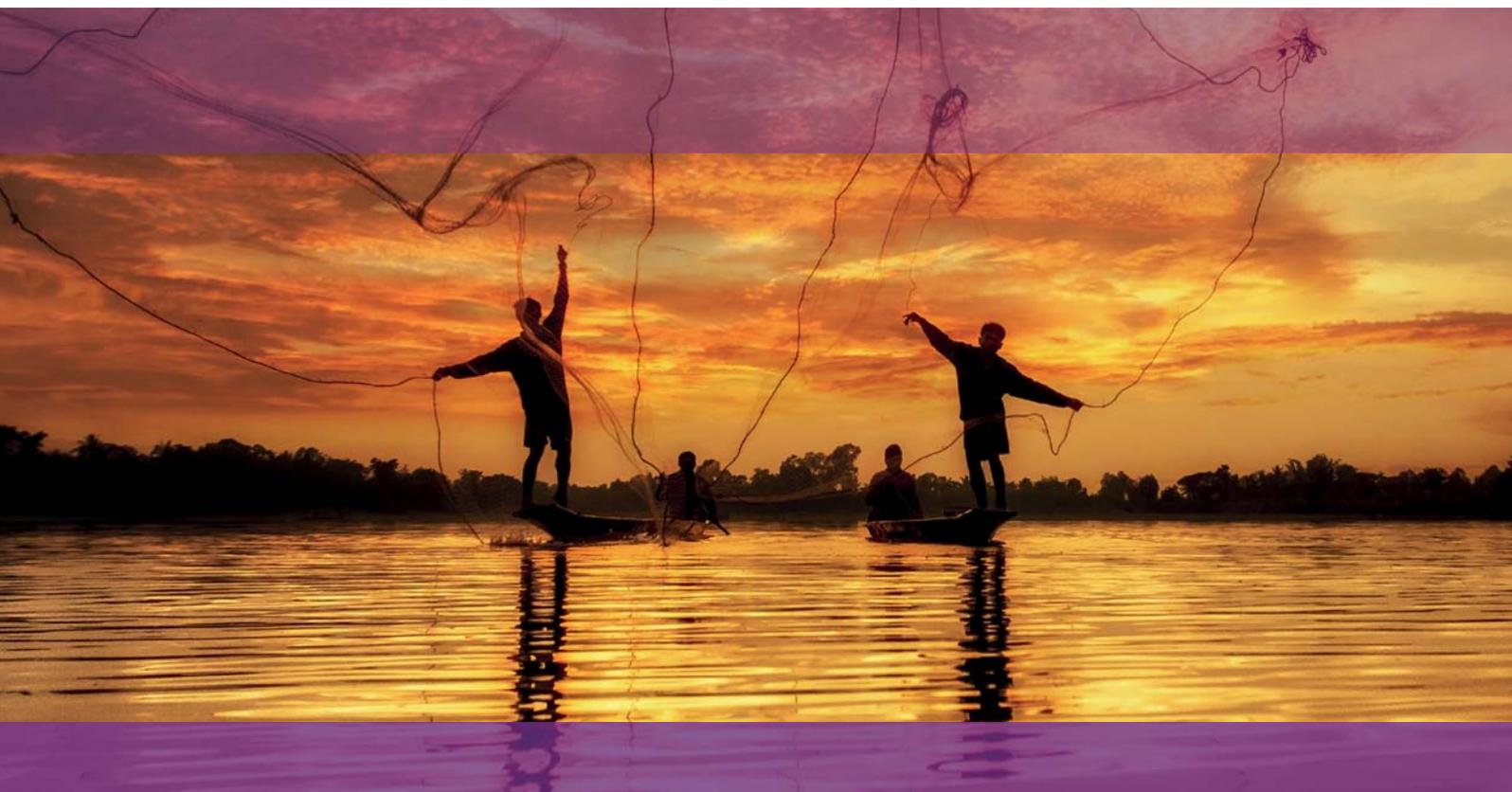
Conclusion

The institutional context for tackling climate change in South Asia is varied, and there are stark differences between these countries and the states in India. However, there are some common trends that give an indication of the direction of travel for adaptation in the region. Table 2 summarises where there was diversity or similarity between results from different locations for each of the dimensions.

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Table 2: Trends in the institutional context for tackling climate change in South Asia

DIMENSION	DIVERSITY IN RESULTS	SIMILARITIES IN RESULTS
Evidence base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence based on climate change is comprehensive in some (e.g. Maharashtra and the federal level in India), very limited in others (e.g. Afghanistan and Chhattisgarh) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very few examples of when the government has been influenced by a new piece of evidence, apart from that commissioned by the government itself
Awareness and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher level of awareness and understanding from those facing the immediate impacts of climate change (e.g. Maharashtra and Pakistan) than from those facing more long-term, distant threats (e.g. Chhattisgarh) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confusion about the connection between adaptation to climate change, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development Lack of knowledge within the government on the costs and benefits of adaptation options
Political commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political leadership on climate change sustained over a number of years which has trickled down to senior officials in some (e.g. Odisha) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political leaders refer to climate change in speeches and policy documents A policy framework for climate change is in place (or being drafted) High political commitment to tackling the specific climate impacts already being felt
Participation and influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very vocal and active civil society on climate change in some (e.g. Kerala), much more limited elsewhere (e.g. Chhattisgarh and Afghanistan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nodal agency for climate change one of the weakest across government Donors are influential in putting an issue on the agenda through technical assistance
Policy framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal monitoring and reporting of implementation started in a few (e.g. Odisha and the federal level in India), but not others The policy has been a catalyst for new discussions and institutional reform in many (e.g. Pakistan and Assam), but not in some (e.g. Bihar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clarity of purpose and value of the cross-sectoral policy document Policy framework has weaknesses
Institutional coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority of nodal agency boosted by the involvement of the highest-level official in some (e.g. Assam and Maharashtra) Coordination committees operational in some (e.g. Pakistan and Maharashtra), but not others (e.g. Bihar and Chhattisgarh) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even if coordination committee is operational, it is not regular nor making meaningful decisions
Sectoral mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive mainstreaming taking place autonomously by some sectors where impacts are already being felt (e.g. Maharashtra) Dedicated nodal officers for climate change designated in certain sectors in some (e.g. Odisha), but not others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-sectoral policy framework is not a motivating factor for mainstreaming
Budgeting and finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some receive a much higher proportion of international climate finance (e.g. Nepal and India) than others (e.g. Pakistan and Afghanistan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although difficult to compare, most spending is approximately 1% of GDP on actions which are contributing to reducing climate change



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