ACT

ACTION ON CLIMATE TODAY

LEARNING PAPER

Influencing adaptation policy: The role of policy entrepreneurs in securing ownership and climate action in South Asia

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ACT	Action on Climate Today
ACCMS	Assam Climate Change Management Society
ADRI	Asian Development Research Institute
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASAPCC	Assam State Action Plan on Climate Change
CANSA	Climate Action Network South Asia
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	UK Department for International Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NRM	Natural Resources Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAPCC	State Action Plan on Climate Change (in Indian states)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToR	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development

Executive summary

Addressing the causes of climate change by managing greenhouse gas emissions is vital to limit the impacts of climate change. However, there is now widespread understanding of the importance of also adapting development pathways to a changing climate. A central part of this process is the mainstreaming of adaptation concerns into government development policies, planning and sectoral decision-making. To date, many of the transferable lessons on adaptation mainstreaming have been in the form of technical approaches such as risk assessments and toolkits. In contrast, this paper provides an empirically informed review of some of the more tacit and informal approaches used to influence adaptation policy.

This review highlights the particular role of policy entrepreneurs who work in policy-making arenas to promote policy change. They navigate the political complexity of both formal and informal systems of governance to promote successful adaptation mainstreaming processes, through brokering, advocacy and networking to influence policy. Building on previous policy influencing perspectives from the political science literature, the paper uses empirical examples from the Action on Climate Today (ACT) programme in South Asia to create a typology of influencing strategies that includes:

- *Stories and narratives* – using simplified stories that help decision-makers make sense of complex realities, including by linking climate action to development objectives;
- *Rapport and trust* – building trust in the programme and its staff and the advice being offered;
- *Cheerleaders and champions* – nurturing and rewarding leaders and leadership;
- *Advocacy and networking* – harnessing and developing networks on adaptation inside and outside government;
- *Downstream implementers* – influencing action on the ground by working with those who actually implement, rather than set, policy.

Drawing on these examples and foregrounding the importance of informal and tacit strategies for policy influence can help others who are designing and providing technical assistance to support national and sub-national governments to mainstream adaptation into their policies. Support programmes can factor in design elements to maximise this potential, including through the use of political economy analysis, adaptive management approaches and explicitly designing areas of programming that allow for informal influencing processes and rapid response to opportunities.

In summary, the experience of the ACT programme in South Asia suggests there are a number of ways to maximise the potential of a programme for policy influencing and entrepreneurship in order to mainstream climate change into development.

1. Design programmes with policy entrepreneurship in mind, including using adaptive management approaches, providing flexible rapid deployable resources, output- and outcome-based reporting, and giving space in job specifications to seize unexpected opportunities for policy influencing.
2. Develop and balance the skill sets and personalities of policy entrepreneurs in the programme team to cover the different types of policy influencing tactics.
3. Engage programme staff who have prior experience with the relevant local bureaucracies and adaptation issues.
4. Undertake regular analysis of the changing political economy influencing adaptation mainstreaming, including assessments of both proximate and more distant policy drivers.
5. Map out, learn about and engage with the informal shadow networks that operate alongside formal decision-making structures.
6. Construct policy narratives around adaptation to link with the interests and incentive structures in government, at the same time being cognisant of bottom-up perspectives and priorities.
7. Calculate and communicate the benefits of adaptation, tailoring these to appeal to different groups, including those inside and those outside of government.
8. Initially work with parts of government that are best prepared for adaptation action and build out the network and interest from there to reach others.
9. Engage high-level champions to help map adaptation issues onto higher-level policy agendas.
10. Build awareness, capacity and leadership down through organisations from top-level decision-makers to downstream implementers to help institutionalise and sustain change.

1. Introduction

Global climate change and human development processes are combining to create rapidly changing patterns of vulnerability and resilience. The impacts of climate change on development are increasingly being recognised around the world, and governments, the private sector and communities are stepping up to respond to current variability in the weather and to adapt to future climatic conditions. Alongside the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation is now recognised as a crucial part of our response, gaining more equal weighting in international policy negotiations on climate change.

A major part of the response has been the integration (here referred to as 'mainstreaming') of adaptation into government development policies, planning and sectoral decision-making. There is now considerable experience of efforts to support governments in this process of mainstreaming. However, many of the transferable lessons to date relate only to technical approaches to supporting mainstreaming, such as providing training and preparing risk assessments and toolkits. However, the literature on political economy and policy influencing also emphasises the importance of understanding the mainstreaming of adaption in terms of the more informal, tacit processes that are involved (Court and Maxwell, 2005; Birkmann et al., 2010).

This paper combines perspectives and theories on policy influencing from the literature with empirical examples from the Action on Climate Today (ACT) programme in South Asia, to populate a typology of influencing strategies for adaptation to climate change. ACT is a five-year £23 million programme funded by UK Aid that works in partnership with the national governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan and seven sub-national governments (India's Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Odisha and Maharashtra, and Pakistan's Punjab) to strengthen systems of planning and delivery for adaptation to climate change. It helps build capacity to integrate climate adaption into policies, plans and budgets, and to attract climate change investments.

While ACT uses both formal and informal strategies for influencing (and the line between them is blurred), this paper draws particular attention to more informal and tacit strategies and mechanisms that have been used to inform and strengthen governments' responses to assessing and managing climate risk. Projects and programmes to support adaptation typically neither plan for nor report well on these informal tactics, despite their apparent significance in mainstreaming processes. ACT's experience can therefore provide lessons and guidance for structuring other technical assistance support to optimise the potential for policy influence and for securing ownership of adaptation by governments.

This paper will be of interest to all those seeking to influence policy on climate change adaptation, and in particular those designing and providing technical assistance to support national and sub-national governments to mainstream adaptation into their development policies.

Government officials and partners listen to the key note speaker at the East India Climate Change Conclave, 2018.

2. Influencing adaptation mainstreaming policy

2.1 Mainstreaming adaptation

While climate change adaptation is an issue that cuts across a wide range of sectors, in many cases it has been implemented as a discrete set of projects and programmes. To some extent, this reflects project-based international funding models, but also a desire to learn how adaptation is different from 'business as usual' development. However, many efforts acknowledge the inherent interrelationships between adaptation and development processes. As such, climate change is increasingly being integrated or 'mainstreamed' into development planning and sectoral decision-making, so adaptation measures can become 'part of a broader suite of measures within existing development processes and decision cycles' (OECD, 2009: 60).

Mainstreaming may be horizontal, where climate objectives are compatible with policies and mechanisms across sectors (such as agriculture, water or health), or vertical across government hierarchies (international, national, sub-national, local). Such integration is justified because it can ensure the long-term sustainability of investments and reduce the sensitivity of development outcomes to both today's and tomorrow's climate. It is also seen as more efficient and effective than designing, implementing and managing climate policy separately and 'stand-alone' from ongoing development efforts (Persson and Klein, 2008). As a consequence, many climate actions have been promoted primarily on the basis of their wider development co-benefits. Climate change mitigation policy narratives have therefore emphasised the cost savings of energy efficiency or greener urban transport that deliver cleaner air. Comparatively, narratives around the benefits of adaptation to manage climate change impacts have been weaker in their ability to influence policy changes (Tanner et al., 2015).

Altering governance structures and processes is central to the integration of adaptation into development. Governance in this context includes both *formal* government decision-making processes and regulation and *informal* interaction, including between public and private actors. ACT has approached governance in terms of different dimensions that are relevant at multiple scales, from the global down to the community (Gogoi, 2017). These include **entry-points** for mainstreaming climate change into the planning and policy process; the **enabling environment** or 'system' that supports mainstreaming; and a set of **political economy drivers** specific to the location that inform entry-points and enabling environments.

ACT's primary concern is to enhance the enabling environment for mainstreaming adaptation, by developing the capabilities of the institutions responsible for adaptation (Shakya et al., 2018), and, in particular, to strengthen the key functions of institutions required for managing climate change:

1. **Authorising climate action** – requires strong leadership to build and maintain political commitment, mandate institutions with responsibilities and hold these institutions accountable;
2. **Resourcing climate action** – covers four types of 'resources': accurate *information* that is compelling and relevant; new *finance*; trained *staff* for whom climate action is a priority; and a broad *constituency* of credible and influential partners who both help delivery and legitimise action;
3. **Delivering climate action** – involves actors who can convene others and incentivise wider collaboration, partners with delivery reach and processes that allow for regular reflection to learn and adjust approaches.

2.2 Challenges in mainstreaming adaptation

The challenges facing governments in mainstreaming adaptation are common to many cross-sectoral policy agendas – such as gender and HIV/AIDS, among others. This includes governance issues related to capacity constraints, staff turnover, outdated rules of business and poorly aligned institutional incentive structures (Elsey et al., 2005; Moser and Moser, 2005). However, climate change also brings its own additional challenges for mainstreaming.

Climate change has been described as a 'wicked problem' because its policy difficulties are beyond the capacity of any one organisation to understand and respond to; there is disagreement on how to frame the multiple interrelated causes of the

problems; and finding the best way to tackle them is challenging (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007). The cross-sectoral complexity of climate change means that any effort to tackle the impacts requires the involvement of multiple and overlapping institutions and actors. There is hence a wide range of different potential government entry-points for adaptation mainstreaming. These include working through sectoral line ministries, via planning and finance agencies, and through environment ministries that are mandated with climate change policy processes and national adaptation planning.

This complexity is combined with the considerable uncertainty involved in defining specific climate impacts and therefore the costs and benefits of actions. This uncertainty fuels the perception that these changes may not happen within typical political cycles and investment horizons, frustrating proactive decision-making on adaptation. Climate change is also a thorny issue politically, as there is significant inequality in those bearing the impacts both globally and locally; adaptation actions may themselves create trade-offs that favour some groups at the expense of others, such as when flood protection moves flood water to poorer communities elsewhere (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014).

The science of climate change has historically received significant attention, and as such the views and analysis of 'experts' have tended to dominate, with no meaningful participation of the vulnerable people who are actually affected. While experiences of 'community-based adaptation' have grown in recent years, in many cases there is little community engagement in decision-making or recognition of people as stakeholders in adaptation policy processes.

Fundamentally, in many countries and sectors, there are still low levels of awareness about climate change issues and an associated lack of urgency to take action. Major international events, such as the big United Nations meetings in Copenhagen in 2008 and Paris in 2015, have helped raise the political profile and widened the awareness of climate change and development issues (Peters et al., 2016). Climate-related disaster events provide periodic media interest, yet mainstreaming climate change is still widely perceived as a distant goal that is not a political priority or a vote-winner. Outside these peaks of interest, then, other, competing, agendas can push it to the margins.

2.3 Formal and informal policy influence: The role of policy entrepreneurs

Policy influence in the context of this paper is concerned with enhancing the processes of adaptation mainstreaming: embedding climate adaptation concerns within government policies, budgets and decision-making structures. It is assumed to be a positive influence, seeking action on adaptation rather than attempting to block action on climate change. Policy influence is particularly important in the context of externally supported programmes that seek to secure government ownership and support for adaptation mainstreaming. In such programmes and efforts, the 'process' involved in the intervention (how it is done) is as important as what activities are carried out.

Climate change impacts and the need for adaptation have traditionally been communicated through scientific assessments, which can confuse non-technical experts and lead to predominantly technical solutions (Klein et al., 2007; Tanner and Allouche, 2011; Eriksen et al., 2015). The strategies for policy influence in externally financed adaptation mainstreaming programmes reflect this tendency, and are commonly formalised into technical steps (OECD, 2009; UNDP and UNEP, 2011). These follow activities to deliver a set of prescribed outputs or outcomes, such as developing new policies, implementing new activities or demonstrating changes in decision-making processes. The common model therefore typically involves providing technical assistance to a government department that can generate analysis of climate impacts and vulnerability in key sectors (e.g. agriculture); development of policies and options for adaptation (e.g. new seed varieties); and translating these into a workplan (e.g. training of extension services). Policy influence is sought by providing support to decision-making processes; producing new information and knowledge; and strengthening institutional capacity through training and advice, and making links with other policy processes, such as the United Nations climate change regime.

This scientific approach supports a linear view of the policy process, in which evidence is brought to bear on policy. However, in combination with these 'formal' technical approaches, mainstreaming efforts often employ more informal and tacit strategies. While toolkits and analytical methodologies exist for formal and technical strategies to support

mainstreaming, these informal strategies are far less codified, shared or explicitly written into programming, despite their potential importance (Court and Maxwell, 2005; Fraser and Kirbyshire, 2017). Nevertheless, technical support initiatives such as those typically found in international cooperation programmes can draw on these informal aspects of governance and influence to further their aims. Indeed, in order to further their goals, such programmes may need to work through political networks that may be based on clientelism, patronage and corruption. These networks may help determine which path of action is taken, who the winners and losers are and which ideas or groups of people are included or excluded as a result (Tanner and Allouche, 2011). The programmes thus need to explicitly consider informal strategies of influence, balancing the risks and potential benefits of different influencing tactics.

To some extent, the distinction between formal and informal influencing strategies parallels that between formal institutions (the written constitution, laws, policies, file notes, rights and regulations enforced by official authorities) and informal institutions (the (usually unwritten) social norms, customs or traditions that shape thought and behaviour) (Unsworth, 2010). Practitioners and scholars alike are giving greater emphasis to the political dimensions of climate change, where informal interactions may be as important as formal governance in determining whether mainstreaming is successful (Tanner and Allouche, 2011; Taylor, 2014; Paterson, 2018).

For example, studies of policy processes have highlighted the role of 'shadow-networks' in influencing climate and disaster risk policy. These are networks or spaces of interaction that exist alongside but outside formal institutions and organisational structures (Pelling et al., 2008; Birkmann et al., 2010; Armijos et al., 2017). Such networks can help create consensual approaches to tackling problems, though, importantly, they can also provide less transparent and exclusive fora for decision-making. More broadly, development agencies are now acknowledging the contextual politics of the government planning and policy-making process, and the power relations between different groups within them (World Bank, 2017).

Influencing policy to mainstream adaptation therefore requires individuals who are able to navigate the political complexity of both formal and

Awareness session organised by ACT for political leaders at the Legislative Assembly in Maharashtra involving the Chief Minister, Environment Minister, Chairman and Speaker of both houses.

informal systems of governance. Such individuals have been referred to as 'policy entrepreneurs', people who work in policy-making arenas (within and outside government) to promote policy change. They advocate new ideas and develop proposals; define and reframe problems; specify policy alternatives; broker ideas among the many policy actors; mobilise public opinion; and help set the decision-making agenda (Roberts and King, 1991). According to John Kingdon, (1984), similar to a business entrepreneur, their defining characteristic 'is their willingness to invest their resources – time, energy, reputation, and sometimes money – in the hope of a future return' (Kingdon, 1984: 122).

Policy entrepreneurs understand political contexts and look for political opportunities to present new ideas in new ways. To do so, they combine the formal strategies familiar to technical approaches to mainstreaming and a set of more tacit, informal strategies. The approach to policy entrepreneurship taken will depend on the personalities of both the influencer and those being influenced. Some are more comfortable using scientific evidence as the main pillar of influencing strategies; others may draw on personal rapport; others still may favour using networks and political incentives for policy change. Crucially, a policy entrepreneur is able to make arguments and strategies that break down traditional alignments of interests. This deep engagement with the policy space enables strategic thinking about who might support and oppose a particular change (Taylor, 2005).

As well as promoting certain policy, institutional or decision-making characteristics, influencing is focused on preventing negative processes and outcomes. Despite this, there is little discussion in the literature on policy processes around 'negative lesson-drawing', or learning what not to do (Dunlop, 2017; Stone, 2017). Policy entrepreneurs are well placed to understand why policies may fail and to facilitate policy learning – a process that both practitioners and researchers have largely overlooked.

The following section of the paper draws on insights from the literature along with empirical evidence on policy influence from the ACT programme to propose a typology of influencing strategies that can be employed by those seeking to promote adaptation mainstreaming in South Asia and elsewhere.

Shri Nitesh Kumar, Chief Minister, presents at the East India Conclave on Climate Change organised by the Government of Bihar, ADRI and ACT in Patna, Bihar.

3. A typology of policy influencing strategies

The complexity of the policy system and related influencing approaches defies easy classification or replicable toolkits. Different influencing strategies may be deployed simultaneously, with informal actions as catalytic adjuncts to the more formalised processes supporting adaptation mainstreaming. Nevertheless, combining academic insights and the ACT experience has produced some lessons, generated by means of a typology. The typology (see Figure 1) builds on Kingdon (1984) and Roberts and King's (1991) concept of a public or policy entrepreneur and an initial typology developed by Simon Maxwell, as outlined in Start and Hovland's (2004) policy influencing toolkit. Each area of the typology in turn draws on a range of other conceptual foundations, as explained below. This classification helps us understand and share knowledge on the strategies employed to influence policy around adaptation, beyond the 'formal' approaches.

The typology illustrated in Figure 1 has five different influencing strategies, but in reality they are not stand-alone and are generally used in combinations with each other. Some of the ways in which the strategies relate to each other are as follows.

- Some of these strategies for influence are more focused on the agents of change, such as the importance of building trust, developing champions or working with those who implement policy down the bureaucratic hierarchy. Others are more linked to the specific tactics used for influence, such as policy narratives, advocacy and networking.
- The different influencing strategies can feed off each other. For example, creating compelling 'stories and narratives' becomes a lot easier if you have 'cheerleaders and champions' in place who are already receptive to the narrative.
- There may be trade-offs to using some of the influencing strategies. For example, reaching out to 'downstream implementers' may take a great deal of time and effort, and reduce the chance of nurturing high-level champions.
- Some policy entrepreneurs are more adept than others at deploying some of these strategies, but teams can look to build capacities that span these techniques.
- By examining the use of these strategies in Section 4 in relation to the ACT programme, we can discern some patterns where some types of influencing strategy may have greater or lesser importance at different points in the programme cycle.

It is also worth noting that, while ACT team members and other policy entrepreneurs are working to push a certain vision of climate adaptation, in this case one supported by the norms and values of

Figure 1: A typology of policy influencing strategies

international development, at the same time others will often use similar tactics or strategies to block action on climate change. This may include those lobbying for certain technologies or fossil fuels or those promoting climate change denial.

3.1 Stories and narratives

One of the principal ways that practitioners, bureaucrats and policy-makers articulate and make sense of complex realities is through simplified stories or scenarios known in the literature as policy narratives (Roe, 1991). Literature on environmental policy narratives demonstrates that these can sometimes be profoundly misleading, but nevertheless they are very powerful (Leach and Mearns, 1996). Powerful stories can help set norms (such as the responsibility of government to factor in climate change impacts and adaptation), as well as communicate and convince policy-makers of problems and the range of potential solutions. Importantly, 'counter-narratives' can emerge that support certain interests or priorities, often linked to the status quo in the face of disruptive change – for example, the development of a green narrative to support diesel engines in the face of a potentially transformational switch to electric vehicles.

Developing development-based policy narratives around climate change and linking with existing policy priorities in order to mainstream adaptation within the latter provides an important entry-point for influence. This has been a common strategy in the co-benefits approaches to climate change. For example, climate mitigation through green transport in cities has ridden on the desire for improved air quality, and employment opportunities from green technology have driven renewable energy policy in many countries (Kok et al., 2008; Global Commission on the Economy and Climate, 2014). For adaptation, the narrative around 'climate-resilient development' has emphasised protecting previous development progress and the co-benefits of risk management even in the absence of climate change or disaster events (Surminski and Tanner, 2016).

3.2 Rapport and trust

Building rapport and gaining and maintaining trust is an important component of partnerships with government authorities, both political and bureaucratic, as well as other actors, networks and coalitions. There is much evidence on the importance of governments and other actors having trust in climate information and data (Ziervogel et al., 2005; Tall et al., 2014). Yet emerging work on policy entrepreneurship also suggested that the ability to influence policy is built on mutual trust, respect or friendship. Equally, 'when people feel angry, offended, annoyed, or betrayed, negotiations can be very difficult' (Brouwer and Biermann, 2011: 6).

Developing rapport and trust can be crucial to the processes of policy and institutional change but is rarely written explicitly into programming activities. Many of these related activities, such as informal social engagements, may be considered to be outside the scope of the regular terms of reference (ToR). Consequently, such activities may not be shared with monitoring and learning frameworks. This is often because activities undertaken to build rapport and trust may be informal and opportunistic. Yet, without them, other programme activities may not be set in motion. Trust is also vital for maintaining networks, coalitions and cooperation across the different scales, actors and sectors of the mainstreaming process. Generating trust within partnerships and networks is also important to manage risk when new approaches are being promoted and tested.

3.3 Advocacy and networking

Policy-making usually takes place within communities of people who know and interact with each other. There is growing understanding globally of the importance and success of networks in advocating for policy shifts. As we move into an information and data-driven economy, power becomes vested in the networks that structure society rather than in governments, institutions or corporations (Castells, 1996). The role of knowledge networks in shaping policy is therefore increasingly important, not least given the ability of climate change impacts and adaptation to span geographical borders (Maxwell and Stone, 2004).

Much attention has been given to transnational networks and communities of practice in climate change (Bansard et al., 2017). Initially, these came together in pressing for global emissions reductions (e.g. 350.org). More recently, networks have formed under the banner of climate justice, which calls for justice for affected places and communities (e.g. the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice). Conversely, some networks

have lobbied against climate change, questioning the science and the value for money of mitigation and adaptation actions (e.g. the Global Climate Coalition; Dunlap and McCright, 2011). More localised networks can also help raise the profile and advocate on climate issues. This can increase the availability and influence of high-quality evidence in the policy process and help build consensus and policy legitimacy in tackling climate-related impacts (Mintrom and Vergari, 1996).

Networks can act as 'bridging organisations' between government and non-government spheres and across sectors (Folke et al., 2005). Policy entrepreneurs working on mainstreaming interventions are also well placed to broker and facilitate coalitions and networks across formal and informal actors and spaces. Governments use 'shadow systems' – informal spaces of information and knowledge exchange – to introduce and sustain new ideas (Leck and Roberts, 2015). Bearing the costs of convening and brokering new agreements, including supporting spaces for interaction and information-sharing, can represent an effective way to foster institutional reform (Fraser and Kirbyshire, 2017).

3.4 Cheerleaders and champions

Policy change often occurs through individual leaders who develop and carry through the vision of change. These individuals (and groups of individuals) can identify politically intelligent routes through the bureaucracy and government machinery, as well as bring others on board with a common vision. In turn, they provide nodal points for those seeking to influence change. Champions can be identified and nurtured through adaptation mainstreaming interventions, and they themselves then become the policy entrepreneurs. They bring ideas and issues to the policy environment, initiating institutional and policy change by leveraging their positions and resources to achieve desired outcomes (Carmin and Anguelovski, 2012).

Leadership is increasingly acknowledged as important to address the challenges of climate adaptation by being able to: 1) influence the policy process so as to get adaptation policies accepted and implemented; 2) enhance connectivity across different policy-making levels, sectors and actors; 3) enhance the capacity of society to learn in

An exposure visit to the wetlands in Kol-e-Hashmat Khan as part of a training programme.

response to feedback from the natural system and to anticipate long-term impacts of climate change; and 4) increase the adaptive capacity (adaptability) of governance networks concerned with climate adaptation (Meijerink and Stiller, 2013). Influencing strategies can identify and nurture individuals able to champion adaptation issues, recognising and rewarding their actions. Tactics to support leadership include encouraging consistency of those attending training sessions; formally recognising a network of champions and enabling them to share experiences; and exposing champions to wider opportunities for learning such as international meetings.

Nevertheless, there are risks in relying on individual leaders and champions. Such individuals may suddenly move post, leaving a vacuum, or may highlight and push for one kind of problem definition over another (Roberts and King, 1991). Diversity may be one way of mitigating such risks. Successful adaptation approaches elsewhere have noted the importance of involving champions and policy entrepreneurs who span both formal (e.g. government officials) and informal (e.g. volunteers and community leaders) arenas (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014).

3.5 Downstream implementers

Changing policy does not always equate to change on the ground. There are many cases of policies being formulated and ratified, but without the resources or the buy-in of those who need to enact the policy or change processes on the ground. This is especially common in externally supported interventions such as the adaptation mainstreaming context analysed in this paper. As such, there can be a significant implementation gap between what politicians, policy-makers and external donors think they are doing and what actually happens. Influencing tactics of policy entrepreneurs can therefore engage not just with senior level policy-makers but also with what Lipsky (2010) has termed the 'street-level bureaucrats'. Working to influence these implementers downstream in the hierarchy acknowledges the complexity of decision-making and the influence of a variety of top-down and bottom-up causes and processes in adaptation decision-making (Biesbroek et al., 2015).

The street-level bureaucrats are the people who are the actual implementers of adaptation and mainstreaming policy. They have the functional power to influence decisions through, for example, the interpretation of guidelines, the undertaking of performance evaluation, the solving of problems and the actual implementation of governance mechanisms (Morrison et al., 2017). These powers help explain why changes to formal rules and regulations do not always lead to the intended outcomes (Antonson et al., 2016). Rather, these actions of implementers need to be understood in terms of how they shape the formal rules and norms established elsewhere. Policy entrepreneurs therefore need to understand the context, constraints and incentives of these downstream implementers, and recognise the influence they have on any reform processes.

4. Policy influencing in practice: The ACT experience

This section illustrates policy entrepreneurship and influencing in the context of efforts to mainstream adaptation into institutions and policy processes. It uses examples from the ACT programme in South Asia, mapping them onto the typology outlined in Figure 1 above. It draws particular attention to informal influencing strategies, which will resonate with those working to influence policy even outside the climate change context. Such informality is often under-reported in projects, despite its crucial role in supporting the more formal mechanisms commonly included in work programmes. This section also reflects on some of the common challenges and limitations ACT has faced in using each of these influencing strategies and why each may therefore be suitable for some, but not all, policy issues.

4.1 Developing adaptation policy narratives

Policy-makers themselves have suggested that influence requires winning the argument about what the problem is before trying to win the argument about what the solution is (Taylor, 2005). Developing and communicating compelling stories or policy narratives is a crucial part of this process. ACT has used an organic process of developing and refining specific narratives for each location (and/or different parts of the government in each location) on the need for investment in adaptation. This process of 'domesticating' climate change issues is contrary to the global narratives of climate change as an issue led by scientists and diplomats at United Nations inter-governmental conferences.

Early on in the programme, ACT carried out internal long-range planning exercises to identify an initial list of potential actions in each location. These combined the government's political priorities and the 'entry-point' for linking climate change impacts to these. This enabled the subsequent technical and capacity support to align with and, when necessary, adjust a wider narrative around development in the location. In nearly all locations, addressing natural disasters and extreme events provided a more compelling narrative and entry-point than did slower-onset events or long-term climatic shifts. Thus, the narrative was able to build on floods in Assam, water scarcity in Afghanistan and drought in Maharashtra, for example. The programme has tried to use natural disasters as the entry-point but also to introduce the impacts of slow-onset events within the local narrative on climate change.

Every year, ACT monitors how climate change is understood and described in each location as part of a context assessment process involving a key informant group discussion (Gogoi and Bisht, 2018). For example, in Kerala at the start of the programme, climate change was closely identified with the state's long history of environmental and 'green' activism but there was confusion over the distinction between this and environmentalism. Through ACT's engagement and other factors, this narrative has shifted slightly, and mainstreaming climate change within development is a more widely understood and used term. In Assam and Kerala, the team compiles a monthly archive from local newspapers that highlights the local impacts of climate change and shows how the team communicates with policy-makers.

A key tactic for building such narratives was to link these risks with areas of government that are best prepared for adaptation action and build out the network and interest from there to reach other areas and actors. ACT has also used a solution-based narrative to help give partner governments a sense of empowerment and vision of what an external support programme of technical assistance such as ACT could provide. In Maharashtra, ACT presented the risks of climate change to the government by 'climate-screening' the government's flagship drought prevention programme, providing a positive story about the benefits of incorporating climate change information and additional adaptation action. This has also meant matching the incentive structures in the partner governments, such as helping leverage additional climate finance to fund some of their priority areas.

In Pakistan and across a number of states in India, ACT is supporting the governments to identify specific actions using value chain analysis. This uses a positive story of delivering livelihood benefits by identifying crops that are climate-resilient, environmentally friendly, and suited to

local production and market systems. For the province of Punjab in Pakistan, value chain analysis on canola, mung beans and chickpeas has revealed bottlenecks and generated recommendations to government, such as on crop-specific sowing and threshing machines, that will maximise productivity and income from these more climate-resilient crops.

Box 1: Developing adaptation narratives for policy influence in Assam

In Assam, the absence of policy narratives on climate change acted as both a challenge and an opportunity for ACT's influencing efforts. ACT has taken a phased approach to building influence for climate change adaptation in Assam. The programme's first initiative was to support the Government to draft and adopt the Assam State Action Plan on Climate Change (ASAPCC), which presented the opportunity to strengthen understanding and knowledge on climate change. The central government had instructed the state government to develop this plan but there was no narrative or rationale that resonated with sectoral departments beyond the Department of Environment and Forests on why they needed it.

ACT therefore had to convince the sectoral departments of the purpose and value of the plan, and of action on climate change in general, in terms that aligned with their departmental priorities. In particular, ACT highlighted the link between tackling floods – an overarching issue for these departments and an increasingly severe threat for the state – and the need for action on climate change. This included technical analysis to map vulnerability and the extent of loss and damage in the state. The analysis ACT provided was reinforced by the historically unprecedented monsoon floods of 2017, which had impacts on upwards of 2 million people and resulted in above US$400 million in loss and damage for the state (Kashyap, 2017). The team leader worked with local journalists to inform their reporting on this and other extreme events to highlight the risks climate change poses of increasing the frequency and severity of flooding.

ACT has used the fact that the Chief Minister's own constituency – Majuli Island – is one of the most vulnerable districts to climate change and is of significant cultural and religious importance to the state. First, the programme carried out an assessment of community-level risks in the district, which was released by the district administration and received media attention. This helped highlight the 'human dimension' of climate change. ACT also selected Majuli as one of the urban areas in which to work with the Assam State Disaster Management Authority to develop urban flood management frameworks. Focusing on Majuli was not only justified because of the degree of vulnerability of the district but also helped attract media and political attention.

Another key strategy for ACT in Assam has been to project the narrative on climate change in coherence with the state's development agenda. Hence, in 2016, when the Government of Assam launched its vision document for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 (Government of Assam, 2016), ACT worked with the sectoral departments to develop the action plan for climate change-related targets. Now, ACT is developing a digital interface that enables simultaneous tracking and reporting for both SDG and ASAPCC targets. This will enable an assessment of climate benefits accruing from the SDG deliverables, helping departments prioritise actions with maximum combined benefits. This will help the State Government mainstream expenditure for action on climate change.

The combination of these narratives has helped transform the Government's response to climate change. It has emerged as a leader in the country, with a strong commitment to implementing the ASAPCC through innovating new institutional approaches. For example, ACT supported the Government to establish a new cross-sectoral special purpose vehicle, the Assam Climate Change Management Society (ACCMS) to ensure effective delivery of the climate change plan, but also crucially as a means to leverage external climate finance. This involves a two-tier management system, with a governing body headed by the Chief Minister responsible for planning, coordination and resource mobilisation, and a steering committee monitoring the day-to-day implementation of the climate plan by 14 line departments. The society has been allocated a corpus fund (INR5 crore: US$700,000) from the State Government, which illustrates the Government's political commitment to the ACCMS and tackling climate change in general.

One challenge of relying on stories and narratives to influence policy change on climate change lies in ensuring that 'unpopular' issues do not get ignored. For example, across all locations, government interest in accessing additional sources of climate finance has been a useful 'positive' entry-point, but moving the discussion on to how governments can maximise the adaptation benefits from their domestic budget has been a slow and difficult process. In addition, focusing only on issues where there are positive solutions can mean that issues for which the solution is not easy to implement, or not politically viable, do not get the attention they may deserve (e.g. soil degradation, water pricing).

4.2 Rapport and trust

Building trust with government officers and politicians is fundamental to an externally supported programme's ability to influence policy, but it can be both difficult and time-consuming (Brouwer and Biermann, 2011). One aspect of the ACT programme that is crucial to ensuring rapport and trust with the government involves co-locating team leaders and technical experts within government units with a formal mandate for climate change coordination and/or having the team located in a nearby external office but visiting the government office regularly (often daily). This contrasts with other models of technical assistance, which either base the technical team centrally in the region or send in international advisors for short-term assignments. Much of the reported influence comes from the rapport and trust built up through the day-to-day contact with officials, which also helped give the programme wider credibility. Informally, ACT staff have provided advice and policy inputs on topics beyond the formal purview of the programme strategy. As a result, when a window of opportunity for advancing adaptation policy or practice has opened, the local ACT team has been the visible and trusted first port of call for assistance.

For example, in Chhattisgarh, India, ACT has supported the creation of the State Centre for Climate Change as part of the Government structure. Upon the Centre's inception in 2016, ACT operations moved inside it, strengthening everyday interactions with the Government and its decision-making structures on climate change. The permanence of this arrangement also helped give ACT programme staff the time and opportunity to push policy documents over the necessary procedural hurdles to achieve sign-off. In Maharashtra, having a technical expert located full time within the Government secretariat proved crucial for the long process of getting a Climate Change Policy drafted, approved and adopted, through constantly raising the issue with relevant officials and managing the internal bureaucracy.

Building an informal rapport with senior bureaucrats is crucial to ACT's successful policy

ACT accompanies a team from the British High Commission to discuss the siltation problem in Bihar with the Government.

influence. The personalities and experience of the local ACT teams have determined their level of success in building a strong working relationship with their government partner. They have often had prior experience with the relevant government departments and their key actors, and know the local policy context and its dynamics. As policy entrepreneurs, ACT staff often looked initially for common connections between the team and officials, for example whether they had had similar academic training. For example, personal trust improved in one case when it came to light that the team leader's sibling had trained at university with the climate change nodal officer.

Another key tactic that ACT uses to build trust and rapport is to organise events for government counterparts without putting ACT at the forefront. For example, the high-profile East India Climate Change Conclave in Bihar in 2018 raised the profile of the Government with the invited experts from across the country. As a result, the Government then trusted that the local team was more interested in supporting the Government, rather than winning kudos for itself. Following the event, the Government of Bihar added climate change to the mandate of the Environment Department on the advice of ACT. Similarly, most technical outputs from the programme are branded as the government's, with limited (if any) recognition of the contribution of the programme and the donor.

Nevertheless, embedding within the government machinery poses some risks, as embedded technical advisors could be co-opted into other work of the department rather than focusing on the agenda of the programme. There is also an unfortunate reality that some types of people may be more accepted or 'trusted' than others by certain politicians and bureaucrats – depending on gender, age, religion, where they are from or their disciplinary background, among other things. For example, while embedding helped build trust in some cases, in others the programme was able to influence more effectively by drafting in nationally or international recognised expertise at strategic points.

Investing time and resources in trust-building can also be a risk as relations that have taken time to build can be nullified by periodic changes in officials or in the government ruling party, as has occurred in Indian states of Kerala and Assam during the ACT programme's lifetime. In part to mediate this risk of bureaucratic 'churn' and political change, a policy influencing tactic common to many of the ACT locations has been the engagement of researchers and organisations that already have links with and are trusted by political and bureaucratic decision-makers. In Odisha, the programme worked with a local organisation (CTRAN), which had a track record on adaptation in the state and understood the policy space, having provided support since the earlier inception of the State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC). Similar tactics were employed in Bihar (see Box 2). Again, however, the tactic of engaging established consultants carries a risk – that of implicitly restricting newer, more competent or more innovative consultants and researchers who might bring new perspectives, ways of working or efficiencies.

4.3 Advocacy and networking to mainstream adaptation

As a demand-led technical assistance programme, ACT works to support locally identified adaptation needs rather than advocating a particular course of action. However, in a number of locations, it has strengthened the wider network of organisations to improve the institutions governing climate change (Shakya et al., 2018).

ACT has helped develop networks external to the government that can generate analysis, share knowledge and provide pressure and legitimacy for adaptation policies and actions. In Afghanistan, ACT linked a group of Afghan civil society organisations (CSOs) working on environmental causes with the Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSA). This entailed CANSA training these CSOs to develop and deploy tactics of engaging, campaigning and working with the Government on climate change issues. Subsequently, CANSA absorbed these organisations as members, and this group was recognised as Afghanistan's first National Steering Committee of CANSA, giving them a voice and platform. This helps ensure these CSOs can work as an informal pressure group to ensure continued government action on adaptation even after ACT wraps up.

ACT has also engaged the media as a key stakeholder and avenue to influence the government. On a number of occasions, ACT has organised high-profile media events to launch government policy documents developed with support from the programme. For example, in Bihar, the Deputy Chief Minister launched a technical report on financing of adaptation at a

Box 2: Trust and policy influence in Bihar

In Bihar, efforts by ACT to strengthen the State Government's capacity to manage and finance action on climate change initially drew on an expert consultant from outside the region, but gained no significant traction from the Government, as the issue did not resonate strongly with its existing interests and priorities. The programme team thus decided to engage the Bihar-based Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI), a think-tank with a long and trusted track record of providing technical analysis for state and national authorities.

ADRI had credibility with the Government of Bihar on social, political and economic issues but no significant prior experience of working on climate change. This credibility had been cemented through strong professional relationships between ADRI's senior leadership and the state bureaucracy and politicians, as well as through the vast amount of support that ADRI was providing to the Government of Bihar on designing, delivering and monitoring development initiatives. The ACT local team has built a strong working relationship with ADRI, supporting it to carry out technical analysis on climate change issues in the state and to build its internal capabilities. Publications and reports from the programme were authored by ADRI, and its team co-organised a high-profile international conference on climate change in the state.

As a result, the ACT programme enhanced its influence with the state on climate change, by using a trusted partner to carry out and communicate the analysis and policy advice. For example, ACT worked with ADRI to recommend and support an expansion in the mandate of the Department of Environment and Forestry to also include climate change, which the Government formally approved in 2018. In addition, ACT supported ADRI to build a team of experts and establish a climate change centre within the organisation. This is important to sustain the technical support and influence of ACT beyond the duration of the programme.

high-profile event that received a great deal of media coverage and in the process added political weight to a subject that had previously not received much attention. By linking to wider news stories and events (e.g. World Environment Day), it is easier to generate media interest. For example, in Pakistan, ACT provided technical support to integrate climate change into the first-ever Punjab Women Development Policy, which was launched on International Women's Day and received considerable media coverage. In Afghanistan, ACT facilitated training to journalists on climate change reporting and built a network of interested reporters to help with this influencing strategy. This led to a spike in media coverage of climate change issues in Afghanistan. In Bangladesh, ACT has built the capacity of a group of NGOs, think-tanks and journalists on scrutinising the Government's work on climate budgeting. This has led to the preparation of a report that presents a set of eight asks by civil society from government that range from demanding an annual increase in the climate relevance of the country's budget to a joint monitoring mechanism that engages the media and civil society in monitoring the effectiveness of spending on climate change.

A different tactic has been to facilitate climate change communities of practice within government, with ACT using its position 'inside the tent', where its voice is more likely to be heard. Such internal networks can help embed adaptation as a concern across different sectors, constructing and spreading policy narratives (see Box 3). A commonly cited difficulty with adaptation mainstreaming is that the nominated focal point for climate change lies with the environment and/or forestry department. While these parts of government may have stronger capacity on environmental enforcement and technical issues, they are commonly weak in their ability to influence adaptation policy in other important sectors such as water or agriculture (Klein et al., 2007). ACT has built opportunities for networking and for champions within government to 'advocate' internally – for example, establishing a series of thematic working groups involving government and non-government actors to develop Nepal's National Adaptation Plan (NAP); supporting the Climate Change Cell in Chhattisgarh to act as a knowledge centre and organising seminars, workshops and training events for different departments; and facilitating cross-sectoral climate change committees across a range of locations.

Box 3: Developing a cross-government climate network in Kerala

Networks within government can be important means of enhancing the influence of the agency responsible for managing climate change – extending their reach across sectors and also opening up channels for informal influence. In Kerala, climate change was not a high policy priority for the Government when ACT began. A (central government-mandated) State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) had been drafted but funds were not allocated for its implementation, and the climate change lead department did not hold significant power across government.

One of many strategies used by the local ACT team to increase political commitment on climate change has been to strengthen the influence of the Climate Change Cell within the Environment Department over the line departments. ACT worked with the Principal Secretary of the Department to ask other secretaries to nominate departmental nodal officers for climate change. Many now have a three-member focal team, helping mediate the risk of staff churn and institutionalising climate change within the state's planning and organisation processes. This provides the Climate Change Cell with a direct avenue to communicate with the line department, to understand and inform its policy processes. All letters to the respective department on climate change are sent by/from these officers, and they represent their department at meetings on climate change.

These individuals have established a network and more informal 'community of practice', sitting across government departments, universities, institutions and other government agencies. An email and WhatsApp group has provided an informal platform for discussing new ideas, sharing best practices and building relationships across the group. This has helped overcome the culture of hierarchy, which often prevents free and open communication between and within different departments.

The engagement of networks of citizens and communities can also help support policy influencing objectives. ACT has supported a number of stakeholder engagement processes to inform decision-making of adaptation policy – for example, as part of the Nepal NAP process, although it has proven difficult to get sufficient representation and inputs from the most vulnerable and excluded. In Maharashtra, ACT is supporting the State Government's efforts to build a network of 4,000 'water champions' as part of its Water Literacy Campaign. ACT has developed a Water Budgeting Tool to help communities get involved in water resource management decision-making and ensure their water and livelihood needs are taken into account. The government is now rolling out the tool, with training activities underway at the village level. Engaging citizens can also put pressure on government in relation to adaptation policy and activities, as well as promoting accountability mechanisms, including for the spending of climate finance (Schalatek, 2012).

One challenge of working through networks of other partners and individuals to influence policy is the lack of direct control over the process. ACT has been able to build these networks' levels of understanding and capacity but there has been no certainty on what they will eventually advocate for. It is also a more indirect, and less immediate, process of influencing, and the contribution of the programme to achieving the end result can be difficult to measure. For example, the highly participatory process used to prepare Nepal's NAP, involving all climate-relevant ministries and agencies, meant the process took a lot longer than it would have if only a single department, or a consultant, had drafted the document.

4.4 Supporting cheerleaders and champions

Nurturing and supporting people who can champion adaptation and mainstreaming is crucial to securing lasting institutional and policy change (Meijerink and Stiller, 2013). In many locations for ACT, opening the door to policy influence has hinged on securing the interest of a high-profile champion. In some cases, this has been a senior politician. For example, the Deputy Chief Minister in the Indian state of Bihar became a key ally of the programme, while in Pakistan the programme works closely with the Prime Minister's Special Advisor on climate change. In others, it has been a

senior official. For example, the Principal Secretary of the Water Resources Department in Odisha, who has a background in disaster management and recognised the need to address flooding issues, has championed important work with the programme. In Assam, the team leader built a strong personal rapport with the Chief Secretary of the Department of Environment and Forests after several rounds of formal and informal interactions, where he was able to make the case for Assam showing leadership on adaptation. This buy-in helped the programme move forward far more efficiently, with the Chief Secretary handling the bureaucratic hurdles from inside the system.

In Afghanistan, the main entry-point has been through mainstreaming climate change into the Natural Resources Management (NRM) Strategy. ACT identified and supported the Director General of NRM within the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock as a champion of integrating adaptation. A policy window was opened for integrating adaptation into a draft version of the strategy when ACT was invited onto the technical working group and, along with other partners, such as United Nations agencies and the World Bank, worked to support government officers to develop mainstreaming actions within this strategy. In Nepal, in developing the workstream on adaptation and tourism, the focal point and the nodal officer had both previously been posted in the Ministry of Environment, where they had had substantial exposure to the issue of climate change adaptation. As a consequence, they could relate the problem of climate change to tourism and influence take-up of the issue in the Department of Tourism.

In some cases, fostering these champions has meant being highly responsive to the demands and interests of senior figures, orienting the programme's activities to those areas of adaptation where there would be sufficient leadership to push policy change and implementation. In Bihar, the programme took up the topic of siltation because of strong demand and interest from the Principal Secretary, despite the link to climate change not being straightforward. The programme has been able to quickly move forward the Government's thinking on siltation, including through a Sediment Management Framework, but the goodwill generated also helped progress other areas of work.

For many locations in the ACT programme, influence has also been sought indirectly by identifying and working with other actors who have the most influence on policy- and decision-maker networks. In Kerala and other locations, the programme hired as an advisor a former bureaucrat with strong networks in the government system, to help push files through the bureaucracy and gain access at the highest levels. In all locations, ACT tries to use local experts, researchers and organisations who themselves have networks and relationships within the government, which the programme can utilise to deliver the technical workstreams. In Nepal, working with a local partner, Practical Action, meant the ACT programme could build on its pre-existing networks, which in turn helped position ACT in what is a busy field of national and international organisations and programmes. In Maharashtra, previous work contacts helped persuade the British High Commissioner to raise the urgency of signing off the SAPCC when meeting the state's Chief Minister.

A regional dialogue in 2018 on climate finance in Bangkok with government officials from across the region.

Working through champions is not without risks. Relying on individual champions within government may privilege the interests of senior politicians and bureaucrats over those that might be generated through more participatory consultations or bottom-up assessments. In addition, the programme has to manage expectations and requests for personal interests and incentives that may be beyond its remit. In general, working only with influential actors risks not being able to challenge the status quo. These individuals and actors, who already have 'power' within the current system, are unlikely to champion issues that could challenge the systems and structures within which they operate. For example, in some locations, it has been difficult to obtain interest from 'champions' to look explicitly at water-intensive or 'unsustainable' crops (e.g. sugarcane), given that these farmers are important political lobbies.

4.5 Downstream implementers

The ACT programme has had success in both framing its offer as being about support to the implementation of existing climate plans and policies, and targeting those responsible for implementation as key drivers of change. When the programme started, most locations (with the exception of Afghanistan) already had some form of climate change policy framework in place, including most of the Indian states, which had at least draft versions of an SAPCC. Most of the governments had also recognised that there was a significant implementation gap, and a lack of understanding on how to go about implementation. ACT was therefore well placed to offer support both to those responsible for coordinating and managing the implementation process and to the line ministries and departments expected to carry out the implementation.

In addition to working with and building high-level 'champions' within the government, ACT has worked with the 'implementers' within the bureaucracy and at all levels. In some cases where ACT did not immediately have an entry-point at the senior official or political level (e.g. in Chhattisgarh), it started working with medium-level officials to build the programme's credibility to then allow it to engage at a higher level. In all locations, ACT has made a targeted effort to quickly move its engagement from the responsible agency for climate change (e.g. environment departments or ministries of climate change) to the sectoral agencies that can inform adaptation on the ground.

In Afghanistan, mid-level bureaucrats were the main point of influence, precisely to take the messages both up and down the hierarchy. In Odisha, while the senior bureaucrats in the Environment Department were consulted and were the main point of coordination for the programme, ACT worked primarily with technical staff in the Water Resource and Agriculture departments on flood management and mainstreaming adaptation into the Government's water resource and agriculture planning systems. In Nepal, during the recent transition to federalism and related government upheaval and uncertainty, ACT focused its engagement on officials and actors who were not directly impacted, such as the Central Bureau of Statistics. In all locations, offering targeted training, particularly in connection with developing climate finance proposals, has proven an effective way to engage and influence officials lower down the hierarchy. This includes relatively lower-level technical officers, who often do not get the opportunity to participate in climate change-focused events and workshops and have few opportunities to build their own profile within their departments.

The focus on working with implementers is supported by the development of pilot activities. Frequent calls from government for piloting reflect their desire to see more implementation, helping demonstrate how policy change works on the ground and acting as a valuable influencing strategy. While ACT has not been able to support all activities requested, given its limited budget and mandate to provide technical assistance only, some activities, such as support to pilot an integrated irrigation and agriculture planning framework in Cuttack and Subarnapur districts in Odisha, have helped secure wider policy influence.

One challenge of working directly with 'implementers' within the bureaucracy is that they usually lack the authority to take decisions and make change happen quickly. For example, in India, the hierarchy that exists among bureaucrats from different 'services', even if they are at the same level of seniority, can limit the authority of some officers. In most locations, working with an 'implementer' within the bureaucracy who has the visible backing and support of a senior officer has been the ideal situation. In addition, lower-level officials are often easier to access and engage but are usually more risk-averse. They tend to be hesitant to take actions beyond the scope of their responsibilities and job description and prefer to follow clear guidance and instruction from above.

5. Implications for the design of adaptation technical assistance programmes

Drawing on these examples and foregrounding the importance of informal and tacit strategies for policy influence can help others who are designing and providing technical assistance to support national and sub-national governments to mainstream adaptation into their policies. The ability to effectively influence policy for adaptation mainstreaming can be built into the design of technical assistance interventions from the outset.

By way of a conclusion, the examples outlined in this paper help determine several options on setting up programming to optimise these strategies and their influence on policy. These include the use of political economy analysis, adaptive management approaches and explicitly designing areas of programming that allow for informal influencing processes and rapid response to opportunities.

First, many of the strategies outlined in this paper require a thorough understanding of the changing policy context, especially locally. One way to promote this is to engage programme staff who have prior experience with the relevant local bureaucracies and adaptation issues. However, programmes can also undertake regular analysis of the changing political economy influencing adaptation mainstreaming, including assessments of both proximate and more distant policy drivers. In the case of ACT, this has been carried out centrally through a regularly updated context assessment. Bringing staff and partners into the process of collating these analyses promotes buy-in to enable politically astute programming and better tracking of the intervention's contribution to change processes (Gogoi and Bisht, 2018). In reality, the formal context assessment has been less helpful to the local team members (who already know the context well) but important to ensure the management team and the funder have the same level of local knowledge.

Second, a more decentralised approach to programming helps ensure approaches to policy influencing are locally appropriate. This is more

Shri Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha, launches the real time flood forecasting model for the Mahanadi river.

likely to be effective where team leaders in different locations have greater ability to define programme priorities and methods, rather than acting only as implementers of a centrally determined strategy and approach. However, it brings a risk of having a fragmented programme without any overall coherence. To avoid this, ACT uses a common programme-level results framework, which the regional management team employs to assess progress and evaluate new possible local entry-points and strategies. All of the local team leaders, also meet regularly, at quarterly 'core team meetings', for peer-to-peer exchange and learning and to collectively assess progress.

Third, policy influencing strategies may also benefit from the iteration and flexibility of an adaptive management approach to programming. Adaptive management is an intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context (USAID, 2018). Crucially, this is not about changing goals during implementation, but about changing the path being used to reach the goals in response to changes in the policy and programming context. Setting up a programme to regularly revisit activities and outputs will enable policy entrepreneurs to learn as they go and to take advantage of unexpected opportunities for policy influencing as they arise (see Box 4). However, the real challenge is to establish programmes that are 'committed to experimentation and "learning by doing" from the start, as distinct from building in flexibility to respond to changes in circumstances during implementation' (Wild et al., 2017: 23).

Adaptive management approaches may also widen the opportunities for more politically informed approaches, acknowledging that the drivers of change are often rapidly changing themselves. As such, more in-depth 'development entrepreneurship' methods have been proposed that explicitly and iteratively integrate politics into project and programme implementation to find technically sound and politically possible reforms (Faustino and Booth, 2014; Cooke, 2018).

The challenge of adaptive programme management lies in being able to promise and deliver certainty of results and expenditure to the funder. ACT has overcome this by providing monthly results and budgeting reporting and quarterly forecasting, as well as regular in-person communication with the managers in the funding agency, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), to ensure expectations are aligned.

Box 4: Employing an adaptive approach to programming in Nepal

The ACT programme in Nepal started with an initial set of activities identified through a long-range planning exercise. Many of these activities had to be revised during implementation because of a changing context and changing government priorities. ACT's support to the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) formulation process similarly had to be reoriented when the government received a much larger 'readiness' grant from the Green Climate Fund for the same purpose. The significant impacts of the earthquake that hit the country in April 2015 dominated the policy space around disasters, suppressing interest in climate change. Nepal has also seen significant political upheaval during the lifetime of the programme, including changes in government, adoption of a new constitution, wide-ranging decentralisation of power to newly formed provincial and local authorities, and phased elections for local, provincial and national government. In addition, the country has a very crowded climate policy sphere, where identifying innovative solutions is a challenge.

The programme hence took an adaptive approach to be able to adjust the work and achieve results. The programme team had to be constantly entrepreneurial and innovative to identify new entry-points for influence. The programme focused on sectors and issues that required climate mainstreaming but were less affected by the contextual challenges. Utilising existing relationships, the programme reached out to ministries such as the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation and the Ministry of Urban Development and presented a contextualised narrative on the need to mainstream climate change into these sectors. The programme also engaged with the private sector working on tourism to mainstream climate change adaptation within their investments. Deploying this adaptive approach in Nepal was possible in large part because of the flexible delivery model and monitoring and reporting framework inherent in the programme.

Box 5: How rapid response funds can promote better policy influence

For ACT, the Rapid Response Mechanism has been an important tool for building trust and strong relationships with government partners. A small percentage of the annual programme budget is put aside each year and used to respond to ad hoc and relatively small requests for support from government partners. This allows ACT team leaders to be responsive and demand-driven without deviating from the agreed strategy and focus of the programme. This has included supporting Earth Day events with climate change highlighted by state chief ministers (e.g. in Bihar and Maharashtra); supporting participation in international knowledge-sharing platforms such as the NAP Expo before starting domestic National Adaptation Plan (NAP) processes (e.g. in Nepal); one-off technical support to help prepare a climate funding proposal (e.g. to access funds from the Government of India's Knowledge Management Mission on Climate Change); and logistics support for organising events (e.g. a climate change awareness workshop in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly). The approval and disbursal time is very quick (within a month) and therefore allows the local team to respond immediately to local needs and opportunities.

Fourth, the design, and monitoring and reporting processes of technical assistance programmes need to recognise the large amount of 'off-terms of reference' work that accompanies informal influencing strategies. Explicitly writing staff time and resources into programme plans for influencing can acknowledge the scale of efforts policy entrepreneurs require to influence more effectively. One way to facilitate such processes is for design and reporting formats to emphasise outputs and outcomes rather than activities. Midway through the programme, ACT adopted this type of reporting system, permitting greater flexibility for staffing and resources that could be tailored according to the diverse needs of different locations. At the same time, care is needed to ensure monitoring captures learning on successful and unsuccessful strategies for policy influencing.

The design of programmes can make explicit space for private, informal interactions between the team and local stakeholders that can be fundamental to building trust. For example, ACT encourages team leaders to budget time within their workplan to be used flexibly and adaptively as required, including for building relationships with key individuals and organisations within and outside government. However, this relies on there being a high degree of trust between the local team members and management team, which can only be gained over time.

Finally, policy entrepreneurship can be fostered by setting up programmes to be able to respond to unexpected opportunities and policy 'windows' that emerge rapidly but often close just as quickly, thereby requiring immediate action (Birkmann et al., 2010). This can be promoted by creating specific funds within programmes that are available for such opportunities. ACT's Rapid Response Mechanism was particularly important for building trust and relationships, responding to local priorities and those of senior individuals (see Box 5). Even when these were in the wider remit of climate change action rather than strictly on adaptation, the ability to rapidly and flexibly mobilise resources was reported as crucial to building trust in the programme and its staff. As the relationship between the programme and the government has strengthened over time, ACT has put in place stricter criteria for accessing this ad hoc funding.

6. Conclusion: Ten tips for enhancing policy influencing and entrepreneurship within a technical assistance programme

This paper has used learning from ACT to highlight the importance of influencing strategies within technical assistance programmes, and the need to understand and design different strategies to achieve the desired policy impact. By way of a conclusion, these 10 short tips summarise some of the lessons from the ACT programme for maximising the potential for policy influencing and entrepreneurship. They are drawn from different climate adaptation contexts in South Asia but have a wider, more universal, application.

1. Design programmes with policy entrepreneurship in mind, using adaptive management approaches, providing flexible rapidly deployable resources, output- and/or outcome-based reporting, and giving space in job specifications to seize unexpected opportunities for policy influencing.
2. Develop and balance the skill sets and personalities of policy entrepreneurs in the programme team to cover the different types of policy influencing tactics.
3. Engage programme staff who have prior experience with the relevant local bureaucracies and adaptation issues.
4. Undertake regular analysis of the changing political economy influencing adaptation mainstreaming, including assessments of both proximate and more distant policy drivers.
5. Map out, learn about and engage with the informal shadow networks that operate alongside formal decision-making structures.
6. Construct policy narratives around adaptation to link with the interests and incentive structures in government, at the same time being cognisant of bottom-up perspectives and priorities.
7. Calculate and communicate the benefits of adaptation, tailoring these to appeal to the different groups, including those inside and those outside government.
8. Start with areas of government that are best prepared for adaptation action and build out the network and interest from there to reach others.
9. Engage high-level champions to help map adaptation issues onto higher-level policy agendas.
10. Build awareness, capacity and leadership down through organisations from top-level decision-makers to downstream implementers to help institutionalise and sustain change.

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