Reflections on using political economy analysis in OPM's Action on Climate Today Programme

Report

July 2017

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Oxford Policy Management

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'*Sustainability of the activities on this programme is down to institutionalisation: if we do not institutionalise it into government systems, whatever the agenda it will not go beyond the lifetime of the programme. Whatever I do, it must percolate down within the government departments, and there must be champions who will take it forward. It was integral for a Climate Change Cell to be developed.*'

Rizwan Zaman, team leader, Assam

1   Introduction

It is now widely understood that technical capacity and resources alone are insufficient to catalyse real change around entrenched political interests and deeply ingrained inequality.[1] **Understanding power asymmetries is frequently the missing ingredient in project design and implementation**. It is therefore key to invest in political analysis to examine the distribution of power and resources in a given situation and identify the formal and informal interests, incentives and norms that maintain or threaten to challenge the status quo.

OPM has long been applying political economy analysis (PEA)[2] to development issues.[3] The implementation of projects requires us to 'work politically' because effective policy design and implementation hinges on the ability to work in politically informed ways in order to navigate constantly changing local contexts. In turn, interventions need to be flexible, adaptive and responsive to windows of opportunity for reform.

We believe that understanding the history and political theories that influence the dynamics of the country in which we are implementing programmes is key to engaging in 'politically smart' development.

This involves being:

- **politically informed:** understanding the political landscape includes having a sense of history as well as some in-depth understanding of country and sector context, including embedded structures, local informal structures, relationships and actors. This understanding of the political dynamics needs to be constantly renewed, and should not be limited to undertaking formal analysis as a one-off exercise[4];
- **politically astute**: which refers to practical political skills, whereby information about politics and power is used with strategic intelligence and creativity. It is important for a team to be well-informed and astute operators, with the capacity to work with the political actors around them.[5]

This document forms part of a series of papers that illustrate 'how change happens in the Action on Climate Today (ACT) initiative'. This note describes ACT's approach to understanding and engaging in the political change space, with an associated brief

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[1] See: Acemoglu, D. and Robinson, J. (2012) *Why Nations Fail.* New York, Crown Books; Andrews, M. (2013) *The Limits of Institutional Reform in Development.* (2013). New York, Cambridge University Press.
[2] We are aware of the emerging body of literature on the 'the second orthodoxy in development' describing approaches of PEA, political analysis, Doing development differently and thinking and working politically. This has led to recent confusion on terminology. For the purposes of this document PEA is defined as a particular sub-set or application of political analysis. For more information on this, please see Leftwhich (2014) 'From political economy to political analysis'; and Tesky, Graham (2017) 'Thinking and Woking Politically: Are we seeing the emergence of a second orthodoxy?'.
[3] For example, some of the conceptual ideas underpinning the 'drivers of change' approach were developed for DFID by OPM: http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/doc59.pdf.
[4] Booth, D., and Unsworth, S. (2014) 'Politically smart, locally led development', Overseas Development Institute (ODI) discussion paper. London: ODI.
[5] Summary from LASER PEA Guidance Note Final, 15 February 2016, p. 4.

focusing on ACT's approach to operating adaptively within a complex and transient political environment.

2 Context

ACT is a £23 million regional development programme funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and implemented by OPM with a broad range of consortium partners. ACT works in partnership with the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal and India to assist these countries in integrating climate adaptation into policies, plans and budgets in order to become more climate resilient. OPM is working with government counterparts providing support across the policy cycle, from research and capacity building to monitoring and evaluation. Adopting an applied political economy approach, the ACT team identifies and leverages realistic opportunities for reform, focusing on interventions that can be adapted to national and sub-national contexts whilst learning lessons that can be scaled up across the region as a whole. The programme also acts to enable these countries' capacity to attract and leverage climate change investment, generating £161 million of additional leveraged funds to date.

ACT operates within a complex environment involving:

- changes in policy priorities;
- changes in key government positions via elections and frequent transfer of government officials to other positions or departments;
- changes in institutions' and structures, such as decentralisation;
- increasing extreme weather events within the region; and
- social and financial changes, including uncertain access to international finance mechanisms.

Key to ACT's success to date is the ability of the politically informed team leaders to understand, navigate and affect change in the local political environment in which they operate. This is complemented by the formalised application of the tools and processes described in this document.

Fundamental to the programme's ability to work politically is recruiting the right people (who think and work in this way) and having the right programme management framework to allow politically astute team leaders to operate with a high degree of freedom whilst still managing risks and accountability.

3   ACT's approach to PEA

ACT's PEA approach to implementation is informed by ongoing context analysis and carried out by local team leaders who have frontline responsibility for the design and implementation of all ACT initiatives in their location. Team leaders work to develop local political insights and connections and to build relationships and national ownership of this work.

It has been vital for team leaders to be politically informed, taking time to understand the context-specific nature of problems, and the political drivers influencing what initiatives may be possible in their location. This is combined with having a deep understanding of national traditions, capacities and needs.[6] However, for relationships with government partners to be continuously nurtured and reproduced to remain effective points of engagement, PEA must be applied in an iterated way – at a minimum during regular strategic reviews, aiming to bring 'thinking and acting politically' into everyday work to encourage reporting on political constraints as they emerge.

Implementation has required strong frontline, 'politically astute' leadership that has helped to both open and protect the policy space for change. Using a high-level combination of the techniques described in the three case studies below, the Assam team leader artfully navigated the local authorising environment to build space for change and ensure initiatives were politically smart and locally led. In doing so, he went from initially being ignored and thrown out of government offices to launching a cross-ministerial 'Climate Change Management Society', including members from each of the 14 ministries and led by the Chief Minister of Finance.

> '*Sustainability of the activities on this programme is down to institutionalisation: if we do not institutionalise it into government systems, whatever the agenda it will not go beyond the lifetime of the programme. Whatever I do, it must percolate down within the government departments, and there must be champions who will take it forward. It was integral for a Climate Change Cell to be developed.*'
>
> Rizwan Zaman, team leader, Assam

As this document demonstrates, there has been no blueprint for reform across the ACT programme: rather, effective change has arisen from bespoke solutions that reflect the local context and political economy. Solutions are not locked in but are based on ongoing political and contextual analysis of 'best fit', ensuring that they are feasible and realistic for the local context.

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[6] It is also important to recognise that the drivers for change may change over time. Faustina and Fabella (2011) propose a more in-depth technique, called 'development entrepreneurship', which is a method that goes beyond PEA to incorporate politics into project and programme implementation, suggesting an *iterative process* that uses evolutionary principles to find technically sound and politically possible reforms. For more information and a practical model for development entrepreneurship, see Faustina and Fabella (2011), https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/OccasionalPaperNo12.pdf.

4 ACT case studies for PEA

This briefing note outlines the strategic approach to PEA used in ACT via three case studies:

- **Case 1:** Context assessments and understanding the institutional change space.
- **Case 2:** Navigating the terrain for reform and understanding the 'authorising environment'.
- **Case 3:** Responding to entry points – State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs).

4.1 Case 1: Context assessments in ACT

Engaging local agents and institutions and adopting a participatory, political economy-focused approach in ACT has helped ensure local ownership and greater sustainability of initiatives. Measuring the institutional context for tackling climate change has been important in order to identify the opportunities and barriers for effective adaptation in a specific location. ACT's approach to understanding the institutional context for tacking climate change across South Asia is based on an in-depth context assessment carried out each year 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 context analyses are live documents and feed into a continuous process aimed at monitoring and capturing nuances in the shifting political economy. The methodology used in this assessment is summarised in Box 1 below. These assessments are used to varying degrees across the different regions, depending on the initial level of institutional knowledge and engagement of the local team leader.

Every year, the ACT team carries out a full 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 and captures information in an institutional context by region on:

1. the availability of **accurate and relevant information** on climate change and its impact on growth and development;
2. the level of **awareness and understanding** of key stakeholders to the risk of climate change for growth and development;
3. the level of **priority and significance** accorded by key stakeholders to the risk of climate change (high-level political commitment?);
4. the level of **participation and influence** of key stakeholders on decision-making process on climate change;
5. the level and quality of **interaction between government and stakeholders** on adaptation to climate change;
6. the status of **climate change policy framework; and**
7. progress in **financing and mainstreaming climate change response.**

This in turn informs the design and delivery of the initiative's location strategies and activities. By repeating the process annually (and updating it on a continuous basis), 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 and streamlined methodology.**
>
> **The assessment is primarily qualitative and focused around a key informant discussion of at least 10 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 the results of 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: the assessment remains an internal working document.**

This analysis is combined with continuous monitoring of the shifting political environment by the team leaders and their staff. This is often done informally, on a day-to-day basis, as a natural part of team leaders' work. The approach, however, differs across ACT locations. In Assam, the team produces a 'monthly news archive', with the major objective of keeping track of the local news on various sectors of environment: agriculture, urban flood, erosion, disasters, forestry etc. The aim is to provide a brief idea about the impacts of climate change on the local context whilst signalling what scope the team has to affect changes on climate adaptation initiatives. These archives also present a rough analysis of various aspects of socio-economic effects of climate change faced by the communities across the region. In these archives, local newspapers published in English and Assamese are studied on weekly basis to collect relevant news items.[7] The approach to and use of the context assessments by team leaders vary depending on the pre-existing level of engagement on climate change issues.

> '*The context-mapping exercise was helpful for my team as it systematised political and strategic analysis that would normally have been done informally.*'
>
> Rizwan Zaman, team leader, Assam

4.1.1 Using context assessments to understand institutional change space

The above section examines the context assessment process; here we describe team leaders' application of the context assessments to understand the institutional space for change. These assessments complement the work of politically astute team leaders, enhancing their ability to understand, navigate and affect change in the local political environment in which they operate.

Thorough and ongoing context assessments in ACT provide valuable insights about the political and economic environment within which the initiative operates, and shape the design of possible interventions. They have acted as a basis to inform team leaders on the design and delivery of their overall 'location strategies' in each region. The detailed activity workplans used in the 2015–16 location strategies enforced this

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[7] The newspapers are: the Assam Tribune, the Sentinel, Amar Asom, Asomiya Khabar, Dainik Asom, Niyomiya Barta, Asomiya Pratidin and Dainik Janambhumi.

formalised strategic approach to programming through their explicit focus on the importance of key decision-makers.

These live documents help team leaders to reflect on whether technical workstreams are tackling the right issues, and if interventions have been a success or not. They also provide a formalised approach to continual analysis of the changing context and support staff in analysing and responding to changing opportunities, momentum and constraints.

In each region, undertaking the context analysis is an essential mechanism for understanding the institutional space in which to engage, and for analysing the threshold for change. Identifying this change space has a strong emphasis on the approach to strategic relationships across and within government institutions.

The ACT programme is problem-focused rather than solution-driven, such that problems are locally identified and defined, providing the entry point for reform. The ACT approach tracks political dynamics and as such feeds into a process of reflection and adaptation of initiatives in an iterative way. The programme focuses on solving locally nominated and defined problems in performance (as opposed to transplanting pre-conceived and pre-packaged 'best practice' solutions).

ACT team leaders use the outcomes of the context analysis process to understand the changing interests, incentives, ideas and relationships within and across governments. They also recognise that it is not easy to navigate the authorising environment and gain acceptance, given the many unseen complexities in most contexts, where one can only see a small part of the rules and mechanisms driving behaviour.[8] ACT team leaders apply strategic intelligence, creativity and networks to engage in this change space.

For example, the Assam team leader uses a strategic approach to engaging with local government by linking the prominent climate change discourses at the national and international policy levels to climate change in Assam, demonstrating how these supra-state issues were relevant at the local level. The flexibility and decentralised decision-making of the programme allowed him the freedom to operate as he deemed appropriate to establish an extensive network across key stakeholders. Finding individuals with the ability to apply this high-level strategic thinking to engagement activities was a fundamental factor in the recruitment of ACT team leaders.

4.2 Case 2: Understanding the authorising environment in ACT

Unless those with power use their influence to support reform, technical solutions by themselves rarely lead to meaningful change. The ACT programme seeks to create an 'authorising environment' for decision-making that encourages an experimental and iterative approach to defining and implementing workstreams.

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[8] Andrews, Matt (2013) *The Limits of Institutional Reform* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

Each of the team leaders in ACT has managed to effectively navigate the complex political landscape and engage the authorising environment – with varying degrees of difficulty. However, building relationships takes time and this must be factored into the budgeting of the programme. In ACT, the management team take a pragmatic approach to this in budgeting time for team leader to build relationships and linking this to performance objectives.[9]

> '*Around 50% of a team leader' time is spent on management and technical workstreams and 50% is spent on building and maintaining relationships (using results to build cases, building space to engage within and across different ministries). A large chunk of their acceptance has come from this. Formal processes sit behind this informal arrangement.*'
>
> Vidya Soundarajan, ACT programme manager, India

Authorising environments are commonly fragmented and difficult to navigate. Authority does not always reside where it is assumed to reside, it is seldom located in one office or person and acceptance from only one person is not enough to manifest change. When authorisation is built around an institution, it needs to be constantly strengthened and maintained in order for it to be sustainable when changes of command take place.[10]

Authorising structures often vary vertically and cross over many overlapping jurisdictional domains. Informality often reigns in authority structures as well, manifested in personalities and relationships. These structures are seldom well-known, especially to outsiders, which makes it extremely difficult to know who really authorises what in any context. Each context in ACT has been approached as unique and as requiring a thorough scoping to ensure the stakeholders whose authority is needed are identified.[11] It has been crucial to harness the local knowledge of the team leaders, both from an institutional and cultural perspective, and to pay attention to structures of authority.[12]

> '*Having worked in the Government of India for a number of years prior to working on the ACT programme I had an in-depth understanding of the hierarchical levels within and across government ministries, particularly the power balance between the ministries of environment and forest and other ministries.*'
>
> Rizwan Zama, team leader, Assam

Originally from Assam, the team leader worked in central government for 17 years. In initiating the ACT programme, a great deal of effort was needed to build networks and navigate the authorising environment before more tangible work could begin, not only because the team leader had to re-connect with his network, but also because little

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[9] See a parallel study on ACT's approach to operating an adaptive programme.
[10] For more reading on the importance of authorisation in building state capability, see Andrews, M., Pritchett, L., and Woolcock, M. (2016) 'Managing your authorizing environment in a PDIA process'. Harvard Center for International Development Working Paper 312.
[11] For more reading on the importance of authorisation in building state capability, see Andrews, M., Pritchett, L., and Woolcock, M. (2016) 'Managing your authorizing environment in a PDIA process'. Harvard Center for International Development Working Paper 312.
[12] Described further in Adaptive Programme Framework case study (parallel document in this series)

awareness and few institutional connections existed around the climate change agenda.

The Assam team leader started by engaging the Chief Secretary in order to obtain senior-level government buy-in. Many informal conversations went into securing the Chief Secretary's buy-in on the importance of climate change to the state of Assam.

The Chief Secretary has now become the champion of the agenda and has helped push relevant departments to act on climate change. Engagement with the Chief Secretary was complemented with subsequent broad and deep engagement with other stakeholders in an effort to build extensive partnerships. This was a time-consuming job that entailed a lot of work outside of normal office hours. It often required the team leader to provide support on matters that fell outside the immediate scope of the ACT programme and that were not a component of the programme logframe.

Building authorisation around individuals is risky because there is a potential threat that contacts and level of engagement may be lost upon a change of political control or retirement or re-posting of senior officials. To mitigate this, ACT team leaders attempt to ensure that the programme is not seen as exclusively associated with any one political party or faction, or with a restricted group of official allies and champions. The present team leader have broad-based networks, which are actively encouraged. Wider consultations with stakeholders, the development of issue coalitions (within and between actors in government and society) and the engagement of lower-level bureaucrats are all promising strategies already used in settings such as Assam and Nepal.

Other actors in this context include executive secretaries, their deputies and technical staff, politicians, and other stakeholders such as non-governmental organisations, universities and likeminded donors. People were approached on an issue-specific basis in order for the team leader to build coalitions of stakeholders necessary to push for – or not resist – change in a certain policy area. This broad and deep engagement was a conscious effort designed to institutionalise initiatives more broadly within a governance and political economy landscape. This appears to have improved the resilience of the programme: despite a change of government in Assam, an ACT-initiated, cross-ministerial 'Climate Change Management Society' is still in operation.

In Kerala, the team leader has needed to effectively navigate major political changes and has so far worked with four Directors of Energy and Climate Change, four Acting Chief Secretaries of Department of Environment, two politically different governments, and three Chief Secretaries. By effectively navigating the complex authorising terrain they have maintained good acceptance from government.

> '*This is an excellent team and programme, and we should make good use of the team to address climate change in the region*.'

> Chief Secretary, Kerala.

To effectively navigate the local authorising environment team leaders have needed to ensure that all initiatives are locally led (or authorised) and politically informed and

politically astute (meaning that they have broad support and authorisation).[13] An approach that focuses on building relationships and expanding knowledge of the landscape of interest and influence, whilst retaining flexibility to adjust programme strategy and tactics as new information or unexpected opportunities become available is more likely to yield good results.[14]

The ACT programme has increased its acceptance by ensuring that local teams are, without exception, closely engaged with or embedded within the nodal government department. In Chhattisgarh, the team leader and his staff have their office directly inside the Department of Forestry, sitting near the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), who is a nodal officer for climate change. In Maharashtra, although the ACT office is separate, the technical specialist sits inside the Ministry of Environment, close to the nodal officers. In Odisha, Afghanistan and Pakistan, although ACT offices are not integrated within government, almost daily contact with nodal climate change staff is maintained, and the institutionalisation of climate change is strongly supported variously through development of a range of climate change units, climate finance units, and climate change cells.

4.3   Case 3: Responding to political entry points in ACT–SAPCCs

Using PEA in a more 'problem-focused' way – i.e. using a specific problem area as an entry point for analysis, can help highlight feasible openings for reform while enabling an understanding of the implications of particular power relations and incentives.[15] SAPCCs in India[16] have provided an opportunity for the ACT team to engage with a range of different actors across government and beyond on climate change initiatives. This has been one of the key entry points for collaboration.

South Asia is at the forefront of global efforts to tackle climate change. The region has been disproportionally impacted by climate change, and governments are putting in place policies and investing in new technology to build the resilience of their economies and societies.[17]

While representing an impressive step forward on mainstreaming climate change within development planning in India, the SAPCCs have faced delays and challenges, such as institutional barriers, resource constraints and the quality of the plans themselves. Involvement in the SAPCC process has allowed the ACT team to ensure that the governments in question are working towards adequate climate change policies and plans.

In 2009, the Prime Minister of India asked all state governments to prepare a state plan outlining how they will implement the national climate change framework, while taking

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[13] Faustino and Booth (2012) 'Development Entrepreneurship: A Model for Transformative Institutional Change'. [Links to an external site.] Asia Foundation, Occasional paper No. 12, May 2012.

[14] For more information, see Ladner, D. (2015) 'Strategy Testing: An innovative approach to monitoring highly flexible programmes', Working Politically In Practice Series, Case Study No. 3, The Asia Foundation.

[15] Fritz et al. (2014).

[16] And the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) in Nepal and Afghanistan.

[17] The IPCC Fifth Assessment Report: What's in it for South Asia (CDKN 2014).

into account vulnerabilities unique to their own states. This process resulted in the preparation of SAPCCs for each Indian state.

One of the main entry points in Indian States for ACT has been ensuring that climate change became a priority on the agenda of the state political leaders and powerful departments like Planning and Finance. Most state plans were prepared between 2010 and 2011, many making use of consultants supplied by development agencies. Evidence demonstrates that that this approach impacted the level of local ownership.

When ACT began its work, it found that there was a wide variance in institutionalisation, political will and state ownership of these plans.

Despite the federal government mandating their preparation and assigning nodal officers in the states' ministries of environment and forests to provide updates on their plans, there was very little evidence regarding the extent to which many of SAPCCs had actually commenced. In many of the states, pivotal ministers were unaware of their existence and a number were incomplete.

Meaningful impact on integrating climate change into public and private sector policies and investments depends on the ability of the state governments to implement their action plans. Identifying the capacity barriers has been the first step to overcoming them. ACT has been working to overcome the obstacles to effective implementation of coherent, robust and meaningful SAPCCs by first understanding the interests and drivers of these actors in order to create a compelling case for action on climate change. The example of Kerala and Assam are quite explanatory.

> '*In Kerala, the SAPCC had been prepared with the support of the UN Development Programme. It was approved in July 2014 by MoEFCC, however the communication had not reached the nodal officers in the Directorate of Environment and Climate Change. When the ACT team leader joined the programme in the first week of October 2014, SAPCC was an old story and nobody knew the status of it.*'
>
> Nirmala Sanu, team leader, Kerala

The Kerala team leader used this clear gap in awareness and implementation of the SAPCC to solidify ACT's partnership with the state government to revive the process of updating the SAPCC and asked that ACT review it once it was drafted. Therefore, the attention paid by ACT's team to the political economy context and to how that played in implementing the state's climate change framework produced three clear positive outcomes: firstly, ACT was able to reinforce its relationship with the government; secondly, ACT revived the national climate change planning process, which in turn raised climate change on the state's political agenda; and, thirdly, ACT was able to shape the updated SAPCC in a way that would maximise the use of the programme's knowledge acquired by working in other locations.

In Assam, ACT's work on revamping the SAPCC was a catalyst for a range of new opportunities for climate change-related initiatives and collaboration with the Government of Assam.[18] The SAPCC was not originally part of ACT Assam's workplan but appeared as a possible entry point for support to the Government of Assam

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[18] Interview with Rizwan Zaman, ACT Assam Team Leader, 2017; interview with Kausar J. Hilaly, Staff Officer to Chief Secretary of Assam, Government of Assam, 2017.

because it was both a priority of the national government and associated with the Sustainable Development Goals, which were a priority of the Government of Assam.

As part of the SAPCC development process, ACT conducted a range of consultations and workshops with government and non-government stakeholders – combined with the context analysis and long-range planning exercises. This not only built awareness, it also heightened the profile of ACT among government departments and positioned the programme as a trusted partner able to facilitate coordination between government institutions too often prone to working in silos.[19] The format of the consultations was interactive and allowed different stakeholders to share their experiences, build trust and arrive at a much needed consensus on important issues. Furthermore, the SAPCC also provided government departments with a stronger case when applying for climate change finance at the federal and international levels. Moreover, and importantly, it consolidated ACT's reputation as a trusted, credible and responsive partner, and a source of ideas and practical solutions (building acceptance and authority).

Much of ACT's added value rests on its ability to function as a trusted and entrepreneurial partner and 'an idea generator able to quickly and responsively provide advice on and practical solutions to issues that the government is facing'.[20]

The establishment of a Climate Change Cell in the Department of Agriculture in Assam arose as an idea that ACT's team leader floated as part of the programme's support to a value chain study in the department. When confronted by the Chief Secretary's concerns about the sustainability of climate change adaptation efforts in Assam, the team leader suggested the establishment of a 'society' in order to widen ownership of and institutionalise climate change adaptation efforts in Assam. The most recent climate change-focused institutional construct in Assam, the Assam Climate Change Management Society, also arose from 'the process' – it is a special purpose vehicle to coordinate climate action across all stakeholder departments in the state. The Society has a Governing Council headed by the Chief Minister, with council of Ministers as its members and supported by a steering committee chaired by Head of Department of Environment and Forest, Government of Assam.

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[19] Interview with Mahendra Kumar Yadava, Addl. PCCF Planning and Development, Ex-Director, Kaziranga National Park, Department of Environment and Forest, Government of Assam, 2017.
[20] Assam Chief Secretary.

5   Conclusions

ACT's PEA approach has enabled the team to overcome the challenges of many development programmes and successfully build the institutional space in which to engage, whilst mobilising locally owned and sustainable workstreams, such as crop value chain analysis, Financing Frameworks for Resilient Growth and flood forecasting models.

'Politically informed' decision-making, is not the same as pulling a PEA report out of a drawer and looking up the relevant section. It is active, based on personal analysis and assessment, either as individuals or as a team. For politically informed programming to become the norm and improve development outcomes, political analysis must be embedded in everyday routine practice.[21] Much of the successes within ACT have derived from the politically informed team leaders, who have the ability to understand, navigate and effect change in the local political environment in which they operate whilst managing different socio-economic and political challenges and differences.

Set out below are the key drivers that are regarded by the ACT as critical in operationalising a politically informed, politically astute programme and which should therefore have financial, personnel and time appropriately allocated to them.

Lessons that are broadly applicable in a range of development contexts are as follows:

- It is fundamental to recruit politically astute team leader, with local political insights and networks and with skills in advocacy, networking and strategic communication.
- Frontline staff must harness local connections and political 'savviness' to obtain Government buy-in and institutionalise workstreams.
- Building relationships takes time and this must be factored into budgeting of the programme.
- Staff need to be constantly responsive to new information or a changing context: re-evaluating and changing course frequently and rapidly[22] and operating with flexibility and autonomy on the ground.
- Design and embed formalised mechanisms for ongoing analysis 'context assessments' and 'news archive' processes to measure the institutional context for tackling climate change.
- Develop a supportive and facilitative management structure that allows for project re-evaluation and entrepreneurship from frontline staff.
- Ensure a problem-driven approach is understood and adopted by all programme staff, rather than a supplier- / solution-led approach.

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[21] Hudson and Marquette (2015): 71.
[22] See parallel document on adaptive programme management in ACT.

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