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Policy coherence for climate-sensitive planning in Ghana

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Background

In response to climate change threats, climate compatible development aims to foster mitigation and adaptation actions without compromising development progress. However, these three elements relate to a range of key climate-sensitive sectors and are normally addressed separately. This investigation examines the extent to which policies in climate-sensitive sectors are consistent with each other in framing adaptation, mitigation and development actions, and identifies key actions needed to improve policy coherence in Ghana. We use content analysis of policy documents, a multi-stakeholder workshop and expert interviews to address the following research questions: a) to what extent are Ghana's agriculture, energy, water, forest and wildlife sector policies aligned with climate adaptation, mitigation and development? (see Table 2); b) what is the extent of policy coherence amongst climate-sensitive sector policies? (see Table 3); and c) where are the key intervention points to enhance climate compatible development activities? (see 'Lessons for policy and practice')

Key Findings

1. Each sector policy has a different degree of alignment with adaptation, mitigation and development, with most policies aligning principally to development.
2. Sector policies have only "limited" or "partial" alignment with climate adaptation. For example, the energy, forest and wildlife policy documents are focused solely on mitigation.
3. Failure of sector policies to align with key indicators of climate compatible development hampers the capacity to deal with climate change impacts in Ghana in a joined-up way and could put agricultural production and long-term sustainability at risk.
4. There remains "limited" coherence amongst climate-sensitive sector policies. For example, food security is considered a primary issue and indicators related to agriculture were included in all the policies analysed. However, the agriculture policy shows only "partial" coherence with the water sector policy, which could affect the ability to deliver on food security.
5. Increasing inter-sectoral cooperation and institutional capacity would enhance coherence between sectoral policies and requires empowerment through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Introduction

Climate change affects sectors including agriculture, water, energy and forestry across Africa, where most economies and land-based livelihoods are dependent on rain-fed agricultural systems and are characterised by low infrastructural development and weak adaptive capacity. This makes sub-Saharan Africa highly sensitive to changes in rainfall patterns. Responses to climate change are being made by inclusion of both mitigation (i.e. reducing atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations) and adaptation (i.e. actions and processes to moderate the adverse effects of climate change whilst exploiting opportunities presented by climate change) in policy developments and multilevel planning initiatives.

The international community has acknowledged that emission reductions alone cannot prevent the dangerous consequences of climate change and that adaptation is critical. Climate compatible development aims to deliver adaptation and mitigation without compromising development progress, offering opportunities to achieve "triple wins". However, institutional constraints hamper the achievement of climate compatible development, and there is limited empirical research on how best to align triple wins with climate-sensitive sector policies across sub-Saharan Africa.

This research gap is addressed by using Ghana as a case study. Ghana represents a hotspot of climate change vulnerability and has initiated several policies and programmes to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change on livelihoods. Under the Paris Agreement, in 2015 the country submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution, which identified several mitigation and adaptation actions across the energy, agriculture and forestry sectors, and which elaborated Ghana's sectoral adaptation and mitigation contributions, in alignment with the national development vision.

Ghana therefore presents an opportunity to explore how climate compatible development is framed. Assessing policy coherence and identifying conflicts can help Ghanaian policy makers devise a more coherent approach that holistically addresses adaptation, mitigation and development.

Research approach

This research uses a two-stage methodology in analysing how climate compatible development is included in policies in Ghana's climate-sensitive sectors. The agriculture, water, energy, forest and wildlife sectors were selected because of the considerable threats they face from climate change and in light of the significant role that the natural resource base plays in supporting the livelihoods of most of Ghana's population. Additionally, these sectors can directly or indirectly contribute to mitigation actions through carbon sequestration and emission reduction.

Policy alignment: the process of altering different sectoral policies to improve their coherence.

Policy coherence: the systematic promotion of policy actions that support one other among sectors creating synergies that help to achieve the agreed objectives.

In stage one, qualitative document analysis was used to examine how climate compatible development is framed in sector policy documents. Appropriate indicators for the three building blocks of climate compatible development (i.e. adaptation, mitigation and

development) were selected and were validated with interviews with a range of stakeholders and experts. A scoring system was applied to determine the extent to which the policy documents align with the building blocks. A similar procedure was followed to determine the level of coherence amongst sectoral policy documents (Table 1). Through an iterative content analysis, the dominant narratives were identified in each of the policy documents, supported by quotes from the policy makers to ensure a rationale for each evaluation.

The second stage involved interviewing 20 experts affiliated with various governmental ministries and agencies, local universities and research institutions to explore policy coherence amongst the various climate-sensitive sector policies. Additionally, a national stakeholder workshop with 40 experts was held to validate the results of the alignment exercise (Table 2) and score coherence across sectoral policies through small group discussions split by sectors (Table 3).

Table 1. *Scoring system to analyse policy alignment and coherence levels*.

Type of Alignment/Coherence	Score	Description
High	3	The sector policy aligns strongly with the indicators of triple wins and includes specific activities for each building block of climate compatible development.
		The policy aligns strongly with other sectors and includes specific activities for each building block.
Partial	2	The policy supports the indicators of triple wins but it is less clear about how the indicators and each particular building block could be achieved.
		The policy supports other sectors but it is less clear how it could be achieved.
Limited	1	The policy supports a particular indicator of triple wins but there is a lack of evidence to support alignment with it.
		The policy supports other sectors, but there is a lack of details about activities and plans.
No	0	There is no evidence to suggest that the policy supports or encourages implementation of the building block.
		No evidence to suggest policy alignment with other sectors.

3	2	1	0	Alignment	3	2	1	0	Coherence

***Table 2**. Alignment of various sector policy documents in relation to the building blocks of climate compatible development.*

Sector Policies	Building Blocks of Climate Compatible Development			
	Adaptation	**Mitigation**	**Development**	**Overall alignment**
Food and Agriculture	Mentions specific strategies for the attainment of food security.	Mitigation indicators assessed were not given consideration.	Sets out to improve food security to enhance rural livelihoods that will promote development.	
Water	Specific activities to address climate change are highlighted.	Does not provide specific actions to encourage mitigation efforts.	Recognises that water is at the heart of Ghana's effort to reduce poverty.	
Forest and wildlife	Acknowledges climate change and pursues adaptation. However, it is short of details on how it is achieved.	Recognises the threat posed by climate change to forest and wildlife resources and proposes specific activities to address.	Provides specific actions aimed at development.	
Energy	No evidence on how the policy would promote climate change adaptation.	Seeks to deliver mitigation by reducing carbon emissions. It focuses on waste-to-energy resources.	Promotes the mainstreaming of gender issues aimed at reducing the dependency of women on biomass.	
Overall alignment				

Full alignment | Partial alignment | Limited alignment | No alignment

***Table 3**. Coherence between sectoral policies aimed at addressing climate change.*

Policy / Strategy	Energy Policy	Water Policy	Forest/ Wildlife Policy	Agriculture Policy	National Climate Change Policy	Nationally Determined Contributions
Agriculture						
Energy						
Forest and wildlife						
Water						
Climate Change						
Content analysis (average)						
Stakeholder scoring (average)						

Full coherence | Partial coherence | Limited coherence | No coherence | N/A

Lessons for policy and practice

1. Agriculture is the main livelihood strategy for many low-income families and small producers are highly dependent on this sector. **Giving greater importance to the threats that climate change represents for agriculture and improving linkages among sector policies** (e.g. linking the Food and Agriculture Policy and the Forest Policy through agroforestry systems) could offer a safety net to maintain food security of households through the supply of other products.

2. Adaptation is critical for resource poor farmers as it involves adjustments in livelihood choices and farm practices. **Improving the alignment of sectoral policies with adaptation** would help households to reduce vulnerability to climate change, deal with adverse climate impacts and further advance development.

3. Ghana's climate-sensitive sectoral policies have elements that demonstrate good alignment with adaptation, mitigation and development priorities, but there are also several institutional challenges, including an unclear differentiation of responsibilities and roles. **Strengthening national institutions such as the Environmental Protection Agency** would provide mechanisms to ensure effective collaboration between sectors to achieve "triple wins" and help address institutional barriers.

4. **Collaborating in an inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial manner, as well as creating alliances with other stakeholders**, would avoid conflicts and competition between different sectors and foster the capacity of national institutions and agencies to respond to the threats posed by climate change.

5. There is a need for inter-ministerial and inter-institutional approaches aimed at promoting a better integration of climate compatible development into sectoral policy documents. **Defining compromises and trade-offs of state institutions responsible for integrating climate change across different sectors** is a vital step to improving coherence amongst sector policies.

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