

Mid-Term Review of the DFID/IDRC Climate Change Adaptation in Africa (CCAA) Research and Capacity Development Programme

Final Report

On behalf of IDRC Canada and DFID

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the mid term review (MTR) of the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) Climate Change Adaptation in Africa research and capacity development programme (CCAA). It aims to inform on-going work and provide lessons that could be applied to other adaptation initiatives. The report has been prepared by four scientists tasked with evaluating, measuring and reporting on the performance of the Programme to date, suggesting adjustments and commenting on the appropriateness of the current time frame. There have been two core aspects to the work: a 'project level' review of project activities and progress; and a 'strategic level' assessment to critically assess how the objectives, approaches, outputs, and progress in general, meet the needs and climate change priorities for Africa and to assess perceptions of CCAA amongst experts and stakeholders.

The review concludes that the establishment of the CCAA Programme is a timely and significant development in addressing climate change in Africa. The stated objectives remain worthwhile and generally well targeted at the longer-term challenges of climate change adaptation, and capacity building in the region. At the same time the review concludes that there are a number of refinements and improvements that could be made to the delivery of this ambitious programme to help ensure that the programme achieves the stated objectives. In particular, there is a need to place greater emphasis on adaptation to future climate change impacts as opposed to current climate variability.

In general, we consider that the Programme strategy would benefit from refinement in the light of lessons learned from the early stages of the Programme and changes in context since the Programme was originated (such as the availability or lack of outputs from parallel initiatives such as ClimDev). Attention needs to be given to clarifying and 'fleshing out' Programme deliverables, making the elements and tasks (and links between elements) pursuant to these more explicit. Here we consider that the Programme is at a point which calls for defining more precisely what CCAA should and can best deliver. This should include further consideration of how, and the extent to which, it can more robustly address future climate change and climate variability issues. Here we believe that harnessing climate change expertise in South Africa and other international institutions (such as in the UK) would contribute to improving the climate change focus of the programme; increasing support networks within Africa and outside the region; building the much needed research capacity; and, ultimately, devolving 'ownership' of the Programme to African institutions. Here, a clear strategy is needed, including a timeline, to devolve 'ownership' of the CCAA Programme work to African institutions.

The Programme has successfully contributed to capacity building among the institutions and individuals it has touched. The training workshops held under the CCAA have, for example, been particularly beneficial in building the capacity of project teams and encouraging strategic thinking about climate change adaptation. However, more work and more time are required to deliver the strong and geographically widespread capacity of expertise required for sustained impact and effective devolution. Here, there is an inherent contradiction between the Programme and its timescales, namely that the Programme is aiming to develop capacity, but this is fundamentally a long term activity. As such, the investment in building a 'critical mass' of capacity should be viewed as a longer term venture rather than the discrete five year package of the current mandate.

The review provides numerous observations on and specific suggestions for refinements to the programme and its delivery. These include the need to establish stronger networks between the CCAA projects and, in addition between CCAA projects and other climate change adaptation projects and initiatives in the region. Here there is a need to have a better map of the capacity in Africa and the networks that would support climate change adaptation. There is a need to better support the adaptation projects with a platform of climate science and to build the capacity to provide such science from within Africa. Greater use of existing expertise in, for example, South Africa, as well as stronger linkages with expertise outside the region may benefit both the performance of the individual projects under the Programme and promote the development of longer term and sustained capacity in Africa.