

**“Enhancing the Capacity of Technical Institutions Involved
in the Provision of Climate Change Education, Training
and Scientific Research Services in the COMESA Region
(CaPCET)”**

Webinar 1 Report

27th November 2021

1400 – 1600 EAT



Introduction

Capacity-building initiatives aim to enhance knowledge sharing and coordination and their results are evident globally, regionally, and nationally. Climate education, training, and research at the local, national and regional levels is a prerequisite for better implementation of climate mitigation and adaptation strategies that are demand-focused. Local communities, climate professionals, trainers, and other stakeholders have been empowered to contribute to climate ambition through capacity-building initiatives. With the institutional capacity building being one of the limiting factors to achieving climate action, dialogues around climate change needs, demands, and gaps have to be initiated at the institutional level for informed and evidenced country-specific progress.

The Capacity building of Technical Institutions in the provision of climate education, training, and research (CapCET) project organised a two-hour webinar on the 27th November 2021 to create awareness of this noble initiative that seeks to empower institutions to better their institutional, systemic, and individual capacities to curb climate change in the COMESA region and ultimately contribute towards global climate goals. A reflection of different aspects of capacity building including demand and needs assessments were explored. The collaborating institutions included the CapCET team, Ethiopian Environment and Forest Institute (EEFRI) and Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development Institute (ECSDI), University of Zimbabwe.

The Approach

This webinar was the beginning of a series of webinars that will be organised in collaboration with the beneficiary institutions as part of the dissemination package within the project. The webinar involved informative presentations, panel sessions, and discussions.

Informative presentations: Presentations were made on the CapCET working paper followed by two presentations by team leads from Ethiopia and Zimbabwe highlighting climate needs in their institutions.

Plenary session and Q&A: Panellists reflected on different climate concepts around the region and their specific countries. Discussions revolved around demand areas, delivery models and ways to improve the gaps (*Figure 1*)

Presentations

- CapCET working paper: Link of climate change, gender, and delivery models.
- Climate needs assessment Ethiopia
- Climate needs assessment Zimbabwe

Discussion/Reflection points

- The unique training demands that have not been explored in the continent and how the demand resonates with their institution;
- The capacity building delivery models that resonates with them and why?
- What should be some to improve the capacity Building?

Figure 1: Presentations and reflection points

The Webinar

Funded by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) the CapCET project has been in operation for the past 10 months intending to build the capacity of technical institutions involved in climate change education, training, and scientific research. This first CapCET webinar was hosted on Zoom by the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) on behalf of the consortium in collaboration with EEFRI and ECSDI. The webinar aimed at introducing the CapCET project to climate professionals in the continent, disseminating the findings from the demand assessment in Africa and the needs assessment in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe.

The webinar explored different climate needs within the continent and sought to link these needs with those identified in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe. The target was climate professionals within the continent from different sectors ranging from, but not limited to, the biological sciences, agriculture, social sciences to the natural resources. A huge number of participants were from the COMESA region with most representing Ethiopia and Zimbabwe.

This shows the great interest of the two countries to collaborate in this noble initiative with the possibility of scaling up the initiative. It also reinforces the need to build individual, systemic and institutional capacity within institutions whether academia, research, or otherwise. 38 participants joined the conversation that will continue in the coming months as CapCET pushes the agenda of climate change capacity building.

Presentations

Presenter 1: Ms. Maureen Kabasa

After an introduction made by Dr. Joel Onyango on what the project is about and the achievements thus far, the presentation was kicked off by Ms. Maureen Kabasa who presented a paper that was part of the landscape assessment work package of the CapCET project. The paper entitled “*The linkage of the context of climate change, gender, and delivery models*” highlighted the key issues around the multi-dimensions of climate change.

Through this paper, it was clear that climate change is contextual and the different aspects need to be approached differently within different contexts; minority groups need to be included in climate processes for better climate action; and the message of climate change can be passed both informally or formally depending on the audience and the context (global or local). Her take-home message was as shown in (Figure 2) below:

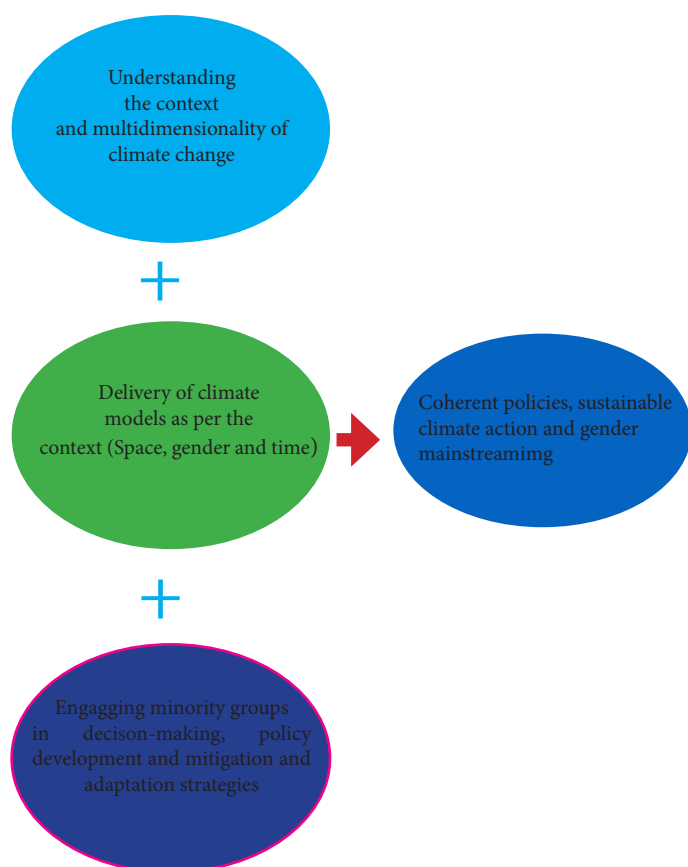


Figure 2: CapCET paper take-home message (increase visibility of the figure)

Presenter 2: Dr. Zenebe Mekonnen

The second presentation was by Dr. Zenebe Mekonnen from the Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute. He presented the needs assessment that was carried out in EEFRI in September by the CapCET team. The needs assessment was carried out at different levels: A demand assessment that included different countries in the continent and institutional assessment (both managerial and individual) within EEFRI.

The assessment was done through online questionnaires sent to key informants and validated through stakeholder discussions. The assessments highlighted key areas that included the training that has been undertaken, training needs, and how they would like the training to be disseminated. From the findings, most individuals have taken part in one or more training on climate change.

EEFRI already has a strong climate change directorate that is instrumental in filling the climate change gaps. Despite the good structures, there are still climate training needs that need to be addressed to contribute to climate action through education, training, and scientific research.

The gaps will form a basis for capacity building through contextual climate development and the delivery of modules. The two main training needs that were highlighted included: Climate modeling and climate leadership, finance, and policy (Figure 3). The full report on Dr. Zenebe’s presentation can be found [here](#).

Climate Training Needs in EEFRI

- Climate modeling – this was mainly due to the need for practical skills in the climate sector that can be transferable to other trainers
- Climate leadership, finance, and policy- many individuals have had little/no training in this and as a way of contributing to sustainability in the institution and Ethiopia this module is useful

Figure 3: EEFRI training needs

Presenter 3: Prof. Lindah Mhlanga

Similarly, the second presenter Prof. Lindah Mhlanga presented on the needs assessment carried out in ECSDI. The demand assessment and the needs assessment (managerial and individual) were carried out using the same method highlighted above. ECSDI works in collaboration with different departments in the University of Zimbabwe and through these relations, they have a strong institutional structure that can be leveraged to address the climate gaps.

Just like Ethiopia most of the respondents have received climate training in one way or another at different levels. Of importance are the climate training needs which CapCET seeks to build capacity on. As for ECSDI climate mitigation and adaptation and climate finance were heightened as the key training needs for various reasons (Figure 4). The training needs will be addressed in the module development stage. The full needs assessment report can be found [here](#).

The two presentations affirmed that exchange programmes are good for experiential learning and incorporation of both online and physical methods of training is important.

Panel Discussions

Panelists from different collaborating institutions presented their thoughts on the reflection questions highlighted above.

Panellist 1: Prof. Kefasi Nyikahadzoi

The discussion was opened by the director of ECSDI Prof. Kefasi. He expressed the sentiments that climate change capacity building in the continent is timely and necessary. Below are his views on the three reflection areas.

Reflection 1: The unique training demands that have not been explored in the continent and how the demand resonates with their institution

- Most countries have tried to improve the curriculum at different levels within the formal institutions for instance in the University of Zimbabwe climate change has been incorporated in their school curriculum.

- Efforts have been made across the continent but the gap is that knowledge has not cascaded among the other important stakeholders for instance the extension officers and farmers. Hence, efforts should be made particularly to build the capacity of those working directly with the most affected by climate change. Therefore, it is helpful to package the information to benefit vulnerable communities.
- Issues to do with National contributions to the reduction of GHGs need to be understood. Stakeholders are preaching the gospel they are not sure of; people are not sure of their contribution to GHGs. There is a need to deal with this aspect so that when negotiating on GHG reduction they are aware of some aspects.
- Agriculture is a sector that is receiving much attention. However, climate change is also affecting human and animal health where there is the emergence of diseases and people are not prepared to deal with these issues. Hence, this gap has to be addressed.
- Emphasis has been placed on vulnerable groups in the rural areas, including smallholder farmers but there is a need to focus on building smart cities; Focus on aspects such a green space since there is an influx of people into cities.
- As an academic institution, the current curricula do not articulate issues with climate change and hence we need to package the curriculum at levels and contexts.

Reflection 2: The capacity building delivery models that resonate with them and why?

Prof. Kefasi Nyikahadzoi highlighted that the University of Zimbabwe is a multidisciplinary university. The realisation is that people are not affected by one aspect but various aspects of climate change and one discipline cannot deal with all the issues.

Therefore, the university needs to focus on a multidisciplinary approach in the training models. The University is going beyond formally registered students but also including governments and community's farmers.

Reflection 3: What can be done to improve capacity building?

The University is using a multidisciplinary participatory approach, which is part of the strategic plan. The pieces of training the university offer at the moment will not result have an immediate impact. There is a need to solve this by establishing what they know/lack and filling the gaps through training (needs assessment). This might change their perception towards adapting and mitigating climate change. The focus should be on mitigation and adaptation of climate change and mainstreaming climate change in education.

Panellist 2: Dr. Agena Anjulo

Dr. Agena Anjulo, the Deputy Director of EEFRI took up the discussion from a perspective of a natural resource manager indicating that the topic on capacity building of climate change is important to EEFRI, Ethiopia, and the whole of Africa. The following are some of Dr. Agena's ideas regarding the three questions.

Reflection 1: The unique training demands that have not been explored in the continent and how the demand resonates with their institution

- Resource management aspects related to water management, crop management, and resilience-building mechanism in farming are unexplored in the continent e.g. in Ethiopia the rainwater is not utilized and little of it is captured. This should be given attention in climate change.
- Unique tree species in the ASAL area can play a role in resilience building in climate-affected areas. In addition, this can be utilized through scientific training, intervention, management, and utilization purpose and hence they need some attention with respect to training.
- EEFRI has done more work on energy crop aspects for instance bio-energy but other natural resources for instance livestock are suffering due to climate change. Research hasn't explored much in the pastoral areas and hence much training should be provided in the management of the pastoral area.

Reflection 2: The capacity building delivery models that resonate with them and why?

- The delivery model is more through universities and hence there should be tailored training. Short-term training matters as knowledge and experience sharing with the African continent is very critical. Capacity building through peer learning will improve knowledge sharing.

Reflection 3: What can be done to improve capacity building?

- Policy implementation is a problem. Governments have made commitments for climate action but there is a need to learn how to implement the laid out policies.
- Adaptation and mitigation aspects at the local communities are also limited and hence resource mobilization should be improved at the local and national levels.

Panellist 3: Prof. Tom Migun Ogada

Prof. Tom Migun Ogada the Executive Director of ACTS and the team lead of the CapCET project finalized the reflection session by indicating different aspects of climate change specifically on climate finance. He indicated his appreciation that Climate finance was prioritized by the two countries and was delighted that all the participants are interested in the development of bankable proposals.

Reflection: Climate finance components that might be important to targeted trainers:

All African countries have developed action plans related to climate action s either NAPS or NDCs but the weak points of the plans have been on how to mobilize climate finance to implement the Actions. Countries have been developing financing strategies for the implementation of climate action strategies. Hence, this can be an important area to provide training apart from training of development of bankable proposals. He registered that there is an inadequacy of experts in this field of development of financial strategies. He added that the preparation of proposals is good but there is a need to differentiate whether they are mitigation or adaption proposals.

Finally, he mentioned that there are a lot of resources that can be mobilized from the private sectors particularly for mitigation but the challenge still lies in adaption. There is a need to focus on capacity building toward adaptation through the packaging of projects that are not only bankable but can attract the private sector. Therefore, capacity building in innovative financing is critical since it is an emerging issue.

Way forward

- As part of the dissemination work, the CapCET team in collaboration with EEFRI and ECSDI will hold another webinar to continue the discussion on demand-driven climate change.
- The capacity-building initiative that started with the needs assessment will be followed by contextual development of modules based on the climate needs in the respective countries.
- The demands in the continent are put into consideration in the module development to address both the in-country needs and the continental needs.
- The modules of development and delivery will include the following:

Climate Training Modules

- Climate change finance (including innovative financing, adaptation and mitigation financing, grants writing, etc.)
- Climate change policy and leadership (building common understanding on climate change discourses etc.)
- Climate modeling (including use of “big data” for decision making, evidence for climate action, risk/vulnerability modeling of impacts of climate change, etc.)
- Climate adaptation and mitigation in practice (e.g. as it applies to various sectors beyond just agriculture, to natural resource use efficiency, energy, and food systems, etc)

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