



MNA Knowledge and Learning ...Fast Brief



ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE IN FRAGILE STATES: AN EXAMPLE FROM YEMEN

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Introduction: It is predicted that the effects of climate change, especially extreme floods and droughts, will significantly affect the world's fragileⁱ and least developed countriesⁱⁱ. Yemen, with its struggling economy and various levels of fragility and conflict, faces daunting development challenges. Throughout 2011 the country experienced political unrest, further aggravating a dangerous downward trend for already impoverished Yemenis. Challenged with diminishing water resources, increasing reliance on agriculture – half of which is rain-fed – and frequent floods and droughts, Yemenis face the daunting task of coping with the potentially devastating effects of climate variability and further climate change as the growth of global greenhouse gas emissions continues apace. It is estimated that climate change induced price increases will increase agricultural GDP, while decreasing real household incomes and food security. Non-farm and farm households will be hit hard because they are both net buyers of foodⁱⁱⁱ.

Creating a climate resilient society is a challenge and more so in a fragile state like Yemen, where options are limited. The health and well being of the population depends on



Picture courtesy: Peter Speyrer

securing food and water supplies, reducing the impact of climate-sensitive diseases, and preventing weather-related hazards from becoming major disasters. Climate-informed decisions that would effectively address these issues are currently not possible. Significant investment is needed to improve climate information and services, to manage climate-related risks and to adapt to the environmental changes that are occurring. Any climate strategy must also explicitly consider the needs of the poor and socially excluded, which are always the most vulnerable and disproportionately impacted by weather extremes. The particular challenges in fragile

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states and the risks associated with any program development are vast and should not be downplayed. Nevertheless, there are significant developments happening in building resilience to climate change. Driven by awareness of the threat of climate change, new approaches are emerging to build resilience, with important results despite the difficult context. Moreover, Yemen's efforts and leadership have the potential for replication regionally and internationally.

Yemen's Strategic Program for Climate Resilience: Yemen has approached this task by creating a strategic program for climate resilience, encouraging donor support for climate related projects and requiring cross-government implementation of climate-smart policies. The Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR^{iv}) is making the first significant investment in Yemen. As a high risk country, Yemen is one of nine pilot countries under the PPCR pursuant to the Climate Investment Funds. The program is demonstrating ways in which climate risk and resilience can be incorporated into developmental planning and the daily decisions of people.

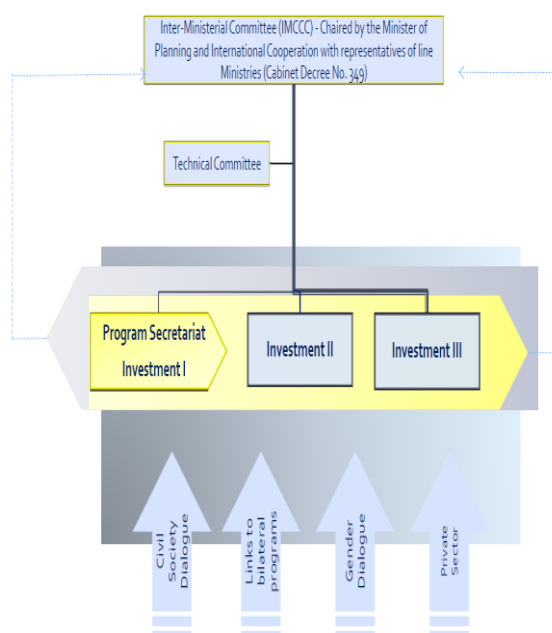
Investments supported by the PPCR: In Yemen, the program has developed three investments – (i) Climate Information System and PPCR Program Coordination; (ii) Climate Resilience of Rural Communities; and (iii) Climate-Resilient Integrated Coastal Zone Management. These are summarized below:

- 1- *The Climate Information System and PPCR Program Coordination* component is strengthening and integrating the national networks of meteorological, hydro-meteorological and agro-meteorological observations; advancing human and institutional capacity building; expanding weather, water and climate information services while serving as integrator for the whole program.
- 2- *The Climate Resilience of Rural Communities* components is combining soil and water management for climate change adaptation

and enhancing provision of ecosystem goods and services in rural communities

- 3- *Climate-Resilient Integrated Coastal Zone Management*, is developing an integrated crosscutting approach to mainstream climate resilience in the coastal zone; improving knowledge generation and management; and implementing adaptation measures.

Figure 1



Ownership, Local Communities and Yemen's Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change: A key driving force for the PPCR process is strong local ownership and government leadership, implemented through an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change (IMCCC – see Figure 1). The IMCCC is a sub-committee of the Cabinet, involving a total of 12 line ministries, whose activities are directly impacted by weather and climate hazards. Chaired by the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, it represents a strong political commitment to mainstream climate resilience into development planning for Yemen. It also ensures that the PPCR and the overall climate change agenda receive the highest level of political attention. Remarkably,

the IMCCC remained fully operational throughout almost a year of crisis in the wake of the Arab Spring and was seamlessly embedded in the newly established Government of National Reconciliation. However the real strength of the program is the ownership by the local population. A comprehensive stakeholder consultation process guided its development resulting in the identification of the three investments to be supported by the program. This participatory process built national and local ownership, enabling consensus on the investment priorities while shaping the program^v. This strong ownership was the key ingredient, which allowed program preparation during times of uncertainty, times of prolonged power-cuts, and when there was only limited in-country movement. The program was designed to be as flexible as possible to allow for adjustments as conditions changed. Consequently all investments are scalable and transferrable, as should be standard practice for a country as diverse as Yemen.

Key Issues addressed:

Political Will: The PPCR process, the establishment of the IMCCC and the preparation of the program are strong indications of the commitment of the Government to address the threats posed by climate change to the social and economic development of Yemen.

Cultural Setting: In most fragile states, women in rural areas play vital roles in water and agriculture and are the most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate. Yemen is no exception. The program is highly sensitive to the need for inclusion if climate resilience is to become part of the mainstream activities of Yemeni society. Involving women in climate change activities at local and community levels is essential for increasing climate resilience and enhancing the adaptive capacity of these vulnerable sectors. To this end, the investments actively focus on the specific needs of women and include female technical specialists seconded to the Project Management Units from the government entities implementing the investments. Targeted training aimed at female

colleagues is included as are community based education projects. The Women and Environment Unit of the Environmental Protection Authority, with the support of local women's NGOs, monitors this Gender Smart Management Framework.

Sustaining Climate Resilience: Yemen, a country with limited resources, is highly vulnerable to climate variability and change in many critical sectors. By building climate resilience into development planning, scarce national resources can be used optimally. Sustaining changes made in institutions to cope with climate is a challenge and requires active coordination between all capacity building efforts of the PPCR and other investments.

Outcomes of the PPCR: The expected outcomes of implementing the PPCR are building climate resilience and the ability to adapt into the water and agricultural sectors, as well as coastal zones; better food security by improving resilience of both water and agricultural sectors; augmenting agricultural production planning, including women farmers to take into account climate change; and improving the sustainability of irrigated agriculture by making more climate-informed decisions on the regulation and use of groundwater.

Operational Approaches - Key Lessons Learned: Engaging in a challenging environment requires:

- A good understanding of the political economy, institutions, local dynamics and processes;
- A multi-sectoral perspective and integrative capacity when assembling the task team, ideally with actors who are well versed with the local context;
- Gender-smart approaches that emphasize social inclusion;
- Strong partnerships with and among all local actors;

- A program that is flexible and simple – while strengthening community and government capacity;
- Straight forward implementation processes to reduce government transaction costs;
- Being innovative and thinking outside of the box, while also managing expectations by being realistic on achievable results;
- Local expertise and expert technical knowledge to develop activities that are best suited for the specific country context;
- A forum for coordination and consultation with government, civil society, academia, private sector and donors – while creating strong buy-in and ownership from a wider group of players and potential beneficiaries;
- “Face time” with clients; and last but not least:
- Listening – *Listen! Listen! Listen!* – our counterparts know their local settings.

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ⁱ[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTLICUS/Resources/511777-](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTLICUS/Resources/511777-1269623894864/HarmonizedlistoffragilestatesFY14.pdf)

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ⁱⁱ OECD 2013: *Fragile states 2013: Resource flows and trends in a shifting world*. DAC International network on conflict and Security

ⁱⁱⁱ Breisinger, C. O. Ecker, P. Al-Riffai, R. Robertson, R. Thiele, and M. Wiebelt. 2011. *Climate Change, Agricultural Production and Food Security: Evidence from Yemen*. Kiel Working Papers, Kiel Institute for World Economy, No. 1747.

^{iv} www.climateinvestmentfunds.org

^v Source: Yemen Strategic Program for Climate Resilience (SPCR 2011). Available online: <https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cifnet/?q=country/yemen>