

GCCA+ Africa Regional Conference

CONCEPT NOTE

Title	Climate Smart Africa: Harnessing Growth and Protecting the Gains
Organiser	EU DEVCO - Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) with the Ministry of Environment of Rwanda
Partners	IUCN
Date	15-18 October 2019
Place	Kigali, Rwanda

1 Background

Since the GCCA was established in 2007 and expanded in 2015 to include middle income countries and the new lens of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), more than 77 programs have been implemented. Given the initial focus on building climate resilience in LDCs and SIDS, the African region has always been a natural focal point. In fact, 31 African countries have already benefited, sometimes in successive funding rounds, from EU GCCA+ grant finance for climate action. Two thirds of the GCCA+ funds are dedicated to African projects.

This Concept Note proposes a programme for the GCCA+ 2019 Regional Conference focused on the African Region.

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1.1 Climate Change and the African Region

Seventy per cent of Africa's 1.2 billion citizens derive their livelihoods from agriculture (WEF, 2016) Africa's geographic position and high climate vulnerability compounded by low adaptive capacity in most African countries, threatens agricultural production and food security across the continent. In many countries natural resources ranging from arable land to virgin forests, and from minerals to water tables, have been dramatically under-valued resulting in their misallocation and depletion. The ecosystem services they provide such as clean air and water filtration services, and fertile land for food crops have been degraded and crucial national revenues lost. Fast growing populations, high youth unemployment, and rapid rural-urban migration trends are escalating demand for energy and rapidly increasing greenhouse gas emissions from key sectors including transport and waste. At the same time dramatic poverty persists across the continent and some 600 million African citizens still lack access to electricity (World Bank, 2016). In terms of climate finance, 14% of the world's population living in sub-Saharan Africa access only 3% of global climate finance flows.

Even though climate change impacts threaten to undermine hard won development gains, it is only one of several competing 'existential' threats faced by millions of Africans. Climate change is often poorly understood by local populations and authorities. And demands for all countries – not only developed ones - to contribute to mitigation efforts are often viewed with political irritation and as a means to slow Africa's efforts to industrialise and to lift millions out of poverty. In fact, African countries have everything to gain and very little to lose from taking strong climate action.

The objectives of this conference are (in no priority):

- To showcase GCCA+ projects across the continent and in Rwanda, to promote their learnings in a community of practice; to derive lessons and strengthening the GCCA+ network of practitioners, experts and policy makers, to inform ongoing strategic discussions around the delivery of EU funded climate assistance in Africa (and beyond)
- To explore pressing issues that will impact the ability of African countries to achieve economic growth that is environmentally and socially inclusive.

The three issues we propose to explore in a variety of sessions and presentation styles are:

- The potential of ecosystem-based adaptation, including the integration of natural capital and ecosystem services into the real economy, to mitigate climate change, build resilience and encourage socially inclusive environmentally sustainable economic growth;
- NDCs – what have we learned since Paris 2015, and how can we harness development planning and finance policies to support systemic climate action in African countries, cities and communities in the context of the update of the NDCs in 2020;
- Climate Finance – from households to corporations – how international climate finance and national policies and institutions can unlock private sector investment in transformational climate action; and

- Climate action in cities – introducing the Covenant of Mayors and showcasing GCCA+ projects focusing on cities and municipalities.

A detailed agenda describing the issues to be addressed and key questions for participants will be circulated to participants when registrations are confirmed.

1.2 Conference Partners

The **International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** will be the main conference partner. Created in 1948, IUCN has evolved into the world's largest and most diverse environmental network. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its 1,300 Member organisations and the input of some 13,000 experts. IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. With Germany, it leads the Bonn Challenge, a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested land into restoration by 2020 and 350 million by 2030. To this end, its Forest and Land Restoration Africa Regional Hub is in Kigali. It is a leading proponent of Agroforestry solutions to improve agricultural productivity while building climate resilience. And developed the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) which provides a flexible and affordable framework approach for countries to rapidly identify and analyse forest landscape restoration (FLR) potential and locate specific areas of opportunity at a national or sub national levels, IUCN's logo will appear on conference documents. In addition, IUCN is organising a field trip on the final day of the conference, October 18.

2 Conference Objectives

2.1 Objectives

Participants include GCCA+ project implementers, EU Delegations representatives, decision makers, scientists and other technical experts. As a subtext, the conference design and participation of GCCA+ experts provide an avenue for mainstreaming best policy practice, informed by closer engagement between policy makers and the scientific community.

A high-level opening ceremony will showcase Rwanda's engagement in global climate action, and the conference will be opened by Rwanda's Minister for Environment, Dr Viictor Biruta (previously the Minister for Natural Resources). In addition, a Cocktail event following the sessions on the Covenant of Mayors and climate action in cities will provide a further opportunity to showcase GCCA+ projects, communications materials and knowledge products.

2.2 Expected results

At the end of the conference, the participants will gain an increased knowledge and understanding of:

1. Opportunities through technical or scientific approaches to improve data generation, collection and analysis to scale up ecobased-systems approaches
2. What additional NDC actions need to be taken to ensure growth and development is sustainable in the long term
3. What policies, plans and strategies are building climate resilience medium to long-term scope;
4. How special climate funds and sound domestic policies can help countries and cities to scale up access to national and international climate finance flows and drive scaled up action for households and the corporate world
5. How cities countries can speed up/increase the implementation of NDCs in 2020 and beyond?

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