Skills Development for Climate Policy and Public Finance

A Clinic on Developing a Regional Approach to Skills Development

Summary Note

Date: 7 November 2014
Time: 14.15-15.45pm
Location: Amari Watergate Hotel, Bangkok

Overview

UNITAR organised a clinic for national and regional training institutions in Asia and the Pacific in the margins of the Regional Technical Workshop on Climate Responsive Budgeting, 5-7 November 2014. The objective of the clinic was to discuss opportunities for establishing a regional network of training institutions and to identify existing capacities to provide training for public sector officials in this innovative field of work.

The clinic was attended by representatives from the Economics and Finance Institute (EFI) Cambodia; the Fiscal Policy Research Institute (FPRI) Thailand; the Climate Change International and Technical Training Center (CITC)/Thailand Greenhouse Gas Management Organization (TGO); the International Center for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD); as well as Government representatives from Nepal and Pakistan (see Annex 1). The Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) submitted a note supporting the regional partnership and provided details of relevant ongoing training activities.

Discussions around the Regional Approach

UNITAR introduced the rationale and main elements of a regional approach to skills development for climate policy and public finance in Asia and the Pacific and presented a draft curriculum that will underpin training development and delivery. UNITAR also showcased a sample e-tutorial on climate-responsive budgeting for sectors that is currently under development. Participants then discussed opportunities and challenges for establishing a regional training network. Main points raised included:
Opportunities:

- Countries are expressing a demand for training and support in the area of climate responsive budgeting.
- There are a number of skills development needs related to climate policy and public finance that are relevant for many countries in the region (e.g. in terms of policy appraisal and performance monitoring from a climate change perspective). It is therefore efficient to take advantage of regional synergies through development of a generic syllabus.
- Several training institutions in the region already have existing capacities and offer activities on the topics of either climate policy or public finance. Represented institutions expressed interest in engaging in a regional network that offers training at the interface of climate policy and public finance.
- There are examples of successful regional training approaches in other areas (e.g. ICCCAD provided ‘Training of Trainers’ on integrating climate change in urban planning for trainers from six countries, who then adjusted the training to their specific contexts).
- In addition to in-service training, climate policy and public finance issues could also be integrated in curricula of civil service training institutions.

Challenges:

- Initiating a regional network requires some up-front investments in training development and support for national and regional institutions. In order to be sustainable, some core funding would need to be provided in the medium/long-term for up-dating materials and continue experience-sharing.
- The technical expertise of training institutions in the domain of climate-responsive budgeting is limited and would need to be reinforced.
- Language might limit the possibility to engage trainers in different countries and share experiences across the region. Moreover, a generic regional syllabus risks being too general, with limited relevance for the national level (e.g. different countries have different public finance procedures). Therefore, training materials need to be adapted to country contexts and delivery should be kept to the national level to ensure relevance and avoid language issues.

Mapping of Existing Activities

The session provided an opportunity to map existing training activities in the region, including:

| CITC/TGO | Several e-learning and face-to-face training activities on climate change for Thailand and ASEAN countries on-going (including training courses on GHG inventories and low-carbon societies). Particularly relevant are:
|          | • Training course on ‘Climate Finance’ for policy-makers, private sector and project developers under development (to be delivered in 2015 in Thailand)
<p>|          | • Training course on ‘Climate Change Economics’ for economists, policy-makers and practitioners under development (to be delivered in 2015 for ASEAN countries) |</p>
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<th>Institution</th>
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<tr>
<td>EFI</td>
<td>Public institution attached to the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Cambodia. Trains government officials from different sectors on public financial management. Collaborations with several national and international training institutions in the areas of economy and finance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPRI</td>
<td>Research and training institute attached to the Ministry of Finance that provides executive training to senior government officials as well as private sector representatives. Collaboration with several regional and international universities. Experience in the area of climate change and public finance through involvement in Thailand’s Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (CPEIR).</td>
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| ICCCAD      | Offers a Masters programme in ‘Climate Change & Development’ plus several national, regional and international short courses, including:  
- 7-day training course on ‘Mainstreaming Climate Change into Planning for Ministries of Planning in Asia’ (Dhaka, 2012)  
- 7-day training course on ‘Mainstreaming Climate Change into Planning’ for Ministries of Planning in Africa (Dar es Salaam, 2013)  
- 3-day training course on ‘Climate Change and Local Level Planning’ for Planning Commission of Bangkok (Dhaka, 2014)  
- 2-day workshop on ‘Scenario Development for Planning’ for Planning Commission of Bangkok (Dhaka, 2014)  
- Short course on ‘Climate Finance’ (under development, to be delivered in 2015) |
| BCAS (written comments) | Series of trainings for the IPCC authors in Asia  
Training for government officials under the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) of World Bank and ADB  
Training need assessment (TNA) and training plan for a long term project of the Government of Bangladesh, supported by USAID called CREL (Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods) |
| Government of Nepal | National Planning Commission collaborates with several training institutions in Nepal for in-service training of staff. |
| Government of Pakistan | Planning and Development Department organizes special training programmes on development financing. Also selects public servants for various training programmes abroad. |

**Next Steps**

- UNITAR with support by UNDP will launch regional approach through initial work in Thailand and Cambodia, focusing on basic level training on ‘Climate Policy and Public Finance’, as well as intermediate level skills development on ‘Climate Change Responsive Budgeting for Sector Ministries’.
- UNITAR will explore opportunities with UNDP to support participation of regional training institutions in delivery of national trainings in Cambodia and Thailand.
- Training institutions in the region are invited to confirm their interest in participating in a regional network through an informal communication to UNITAR.
Annex: List of Participants

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