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Strengthening Climate Resilient Infrastructure in Africa through Local Institutions

Africa's roads, railways, energy networks, and other essential infrastructure are crucial for people's well being and economic growth.

However, these systems are increasingly damaged or disrupted by climate related events such as floods, droughts, and extreme heat. When infrastructure fails, it is often the poorest communities who suffer the most.

To address this, African governments and international partners are working to make infrastructure more resilient to climate change. The Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA), through the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Programme (AAAP), supports governments in planning and investing in infrastructure that can withstand future climate shocks. This includes using advanced climate risk analysis and combining traditional engineering ('grey infrastructure') with nature based solutions ('green infrastructure'), such as restoring wetlands or planting vegetation to reduce flood risk.

A case study from the ARCAN Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Midline Evaluation focuses on GCA's partnership with the University of Nairobi (UoN) in Kenya – an example of how working with local institutions can help ensure long lasting impact and the development of national expertise.

Locally Led Approaches Work

The UoN-GCA partnership worked well because the University of Nairobi played a central leadership role. As a trusted national institution, UoN was able to:

- Set priorities that reflected Kenya's needs.
- Engage government agencies more effectively.
- Navigate local systems and relationships that would have been challenging for external organisations.

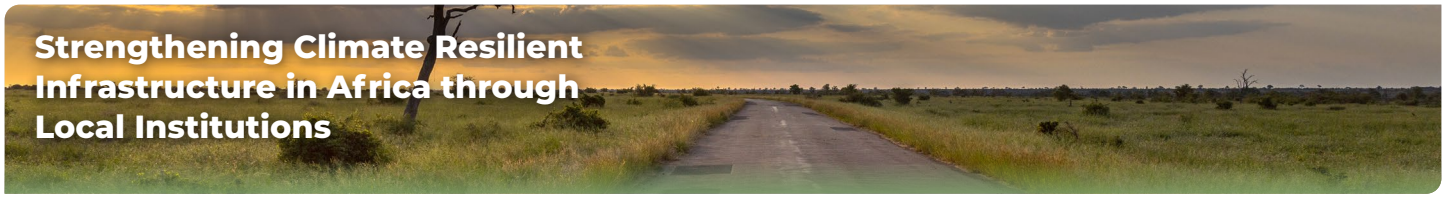
Early technical training from the University of Oxford helped UoN build strong climate risk expertise. Because UoN staff and networks were already well established, they could secure the necessary data, collaborate closely with government partners, and apply new methods directly within existing national planning processes. This increases the likelihood that the skills and tools developed will continue beyond the end of the two year project – though ongoing progress will still require long term funding and institutional support.

Promising Signs of Lasting Impact – But More Work is Needed

There are early signs that the work is already shaping infrastructure planning in Kenya. Government agencies – including the national roads, railways, and meteorological authorities – are beginning to use UoN and GCA tools in their own operations. They have also asked for continued collaboration, indicating that the approaches developed are relevant and useful.

However, much of the progress so far still relies on specific projects, short term funding, and individual champions. Ensuring long term sustainability will require deeper integration into national institutions and funding systems, as well as ongoing demand for the skills and methods developed.

"African governments and international partners are working to make infrastructure more resilient to climate change."



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Participation Built Trust and Improved Data Sharing

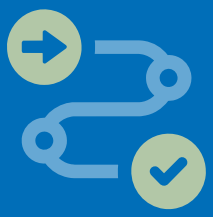
UoN's role as a domestic, well respected institution made it easier to design the project collaboratively with government partners. Its strong professional networks, understanding of Kenyan institutions, and credible technical expertise helped build trust.

Support from Oxford Infrastructure Analytics (OIA) earlier in the process strengthened UoN's capacity and helped adapt tools to Kenya's context. Because government agencies trusted UoN, they were willing to share data – often data that would not typically be shared with foreign organisations. This led to higher quality analysis and stronger integration of climate resilience into national infrastructure planning.

Partnerships Improved Coordination and Reduced Costs

The collaboration between GCA, UoN, and the University of Oxford brought together global expertise and national legitimacy. This mix helped speed up trust building, support smoother data sharing, and create more coherent engagement across sectors. UoN could convene agencies as peers, while GCA and Oxford provided technical guidance. This 'locally led delivery model' helped coordination run more smoothly and reduced transaction costs.

Key Stakeholder Insights



"Anchoring the work in the university but linking it with industry meant the Roadmap became something implementable – not just an academic paper."

Key Informant Interview

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Strengthen national leadership** by investing in universities and local institutions that can carry knowledge forward after projects end.
- **Move from analysis to action** by ensuring that studies like the National Roadmap on Resilient Infrastructure feed directly into national policy and investment decisions.
- **Learn from different delivery models** to improve efficiency, value for money, and long term results.

The Midline Evaluation Summary Report and full case studies will be available at: DevTracker Programme GB-GOV-1-300808 Documents and the Ecorys website at: World-class research-based consultancy | Ecorys

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