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Monitoring and Evaluation of the National Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation Efforts in Egypt

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I. Background

Egypt has a high vulnerability score to climate change as per the ND-GAIN Matrix (ND-GAIN Index, 2020). Meanwhile, it has a medium overall score in climate mitigation efforts according to the Climate Change Performance Index (Index, C. C. P., 2021), and a relatively low performance in the adaptation measures when compared with other African countries such as Kenya (Pörtner et al., 2022). This policy paper aims to examine the current efforts by Egypt to monitor and evaluate its mitigation and adaptation efforts and review what similar countries have done in this regard. The paper will then provide policy alternatives to ensure a workable monitoring and evaluation framework that considers the Egyptian context and the current policy environment. The monitoring and evaluation framework will allow Egypt to utilize its resources, report to the global community, and help policymakers make informed decisions regarding future investments and areas of improvement in various sectors. The paper discusses the importance of adopting a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework and presents an in-depth analysis of the local related efforts, the international frameworks, and motivation and challenges to adopt the M&E framework in Egypt. To conduct this research, the research team has conducted literature and desk review, a stakeholder analysis, semi-structured interviews with governmental officials at the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and the National Council for Climate Change (NCCC).

Egypt has carried out various efforts with the aim of mitigating and adapting to climate change. For instance, Egypt submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and Third National Communication (NC3) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2016, formed the National Council of Climate change in 2015, and developed the National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS) in 2022. Meanwhile, the lack of localized indicators is posing various difficulties in defining a precise national direction and prioritizing the needed actions according to the local needs or to the local framework. Also, the key non-governmental stakeholder's contribution is not integrated which limits achieving the targeted objectives.

These limitations of the current evaluation mechanism for assessing the existing efforts call for a national evaluation framework to measure and thus manage mitigation and adaptation efforts. This paper aims to tackle the problem of Egypt's infirm frameworks on Monitoring and Evaluating on the progress of the units', projects', programs', and policies' efforts to adapt to and mitigate the implications of Climate Change, which might distort the national assessment of the current status and needed improvement.

Based on the stated problem background, this policy paper proposes the following policy alternatives:

II. Policy Alternatives

Policy Alternative 1: Academia must contribute to generating data and insights for data-driven decision making

Climate data availability, accessibility, and quality are fundamental for monitoring and evaluating climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. Determining the datasets required from each ministry was deemed essential for achieving Goal 3 "Enhancing Climate Change Action Governance" of the National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS, 2022).

Given Egypt's vulnerability to climate change and its limited resources, an integrated effort between academic institutions such as universities and research organizations is required to collect and analyze data to monitor and evaluate Egypt's national climate change and adaptation efforts. Academic institutions will bring in the capability of producing and using data as well as providing training for data users and producers in the government. Since CAPMAS is the official agency that collects, analyzes, and disseminates national statistical data, it shall be the governmental entity that oversees the integration of academia in collecting and analyzing climate data. The data produced, insights, and reports shall then be submitted to the Climate Change Central Department (CCCD) at the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA). CAPMAS in coordination with the CCCD agrees on the data required to be collected. Then, in consultation with academics, CAPMAS sets the data collection methodology and determines the possible data sources.

To achieve this, several aspects shall be considered such as securing sufficient funding for academic institutions, data exchange, and privacy agreements, technological and communication infrastructure as well as collaboration agreements between academia and government (World Development Report, 2021).

Policy Alternative 2: Capacity building to ministerial units responsible to report on climate change

In terms of highlighting Egypt's efforts to ensure the availability of the capacity to face a prominent phenomenon like climate change, it has been announced officially several times and especially during Egypt's participation in Parties on Climate Change (COP26) in Glasgow, that it has been stated in the Egyptian National Climate Change Strategy 2050 the capacity-building related strategies. This was further ensured in our meetings with the representatives of the Ministry of Environment, which has also focused on highlighting the fact of establishing ministerial units dedicated to serving sustainable development and climate change.

Despite such assurance and the prominence of such articles in the strategy, the process of establishing such units was not finalized, like the case of the Ministry of Planning & Economic Development. This was also stated in our meeting with the ministry representative. Thus, we find it crucial to display the context of capacity building in such a process to not only minimize the probable consequences of climate change but also to set a long-term strategic path that might help in specifying the activities and tasks needed for either adapting or mitigating climate change. Egypt's climate governance in the capacity building would be described as a process that merely depends on building on and reinforcing the existing capacities and probable calibers which can be individuals, groups, organizations, or collaborations aiming to achieve a goal or to make a difference (Mary Ann Rozance et al., 2015).

Building on that, we suggest that the capacity-building process is much more complicated than what is stated above. Capacity building should assure that the needed knowledge, logic, and technical skills are all acquired by the responsible units and individuals (Boyd et al., 2014). In addition, it is like how Morgan (2006) has framed capacity building as a multidimensional process that combines competencies, capabilities, and capacity. The capacity is the ability of the system to achieve an outcome or create an impact using the energies and abilities (competencies) and the technical and soft skills (capabilities) (Morgan, 2006).

So, the necessity of capacity building to the ministerial units is inevitable to create an impact and achieve the desired outcome. In addition, it was mentioned in the UNFCCC that it should involve training of scientific, technical, and managerial personnel as one way of implementing sustainable climate change adaptation programs (Mataya et al., 2020). Thus, it is essential to articulate the needed steps for implementing such a process, i.e., capacity building of ministerial units dedicated to reporting climate change.

We suggest that the capacity-building process may need to start with undergoing capacity assessments, which is an approach suggested by Stephane Willems (OECD, 2003). This approach will allow for assessing the existing capacities and pinpointing the capacity gap that might be there between the current capacity and the capacity needed to implement the policies. Therefore, the capacity assessment will assist in providing a clear image of what is there and what is needed to implement the policy of establishing ministerial units. Moreover, this assessment will help to recognize whether the existing calibers are able to perform functions and achieve the set goals (Fukuda-Parr et al., 2002). On the other hand, it is very important to decide the availability of a sufficient number of candidates. Capacity building should consider the existence of motivated and enough competent personnel to implement the course of actions and policies. This is especially so that the unavailability of sufficient personnel might affect the performance of such units. Furthermore, the capacity-building process should also involve the establishment of an adequate incentive system to ensure the fulfillment of the deliverables expected from the ministerial units. Not only that, but to ensure the efficiency of the units besides the assurance of the adequate calibers within the units, there should be a definite set of rules, procedures, and financial provisions for such units to maintain the stability of their work and performance (Willems, 2003).

Policy Alternative 3: Working towards adopting a fully established Monitoring and Evaluation framework within ministries

The establishment of a National Monitoring and Evaluation framework provides the government with distinctive information about the progress of the programs, projects, and policies. The Monitoring and Evaluation framework can provide information about a single ministerial body's performance, agencies, or as a country's output (Mackay, 2007). The Monitoring and Evaluation framework aims to provide evidence-based national planning, performance budgeting, policymaking, decision-making, accountability, and management. The framework is built-off several parts, including setting performance indicators - to specify the data to be assessed, incorporating beneficiaries' and stakeholders' views on management decisions through "Rapid Appraisal", the different methodologies of evaluation, including Rapid Evaluation, Impact Evaluation, and Comprehensive Reviews (Mackay, 2007).

Each methodology of evaluation can be adopted independently, which supports the basis of this policy alternative, as advocates for establishing a well-rounded Monitoring and Evaluation System within the ministries following a bottom-up approach, where the most simplified and superior method - Rapid Evaluation can be first adopted singularly, then the Impact Evaluation and Finally the Comprehensive Spending Reviews can follow.

Rapid Evaluation is where a formal review of an entity's activities through findings, interviews, and collected primary and secondary data is assessed for its efficiency and effectiveness through External Consultancy, with regards to the available resources of finance, skills, personnel, and expertise can be adopted. The advantages of Rapid Evaluation are its speed and low cost, however, it incorporates weaker data-analysis techniques and lacks sufficient empirical evidence (Mackay, 2007, McNall, & Foster-Fishman, 2007, Gertler, et al., 2016).

The adoption of Impact Evaluation is next to be adopted by the ministries. Impact Evaluation is a more sophisticated method, assessing the outcomes of the entity, through statistical techniques, providing more reliable and persuasive outcomes but demands high-level data and is expensive. However, the cost can be reduced when marginal improvements in performance are detected (Mackay, K.R., 2007).

The Monitoring and Evaluation framework is to be completed when Comprehensive Spending Reviews is adopted. Comprehensive Spending Reviews aim to track finances to review the issues of inefficiencies and project/program/policy duplication (Mackay, 2007). For example, Chile's Ministry of Finance, singularly established a M&E framework in 1994, where the 1550 performance indicators were firstly monitored and evaluated in 10 to 12 Rapid Evaluations per year, and 3 to 4 annual Rigorous Evaluations followed. This framework was picked up by the rest of the ministries to oversee the performances and need for improvements (Irrarrazaval, Guzman, & Ríos, 2014).

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

This policy paper aims at highlighting the importance of having a monitoring and evaluation framework that can report on the national efforts in Egypt related to climate change and its role in assessing the national efforts and to also set or amend the national strategic vision of Egypt towards climate change.

Building on that, this policy paper proposed three policy options; and after conducting policies' alternative analysis and evaluation based on four different criteria, the analysis portrayed that policy option 2, which is "Capacity Building to ministerial units dedicated to reporting on climate change" is the best option. This policy alternative will not only allow us to tackle the issue of the paper and assist in establishing and empowering ministerial frameworks dedicated to reporting on climate change but also be able to assess the current national status in accordance with the efforts in the areas of adaptation and mitigation. We further recommend that in order to implement this policy alternative with high effectiveness, the capacity-building process for the ministerial units should be under the leadership and supervision of the National Council for Climate Change starting from the capacity assessment and ending with the needed technical expertise delivered to the units.

«All the academic references used in this brief are mentioned in the policy paper.»

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