

SDC 2019 Annual Meeting Abstracts

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Title: Revisiting the concept of adaptation co-benefit



Co-benefits to climate actions are required to attract interest of local stakeholders who perceived less benefits from climate change actions. Highlighting co-benefits have been effective in climate change mitigation. Later, the mitigation-centric co-benefit analysis and evaluation has shifted its concentration towards adaptation. Successful adaptation projects have been integrated into local development needs, and evaluated in terms of resilience and adaptive capacity that include components used be regarded as co-benefits, rather than vulnerability reduction. This implies that the concept of adaptation co-benefits should be revisited to re-demarcate ones within resilience and adaptive capacity, and others beyond these boundaries. Besides, local level adaptation may redeploy risk or vulnerability to other people and places, and if it actually happens, effectiveness and sustainability of adaptation interventions remain a big challenge. Our research aims to demonstrate the revised concept, through a case study of Barguna, a coastal district in the southern part of Bangladesh highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change especially salinity, sea-level rise and cyclones. We took a qualitative stance through adopting focus group discussion and key informant interview. Our study finds that co-benefits from adaptation interventions are not much, and the local level interventions are the results of need assessment by the project implementers at the local level, which do not divert risks and vulnerability to other people and places. Our study also finds that lack of political commitment is hindering scaling up of adaptation intervention with substantial co-benefits. The region has been experiencing a well tie-up among government and non-government organization during the time of disasters since only the devastation by cyclone 'Sidr' in 2007, which provided a lesson about the benefits of joint efforts. Achieving policies aimed at innovation, economic benefit and quality of life would be difficult if climate actions are primary objectives; in fact, such policies have more potential to lead major climate co-benefits through a shared vision for survival and temporary or potential permanent livelihood opportunities among others. Dedicated climate funds should consider identification of explicit co-benefits as a prerequisite for submission of proposal either in direct access modality or in programmatic approach.