Policy mechanisms of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities to manage transboundary climate risks

Adaptation Without Borders

2023

ODI

Funded by the European Union

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Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crisis (SPARC), a six-year programme funded through the financial assistance of the UK Government. SPARC provided critical co-funding for hosting the Policy Dialogue and augmenting the policy review.

It also draws from the work and experience of other Adaptation Without Borders partners, such as the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES).

Many thanks to Rebecca Nadin, Lorraine Howe and Charlotte King from ODI who made this report possible. Copyediting and design by Ruby Cowling and Valerie Geiger at vtype.co.uk

First published by ODI (formally the Overseas Development Institute) in October 2023.

Suggested citation

Opitz-Stapleton, S., Lindsey, C. and Anisimov, A. (2023) Policy mechanisms of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities to manage transboundary climate risks. London: ODI

Available at: adaptationwithoutborders.org

This report has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Adaptation Without Borders partnership and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

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Acronyms

AAAP	Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program
ACFTA	Africa Continental Free Trade Area
AFDB	African Development Bank
AGNES	African Group of Negotiators Expert Support
AUC	African Union Commission
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa's Development
AWB	Adaptation Without Borders
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DRM	disaster risk management
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FDI	foreign direct investment
GGW	Great Green Wall
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Africa
NAPS	National Adaptation Plan
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
RECS	Regional Economic Communities
SPARC	Supporting Pastoralism and Agropastoralism in Recurrent and Protracted Crises
TCARS	transboundary climate, adaptation and mitigation risks
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Introduction

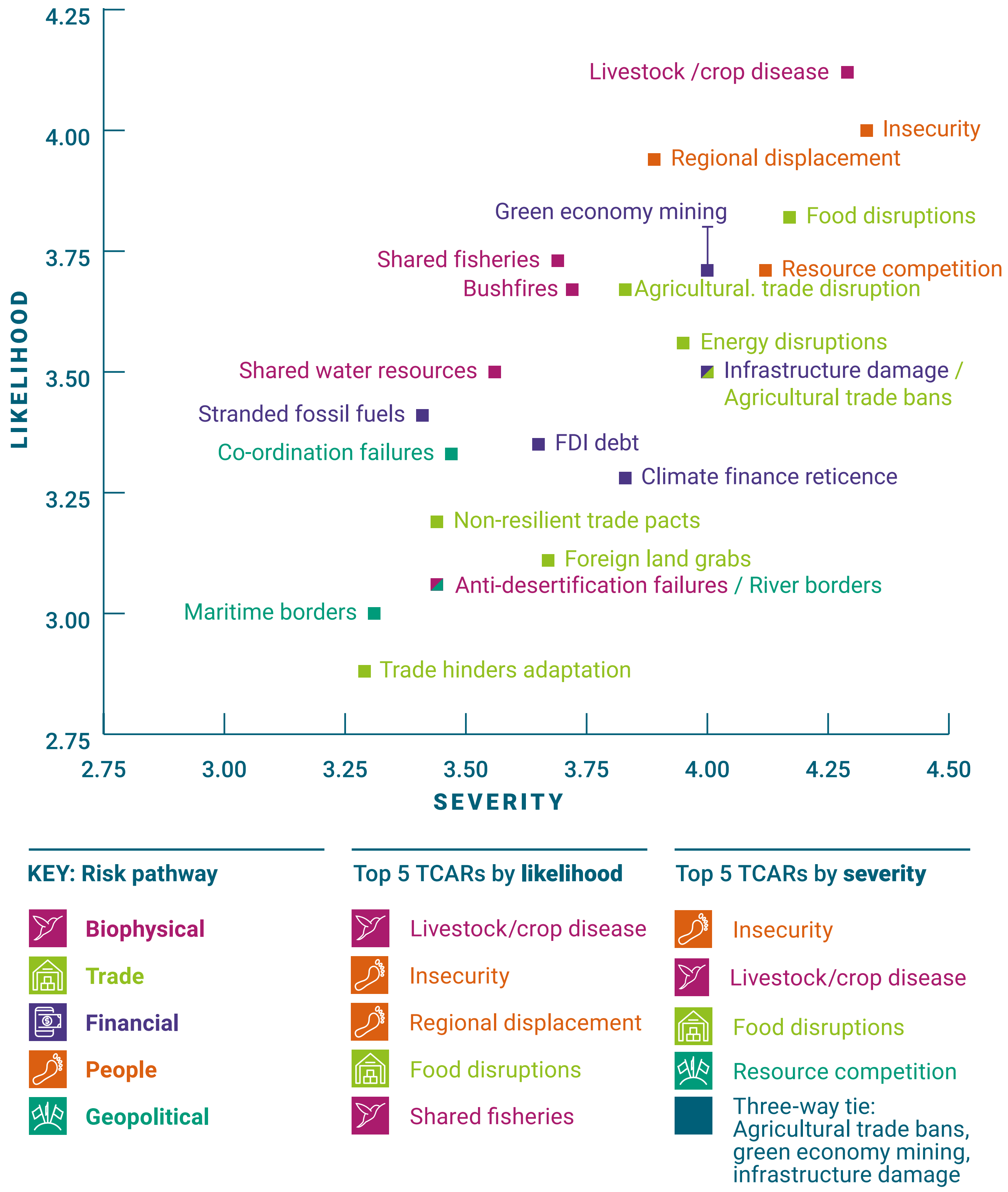
In our interconnected world, both the physical impacts of climate change and the climate change mitigation and adaptation actions taken in one or more countries can generate risks to neighbouring countries; these impacts and risks can cascade across regions, sectors and globally. The failure to incorporate climate risk management within national to continental trade, finance or economic development policies and programmes can also have spill-over effects across scales. These are 'transboundary climate risks' or TCARs.

Africa is facing these cross-border and cascading climate risks, between countries, within regions and across networks that link its continent internationally via trade, supply chains, finance and more. Socio-economic and climate resilient development is a core part of Africa's vision forward, the policy *Agenda 2060: The Africa We Want* (African Union, 2015), and these risks can undermine initiatives and flagship projects under way. The study *Transboundary Climate and Adaptation Risks in Africa: Perceptions from 2021*, and research by the African Group of Negotiators Expert Support (AGNES), found that African member states are increasingly aware of these different systemic risks (Figure 1); however, their capacity to assess and manage TCARs is highly variable (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2021). Individual African Union member states are unlikely to assess transboundary climate risks in their national economic, trade, infrastructure or natural resource management policies and actions – even if some TCARs are mentioned in individual National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) or Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2021). Many of the adaptation actions in NAPs remain unfunded; assigning budget and responsibilities for management to various ministries is frequently under-prioritised by offices of presidents and parliaments. Furthermore, individual country NAPs and NDCs are developed in isolation from other countries' climate policies, thereby creating the risk of redistributing vulnerabilities and climate risks, rather than reducing them (Harris et al., 2023).

If individual countries are slow to recognise the transboundary climate risks they face and that they've potentially created, are there multi-country policy avenues and mechanisms that could be utilised to assist African countries in assessing and managing such risks in a coordinated and cooperative manner?

This report by the Adaptation Without Borders partnership conducts a deeper dive into African Union (AU) policies and programmes and those of four regional economic communities (RECs) – the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community (EAC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Africa (IGAD). The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the political economy of TCARs and their management within existing continental and REC climate, economic, trade, infrastructure and people-centred policies and programmes. We then use this understanding to identify entry points within AU and REC mechanisms that could assist member states in coordinated TCAR management.

Figure 1. **Transboundary climate risks assessed in** *Transboundary Climate and Adaptation Risks in Africa: Perceptions from 2021*



Methodology: 24 TCARs were identified from the policy review. Survey invitations were sent to 55 potential respondents selected from government ministries, regional bodies or regional initiatives; 21 participated. Survey respondents were asked to assess the likelihood and severity of the TCAR if it were to occur in the next 10 years. The likelihood scale ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 representing 'not at all likely' and 5 corresponding to 'extremely likely'. The severity scale also ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 representing 'not at all severe' and 5 representing 'extremely severe'.

Source: Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2021
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The report explores the enabling conditions within existing policy structures for enhancing cooperation and managing transboundary climate risks. It highlights ways of moving forward and recommends feasible actions that can be taken by the African Union and the RECs to meet the shared challenges to climate-resilient development that Africa faces. It is meant to be read as the supporting background document to Adaptation Without Borders' *A roadmap for African resilience: addressing transboundary and cascading climate risks.*

The roadmap proposes 25 key actions towards realising the ambition of the *African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032)* to 'enhance coordination between the Regional Economic Communities and Member States in addressing and managing transboundary and cascading climate risks' (AU, 2022). The actions proposed in the roadmap were developed by participants at the Policy Dialogue (refer to Study methodology). The report concludes with a summary description of some roadmap actions and how existing AU and REC mandates and policies can be leveraged to deliver on the actions proposed in the roadmap.

Study methodology

This study involved a desktop review of African Union, ECOWAS, IGAD, COMESA and EAC policies covering multiple sectors. We assessed the degree to which TCARs are accounted for within a range of current AU and REC policies and associated flagship projects/initiatives. We identified measures of accountability within these policy frameworks for cross-border risk management – evaluating who bears the responsibility for these risks and who is best placed to manage them, based on existing mandates and capacities. Resource needs and potential financing mechanisms were also explored.

We then engaged with participants from the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Group of Negotiators Expert Support (AGNES), and four RECs at a Policy Dialogue in Nairobi, Kenya in July 2023. At the Dialogue, we ground-truthed the desktop review and asked participants about the barriers, gaps and needs that need to be addressed in order to enhance regional and continental cooperation on adaptation and mitigation. Sources of finance for transboundary climate risk management in various sectors were also mapped out by stakeholders. Participants brainstormed actions that could feasibly be undertaken to further ambitions of enhanced coordination around addressing and managing transboundary risks within Africa, given existing policy mechanisms, mandates and financing options. These were then distilled into a roadmap of actions.

Governance: creating TCARs, but also possibilities for their management

TCAR creation: the need to look beyond climate policies

Climate change extremes, shifting seasons and slow-onset hazards like desertification can trigger disastrous impacts on ecosystems and shared natural resources, and to economies and societies that cross national boundaries (Anisimov et al., 2023). However, climate change risks arise not only due to the hazard(s), but to each hazard's interaction(s) with socially created, dynamic vulnerability and exposure that are the result of unequal socioeconomic development and unsustainable use of natural resources at international, regional, national and subnational scales (Figure 2).

In particular, subnational to national policies and programmes – around socioeconomic development priorities, land use planning and resource management, infrastructure, finance and trade – and how they do or do not account for and integrate disaster (including climate) risk management contribute significantly to the creation of systems' vulnerabilities and exposures, which in turn drive climate and disaster risks at the individual, community, national, regional and international levels. They also arise when the mitigation and adaptation policies and actions of one country interact with the vulnerable and exposed sectors and systems of other countries, causing '"maladaptation" that shifts risks from one place or sector to another' (Anisimov et al., 2023: 11).

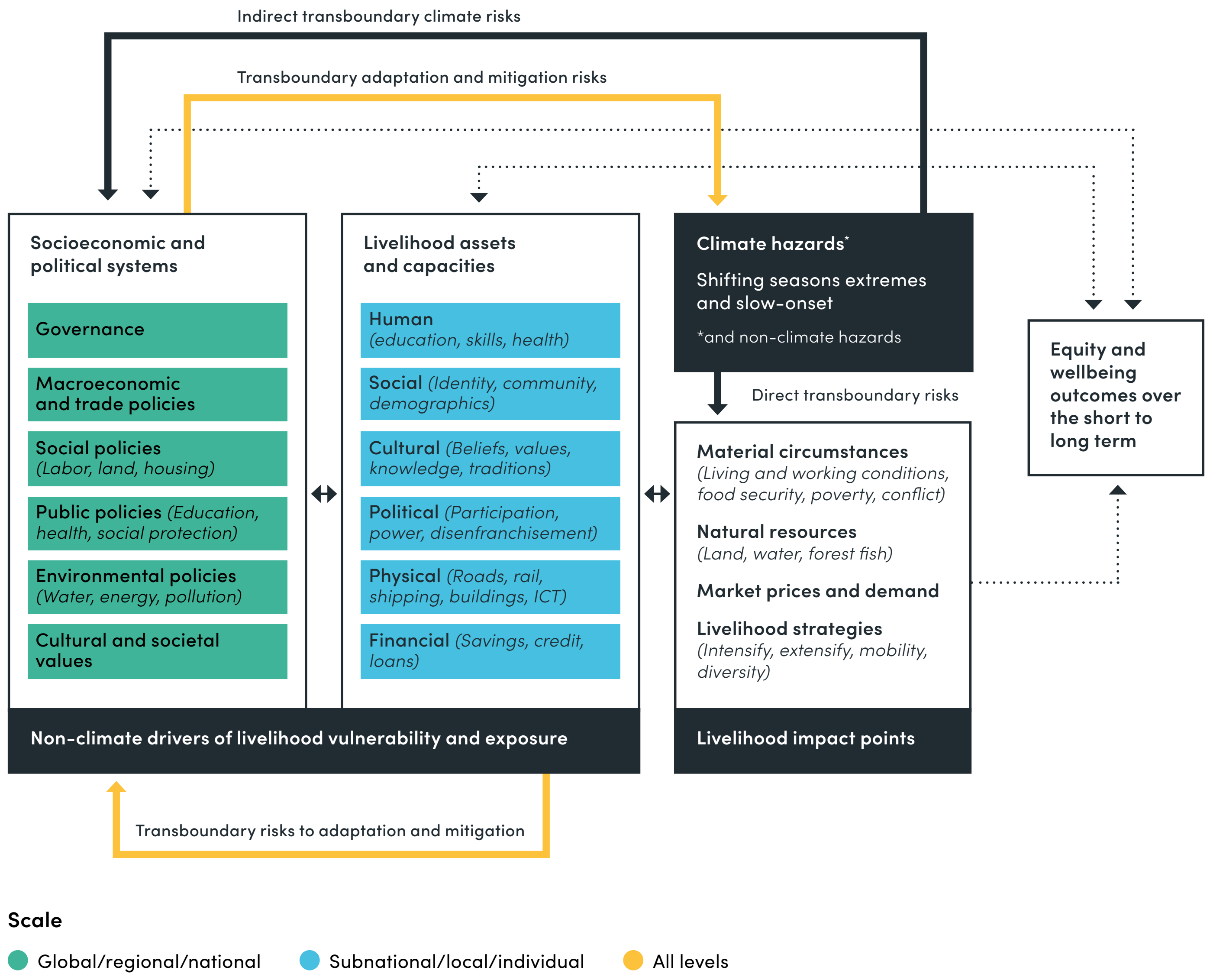
Africa has been described as 'one of the most vulnerable continents to climate change and climate variability' (Boko et al., 2007:435). This vulnerability is driven by a historical lag in socioeconomic development, governance challenges, structural inequalities including unequal access to and use of natural resources that contribute to environmental degradation and poverty, related to colonial legacies and ongoing socio-political instability in some member states (Amechi, 2010). Population growth (rural and urban) and a youth bulge are placing pressure on gaps in markets, infrastructure and institutions (AU, 2015). Exposure to climate hazards is high due to disproportionate employment in agriculture, particularly rainfed agriculture, and to growing urban areas without basic services, land use planning or natural resource management (Trisos et al., 2022).

Lack of access to domestic and international finance for climate-resilient development continues to disproportionately hold back many African countries in managing climate risks through adaptation (Quevedo et al., 2022), which needs to be embedded within non-climate policies and programmes. While Africa has contributed only 3–4% of global emissions, it receives just under a quarter of climate-related official development assistance (ODA) (Beecher et al., 2022).

There are multiple risk pathways through which TCARs can propagate globally (Table 1). Five have been highlighted in previous studies as being of critical importance to Africa due to the existing dynamic, multidimensional and multi-scale vulnerabilities and exposures of human systems and ecosystems within member states (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2021; Opitz-Stapleton, 2023; Harris et al., 2023).

Rohan Reddy/Unsplash

Figure 2. Subnational, national, regional and international socioeconomic and political systems drive vulnerabilities and exposures to climate hazards at the local to individual levels



Source: Opitz-Stapleton, 2023 in Anisimov et al., 2023. Reproduced with permission

The subnational, national, regional economic community and continental policies and programmes are the primary instruments needed for fostering socioeconomic growth, peace, stability and poverty reduction, all of which are necessary for coordinated and cohesive adaptation across multiple scales. But mismatches between these policies at the different scales – in part due to competing member state interests and lack of coordination – and a failure to assess and account for cascading climate risks are among several factors contributing to the creation of TCARs in Africa. However, these policies and programmes also offer entry points for reducing vulnerabilities and exposures in various socioeconomic, infrastructure and financial systems (for example), thereby reducing TCARs. In this chapter, we examine some of the critical policies and programmes that are giving rise to transboundary climate risks, but that can also be (and need to be) leveraged to manage such risks.

Existing governance mechanisms for managing TCARs

African Union, RECs and member states governance

Understanding the governing organs of the African Union and the RECs is crucial for articulating which bodies currently have the mandates to consider and integrate management of TCARs within the sectoral policies and programmes under their jurisdiction. This section provides a snapshot of the decision-making organs of the African Union and the RECs and identifies which bodies will play a crucial role in starting to mainstream TCARs into policies and programmes, while coordinating with member states.

The ideal of pan-African cooperation was initiated through the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. The RECswere founded during the tenure of the OAU with the intent of facilitating economic integration between member states within regions as a step towards fostering continental integration.

The *1991 Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community* of the OAU set out the modalities for trade liberalisation and a free trade area, and establishment of an economic community and its composition, functions, powers and procedures (Packer and Rukare, 2002). The African Union was founded as that community in 2001 under the Constitutive Act with the objective to 'enhance and promote greater peace, security, stability' and 'sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies' including the aim to 'raise the living standards of African peoples' (AU, 2023). It replaced the OAU in 2002; as of 2023, 55 member states have joined.[1]

The Union has international legal personality which is separate from the international legal personality of the member states and has growing supranational powers (Olivier, 2015; Udombana, 2002; Amani Africa, 2022).[2] The legality of its actions is determined by the Constitutive Act, such as entering into treaties with states or organisations, or intervening in a member state in select instances as outlined in the Act (ibid.). The African Union is composed of multiple decision-making organs; some key organs with mandates immediately relevant to governing TCARs are shown in Table 2.

1 Several member states have been suspended at various periods since the AU's formation due to coups or non-payment of member dues (Mattheis and Staeger, 2020; Udombana, 2002). Suspension entails the country being disbarred, in escalating degrees, from the decision-making bodies of the AU and may involve other sanctions (in instances of coups). The RECs may take additional action against the member state. At time of writing (August 2023), Sudan, Niger, Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso are suspended on the basis of coups.

2 The African Union continues to face headwinds in 'compel[ling] member states to stick to, and implement, the AU's decisions, resolutions and positions' due to 'political, technical, legal and regulatory challenges' (Miyandazi, 2020).

Table 1. Five transboundary climate-risk pathways of importance to Africa

Risk pathway	Examples of transboundary climate risks
Biophysical	Potential impacts on shared natural resources, such as regional hydropower on transboundary rivers, or the multi-country spread of human, livestock or crop disease
Financial	Failure to account for physical climate change risks in major national or regional infrastructure (e.g. transportation, electricity generation) funded through foreign direct investment (FDI) and subsequent debt (depending on loan terms) and cascading regional economic impacts
Trade	The import and export of climate-sensitive food commodities and subsequent implications for subnational to regional inflation, food security and stability
Human mobility	The cross-border movement of people ranging from displacement to transhumance, pursuit of economic opportunities under freedom of movement, trade and labour protocols and tourism
Geopolitical	Coordination and governance differences between African Union member states in managing issues around trade, cross-border movement of people or shared natural resources

There are also several ministerial bodies operating on the continental scale, some of which predate the formation of the African Union, that are instrumental in formulating, harmonising and coordinating sectoral policies and actions. The ministerial bodies currently most involved in climate policy and action include the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC),[3] African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)[4] and the African Group of Negotiators (AGN).[5]

The African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) and the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET) also support climate policies and actions across the AU.

3 CAHOSCC was established in 2009 by the AU Assembly to deliver Africa's common position at international climate negotiations and is the highest political tier body in Africa's climate change negotiation structure (AGN, 2023). CAHOSCC approves the climate positions of the AGN as approved by AMCEN and reports to the AUC.

4 AMCEN was established in 1985 as the primary and permanent ministerial forum on environment and development issues, including on implementation of international environmental conventions and frameworks like the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) or the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Sherman, 2009); its positions on climate support CAHOSCC and the African Group of Negotiators and it is one of the three tiers to Africa's climate negotiations bodies. It reviews and approves the common position taken by AGN and reports to CAHOSCC.

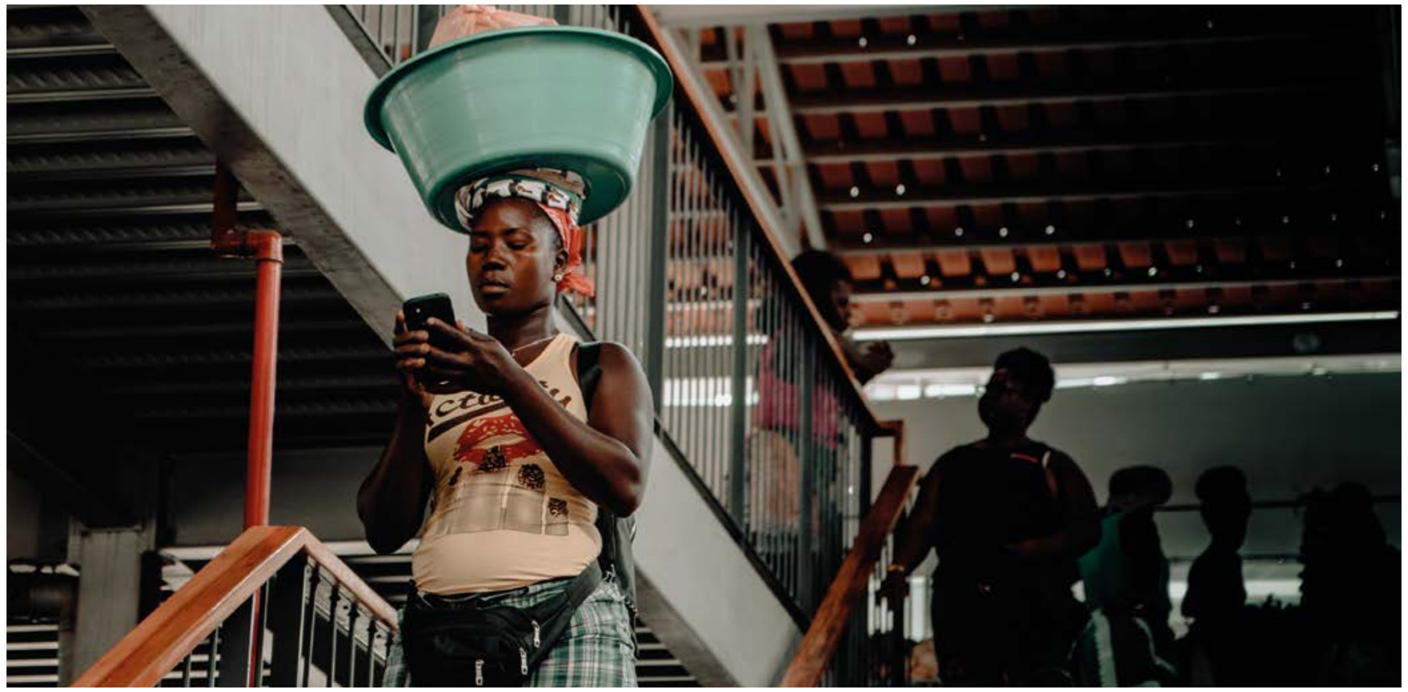
5 AGN consists of African countries' UNFCCC focal points, their national delegations and a secretary. The AGN prepares group positions and strategies for a unified African voice at international climate negotiations (AGN, 2023). It is the third political tier in the negotiation structure and reports to AMCEN. It drafts a common position from the positions submitted by the countries at pre-COP meetings and submits this position to AMCEN.

Table 2. Selected African Union organs and mandates

Organ	Key Mandates
AU Assembly	Highest decision-making body, comprising heads of state and government or accredited representatives. Determines AU policies and decisions, adopts its annual programme, monitors implementation, ensures compliance by all member states and issues directives to the Executive Council.
AU Commission (AUC)	The executive branch/secretariat of the African Union. Initiates proposals to be submitted to other AU organs and implements decisions taken by them. The AUC designs the overarching policy frameworks and continent-wide programmes that aim to guide and promote coherence across regional and national policies, programmes and actions. Assists member states in implementing AU programmes, and in elaborating, promoting, coordinating and harmonising AU policies and programmes with the RECs.
Executive Council	Comprises ministers of foreign affairs. Charged with monitoring member states' implementation of Assembly policies. Prepares Assembly session agendas and drafts decisions for its consideration; promotes coordination with the RECs, African Development Bank (AfDB) and UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA); determines cooperation policies between AU and Africa's partners.
Specialised Technical Committees (STCs)	Members are sectoral Ministers or senior officials from the member states. STCs design programmes and projects and report them to the Executive Council; they also oversee the implementation, harmonisation and coordination of these with RECs and member states. There are multiple sectoral/thematic STCs (e.g. Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment STC), with some – e.g. the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) – having specialised committee status.
AU Development Agency-NEPAD	Coordinates and executes priority continental and regional projects in alignment with Agenda 2063, and provides technical and implementation support to RECs and member states on such projects as CAADP.
Peace and Security Council	Standing decision-making organ of the AU for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. A collective security and early warning management body.
Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC)	Advisory organ through which African Civil Society Organisations can contribute to AU principles, policies and programmes, including through undertaking studies and making recommendations.

Source: Authors' compilations from AU organ websites and from Policy Dialogue participants

Note: Eight RECs are recognised by the African Union: Arab Maghreb Union (AMU); Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD); East African Community (EAC); Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The RECs coordinate with the AU through the Committee on Coordination to further regional integration goals.



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Member states (55 countries) are encouraged to draw from African Union Commission policy frameworks in their national strategies through the implementation of various programmes and activities. The member states are key actors in the realisation of regional and Africa-wide policy frameworks by designing, budgeting and implementing national programmes in various sectors and in relationships with other member states.

Policies and mechanisms: the governance of TCARs

The pan-African vision is furthered through *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want,* which is a long-term socioeconomic development plan launched by the AUC. The vision statement of Agenda 2063 is for '[a]n integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena' (AU, 2015). This vision reflects the need for recognising and integrating the multiplicity of identities and voices across the continent and creating solidarity as a unified voice in the international policy architecture.

The overarching aims of Agenda 2063 focus on building unity and cohesion among member states, inclusivity for social and economic progress (sustainable growth) and regional and continental integration. Its 20 goals address a variety of economic, development and social spheres (e.g. quality of life, well-being, education, health, and gender; sectoral development such as agriculture, the blue economy, and infrastructure; and concerns of governance including peace and prosperity). Several strategic sectoral policy frameworks are in place to support the implementation of these goals (see Table 3); the Agenda maps them to the Sustainable Development Goals. As an overarching vision, the plan aims to set up the enabling conditions for implementation and guide policy coherence across scales: 'The pursuit of this agenda further necessitates that the AU adopts relevant policy, legal and institutional measures, including those that require harmonisation of laws and implementation of decisions at the national level' (Amani Africa, 2022: 6).

Agenda 2063 is realised through flagship projects and implementation through regional and national programmes. Ten-year implementation plans, guided by overarching transformational outcomes (in living standards, sustainability, governance, inclusivity, gender and peace) define policy measures, such as those listed in Table 3.

Table 3. List of key AU policy frameworks, measures and flagship projects

Sector	AU policy frameworks, measures and flagship projects
Trade	*Africa's Continental Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA)* *Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT)* Flagship projects: Formulation of an African Commodities Strategy, Continental Free Trade Area
Industry and infrastructure	The Programme for Infrastructural Development in Africa (PIDA) Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA) Flagship projects: Integrated high speed train network
Energy	Africa Renewable Energy Initiative
Freedom of movement (labour, urbanisation, tourism)	*The Migration Policy Framework for Africa 2018 and Action Plan (2018–2030)*
Natural resources	Africa Water Vision & Continental Africa Water Investment Programme Great Green Wall initiative *African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (2013)*
Agriculture and food	*Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme* *African Climate Resilient Agricultural Development Programme (ACRADP)*
Ocean/coastal and freshwater resources	*Blue Economy Strategy 2019*
Climate change and sustainable development	*African Union Adaptation Strategy (Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan 2022–2032)* *Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI) (2020–2030)*
Other, cross-cutting	*African Union Green Recovery Action Plan 2012–2027*

AU policies aim to leverage regional flagship projects, using them as mechanisms to enhance coordination and governance across scales. Several flagship projects launched by the African Union work toward enhancing regional cooperation as part of achieving broader continent-wide goals, while mirroring these policy priorities within existing regional frameworks, with a large focus on implementation at the national level. For example, ECOWAS has its own regional vision, the ECOWAS *Vision 2020*, which was updated in 2022 to the ECOWAS *Vision 2050*.

Similarly, IGAD's *Regional Strategy (2021–2025) and Implementation Plan* outline socioeconomic and sustainable development objectives with a view to promoting regional cooperation. COMESA's *Medium Term Strategic Plan* puts forth strategic economic priorities every five years, with 2021–2025 their latest iteration, while EAC is on their *Sixth Development Plan (2021/22–2025/26)* guided by a planning and implementation matrix. These regional policy frameworks are anchored in treaties and long-term visions to 2050.

Danique Tersmette/Unsplash

Regional initiatives are broken down into sector-specific policies, plans and programmes which focus on trade liberalisation, agriculture, energy, livestock and pastoralism, human mobility, infrastructure, the environment, natural resources and climate change (see Table 4). Some key policy areas for regional bodies include those around the flow of people, shared natural resources and trade/goods; many of these are integrated across different sectoral policy frameworks. For example, RECs with a strong history of transhumance and pastoralism such as ECOWAS and IGAD address this form of cross-border movement in policies related to human mobility, livestock, resource management (water) and climate development. Furthermore, transboundary natural resources such as shared rivers and basins, coastal zones and forests feature regularly in policies highlighting cooperation, coordination and harmonisation driven by multi-actor and multi-scale mechanisms – such as multi-country initiatives like the Great Green Wall, and multi-country organisations (e.g. river basin organisations like the Lake Victoria Basin Commission).

Trade is a critical policy space – both in terms of regional integration and, more widely, overcoming entry barriers and structural inequalities in negotiations within international trade agreements and the cascading effects on global value chains. Cross-border policies on supply-/value-chains of goods and trade are a major focus of regional bodies, especially as they relate to agricultural commodities, manufactured goods and raw materials. There is increasing attention on ensuring a just-transition approach, in view of adaptation and renewable energy policies internationally, to the demand for raw materials in several African regions. Financial pathways of flows of FDI, ODA and other investments in sectors such as large-scale regional infrastructure projects (roads, telecommunications) are important cross-border policies for RECs, with consideration of associated issues around sovereign debt.

Not all of these RECs' policy frameworks are legally binding or easily enforceable among member states. There is recognition of sovereignty, and of multiple-country legal and institutional contexts and identities in regional instruments, and member states are in different phases of either ratifying, domesticating and implementing the policies.

Table 4. REC policies, mechanisms and programmes that align with those of the AU

Regional policy areas	Regional policy/programme	TCAR pathways addressed
Human mobility	*Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, Right of Establishment and Residence (1998)* *EAC Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Community Common Market (CMP)* *ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment (1979)* *ECOWAS Regulation on Transhumance (2003)* *ECOWAS Regional Migration Policy (2020)* *IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework (2012)* *IGAD Protocol on Transhumance (2020)*	• Human mobility pathway including traditional livelihoods (transhumance) and other types of movement (labour, education and displacement (disaster- and conflict-related)) • Geopolitical pathway concerning issues of cross-border movement of people and goods, as well as conflicts and political stability within and between member states
Agriculture and livestock, including phytosanitary measures for trade	*COMESA Regional Agriculture Investment Plan 2018–2022* *COMESA Regional Livestock Policy Framework 2015* *COMESA Regulations on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (2009)* *ECOWAS ECOWAP – Climate-smart agriculture* *EAC Protocol on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures* *EAC Livestock Policy* *IGAD Strategy for Sustainable and Resilient Livestock Development in View of Climate Change (2022–2037) – (Aug 2022)* *IGAD Region Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Strategy and Plan of Action (2017–2022)*	• Biophysical pathway on agricultural crops and livestock and associated resources (water, grazing areas); as well as cross-border transmission of diseases (phytosanitary measures) • Human mobility pathway related to cross-border movement of pastoralists • Geopolitical pathway related to security and conflict concerns of cross-border movement • Finance and trade pathways (global investment networks on agricultural commodities and trade agreements)
Trade, goods and supply chains	*COMESA's ACTESA Strategic Plan 2020–2030* *EAC Customs Union Protocol* *EAC Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Community Common Market (CMP)* *ECOWAS Free Trade Liberalisation Scheme* *IGAD Regional Trade Policy 2022–2026*	• Trade pathway including on agricultural commodities and livestock (regional trade, international markets) and related supply chains of pesticide and fertiliser, as well as manufactured products and raw materials • Finance pathway (FDI and other investment/finance mechanisms across supply chains of critical resources)
Energy, infrastructure and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)	*COMESA Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan (2020)* *COMESA Enhancement of Governance and Enabling Environment in the ICT sector (EGEE–ICT)* *EAC East African Industrial Policy 2012–2032* *East African Power Pool* *ECOWAS Renewable Energy Policy (2013)* *IGAD Regional Infrastructure Master Plan*	• Biophysical pathway – direct climate risks to cross-border infrastructure (roads, electricity generation and transmission grids, telecommunications) • Trade and finance pathways: cascading regional economic and trade disruption. Sovereign debt due to FDI loan repayment terms
Environment, climate and shared natural resources	*COMESA Strategy on Climate Change 2020–2023* *COMESA draft Blue Economy Strategy* *EAC Climate Change Master Plan 2011–2031* *ECOWAS West Africa Water Resources Policy (2008)* *ECOWAS Regional Climate Strategy and Action plan (2022–2030)* *ECOWAS Environmental Policy (2008)* *ECOWAS Forest Convergence Plan (2013)* *IGAD Horn of Africa Groundwater for Resilience Program*	• Biophysical: climate-proofing integrated water management schemes, including irrigation plans (and adaptation-related actions) and relevant agreements between neighbouring countries on basin management and water use. Shared natural resources conservation including forestry, fisheries, coastal areas and more; with focus on harmonisation, livelihoods and sustainable development • Finance pathway (development and climate related finance for adaptation and mitigation)

Source: Authors' review

Barriers and gaps for managing TCARs in existing policies and mechanisms

The IPCC (Trisos et al., 2022: 1311) has highlighted some of the key barriers to coordination and coherence on adaptation policies and actions globally, noting 'barriers ... arise from rigid sectoral planning, regulatory and implementation procedures, entrenched interests, and power structures and established sectoral communication structures.' These barriers apply as much to incremental and local adaptation as they do to the recognition and mainstreaming of TCAR management within policies and programmes at national, REC and African Union scales.

Participants at the Policy Dialogue reiterated the findings of the desk-based RECs and AU policy mechanisms review, and noted additional barriers and gaps (Table 5).

In particular, Policy Dialogue participants stressed that certain policy sectors – freedom of movement and transhumance; trade and food security; and ICT and infrastructure – faced the most significant barriers and gaps in understanding and addressing TCARs at regional to continental scales. Agricultural and livestock regional policies and programmes tend to have the most awareness of multi-country, cascading climate risks; those related to trade and food security, and infrastructure and ICT have the least. Dialogue participants highlighted that while all of these sectors are linked, they were not necessarily considered linked when their respective policies were drafted or institutional mandates were set up.

Freedom of movement and transhumance protocols within the RECs, for instance, have not been ratified, domesticated or implemented evenly across member states. For example, ECOWAS policies seeking to facilitate conflict-free movement for millions of livestock and herders across the Sahel – e.g. the *ECOWAS Freedom of Movement Protocol*, the Protocol on Transhumance or the PRAPS programme funded by the World Bank – clash with national programmes aimed at sedentarisation. IGAD also has several new transhumance policies (e.g. the *IGAD Protocol on Transhumance* (2020) and *IGAD Strategy for Sustainable and Resilient Livestock Development in View of Climate Change 2022–2037*), but member state domestication and implementation has not yet occurred.

There is also a lack of harmonisation across REC member countries regarding land use and tenure policies. This prevents application of tenure rights and security among land holders, transparency in land administration and equal access to resources, thus exacerbating land-related conflicts within and across borders, particularly those involving pastoralism.

Participants also highlighted the lack of robust climate risk assessments of emerging TCARs and their potential to interact with evolving demographic and environmental trends, or with trade, infrastructure or ICT. In part due to this lack of robust evidence, policy maker awareness – at the sectoral national ministries and at REC bodies – remains low.

As a result, programmes to mainstream management of TCARs at the national to regional levels in sectors beyond the typical sectors of agriculture, livestock or natural resource management (e.g. Great Green Wall or the Lake Chad Basin) are under- or unfunded as they are not prioritised by policy makers. The national and regional parliamentarians who have oversight of national or REC budgets also have limited awareness of TCARs, and may not be as empowered as necessary to implement decisions.

Finally, Dialogue participants reiterated that the perceived geopolitical nature of many transboundary climate risks could make some member states reluctant to cooperate and coordinate through regional response mechanisms as articulated in the aims of the AU and RECs' climate strategies. The AU and RECs already have difficulties encouraging member states to ratify, domesticise and implement particular policies and programmes that are promulgated by the decision-making organs of the AU and RECs. Where policies aim for greater integration across many sectors, the tensions around sovereignty and national interests are particularly evident in freedom of movement protocols, free trade protocols and those around human rights (particularly around gendered rights — for example, see CIAC, 2021). The RECs themselves are in various 'stages along the path to economic and political integration' (Byiers et al., 2019: 2), with overlaps and redundancies in some of the RECs due to origin histories, balances of power and cultural differences among member states (ibid.).

Table 5. Barriers and gaps for managing TCARs in existing policies and mechanisms

Barriers	Gaps
• The inability of the AU to enforce domestication and implementation of specific policies by member states; its authority as a supranational entity is derived from member states and is still evolving, similar to the position of the European Union • The competing and overlapping interests and mandates of various RECs. Some member states belong to multiple RECs, but do not equally pay dues, participate in or adhere to the policy processes of the RECs to which they belong • The incompatibility of some national policies with REC and AU policies – some countries do not domesticate and implement AU/REC policies and programmes within national frameworks • Linked with the previous point, there are ongoing barriers around sovereignty, cultural and langwuage barriers between member states and which are tied with national identities	• Insufficient robust climate risk assessments of TCARs in certain sectors such as trade, infrastructure, transportation or economic diversification • Regional adaptation programmes exist for specific sectors or themes, but these have not yet been implemented by all member states within a REC • Insufficient finance, significantly related to the lack of prioritisation of adaptation within national budgets by Member States or in REC parliaments, in part due to disempowerment of national and regional parliamentarians who oversee and approve government budgets • Insufficient attention and awareness of TCARs in Africa that arise from North–South exchanges in trade, security and FDI • REC and AU policies might be extended beyond 10 years; climate change considerations not incorporated in first versions or in later revisions

Source: Policy Dialogue participants

Geopolitics between member states, RECs and the AU, and the fact that transboundary climate risks are geopolitical in themselves, combine to produce implications for the financing of adaptation to cross-border and cascading climate risks at the REC and AU levels. The budgets of the AUC and the RECs are supported through member states' dues, as well as some external funds, such as from the European Union. Failure to pay dues – whether as a result of budget shortfalls, disagreements over particular AU Assembly decisions, or because of conflict and instability within or across states – undermines the budget needed to implement flagship programmes and activities for climate risk management. Such tension between member states and the RECs, or with the AU, can also reduce cooperation in pursuing international finance for joint projects. Indeed 'the need to protect sovereign interests can block regionally integrated institutional arrangements that are pivotal for accessing funds for transboundary climate investments…' (Trisos et al., 2022: 1311).

There is a growing body of evidence about the inequalities and accessibility difficulties inherent in the current international climate finance architecture (Quevedo et al., 2021) and calls for its reform under the Bridgetown Initiative.[6] Vertical climate funds and bilateral sources of climate finance are commonly thought of and sought, but are insufficient to actually meet the scale of need in adapting to TCARs (anywhere, not just within Africa). The very architecture of some international climate finance mechanisms can make multi-country cooperation difficult. Policy Dialogue participants highlighted the challenges in meeting accreditation and reporting mechanisms when multiple countries submit a joint proposal, given the frequently varied states of readiness to accept and utilise climate finance. And where multi-country climate finance proposals are successful, there can be tensions around the allocations of said finance. Other financing arrangements do need to be leveraged; some of these possibilities are discussed in the next section.

6 The Bridgetown Initiative was put forth by Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados at the 27th Conference of Parties in 2022 in order to reform the global development and climate finance architecture. The current international development architecture was set up in the 1940s using colonialism norms in which low-income countries are forced to borrow at higher interest rates (~14%) compared with wealthy countries (~1–4%). When natural hazard-induced disasters strike or incidences of sub-national to regional conflict occur, damaging and disrupting infrastructure, economies and lives, low-income countries can experience spiralling debt as they seek to recover and rebuild; this further inhibits their ability to diversify economies, provide needed infrastructure and services and raise living standards. Global economic downturns and financial instability in global markets can also exacerbate debt traps. As climate change increases the severity, frequency, duration and spatial extent of climate extremes and slow-onset hazards like sea level rise, the current international finance architecture is further trapping low-income countries in debt and inhibiting their needed transformation to climate-resilient economies and societies. For the text of the Bridgetown Initiative, see pmo.gov.bb/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/The-2022-Bridgetown-Initiative.pdf

Financing the management of TCARs

This section examines existing and potential opportunities for financing the management of TCARs. It outlines climate and non-climate finance opportunities, and avenues for new funding which are emerging through international dialogues for reforms in international finance and international trade.

Climate finance, while helpful and needed, is insufficient at meeting the adaptation gaps that span the local to transboundary scales. Finance for TCAR management (and other scales of adaptation) needs to be incorporated into loan and grant terms, trade pacts, business deals, and other sources of (non-climate) finance.

Climate finance mechanisms

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate finance as 'local, national or transnational financing – drawn from public, private and alternative sources of financing – that seeks to support mitigation and adaptation actions that will address climate change' (UNFCCC, 2023). This is especially critical for developing countries, with some of the poorest being the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In these contexts, climate financing is needed for mitigation, but more so for adaptation and a reduction of the negative impacts of climate events. This is primarily due to the heavy dependence of these countries on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture.

There are a number of programmes that finance climate adaptation projects and interventions across Africa. These include the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program (AAAP) – supported by the Global Centre on Adaptation and the African Development Bank (AfDB) – as well as the Africa Climate Change Fund (ACCF), a multi-donor trust fund, supported by Belgium and Germany among other countries. Regional programmes also exist that finance climate change adaptation projects. These include small programmes such as the Climate Justice Resilience Fund grant projects, as well as larger programmes within such finance mechanisms as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Adaptation Fund and Global Environment Facility (GEF). Climate finance supports adaptation projects spanning the national and regional levels, ranging from pastoralist projects in Somalia to the Great Green Wall Umbrella Programme supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The latter programme spans several countries.

Several non-UNFCCC climate finance avenues are also available to REC member countries, including the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience and the World Bank's Clean Technology Fund, which support both national and regional climate risk management and development projects. Bilateral climate finance opportunities also exist; these include Norway's International Forest Initiative and Germany's International Climate Initiative. The former has deepened its partnership with Ethiopia, providing an additional USD25 million for forest restoration and protection in the country.

Some of these programmes are regional in scope, while others are focused at the national level – for example, climate-smart agriculture projects and food resilience programmes funded by MDBs. An example of a national project is the World Bank's Climate-Smart Agriculture project in Kenya, which aims to increase agricultural productivity and build resilience to climate change risks in smaller farming and pastoral communities. Such national projects could be expanded to the regional level in order to better assess shared transboundary climate risks and the trade-offs with other adaptation and/or mitigation interventions.

Existing regional projects should be retrofitted to build in the assessment and management of transboundary climate risks. One such programme that does this is the World Bank-funded Regional Sahel Pastoralism Project, which, among other activities, improves access to water and new grazing areas, and supports peaceful pastoral mobility along local and cross-border mobility routes. Participants at the Policy Dialogue reiterated that RECs and other regional stakeholders (e.g. civil society) should take advantage of existing climate finance mechanisms and programmes that already support national and regional climate adaptation, and build in TCAR mitigation and prevention within their implementation – though the process to become accredited can be challenging.

Other climate finance opportunities are emerging, which the African Union and RECs should influence and benefit from. These include growing global calls for new forms of engagement with international finance institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank that may emerge through the Bridgetown Initiative and the New Global Financing Pact, and new climate finance mechanisms under the UNFCCC, such as the emerging Loss and Damage Fund. The AU, RECs and Member States should closely watch and engage in discussions shaping these emerging/pending reforms.

Debt-for-climate swaps are another option that may be explored. The AU and RECs should engage with international finance institutions around creating separate funding mechanisms to address transboundary climate risks. There also need to be discussions about the appropriateness and diplomatic aspects of various AU organs and REC bodies becoming accredited entities to climate finance; the climate-finance readiness of RECs to absorb, manage and disburse funding needs to be strengthened. Accreditation could also incentivise other sources of finance and investments.

The African Union, RECs and member states can explore other innovative climate finance options such as carbon markets and green bonds to manage transboundary climate risks. Kenya, for example, has the Kenya Green Bond Programme, which aims to utilise domestic and international capital to fund low-carbon development projects – renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture and low-carbon transport, for example. The country has recently amended its Climate Change Act to set up a domestic carbon trading industry and tap into an estimated $2 billion carbon market. The country's president recently announced that Africa's rainforests and carbon-absorbing ecosystems, such as mangroves, are an unparalleled economic goldmine (France 24, 2023). However, carbon markets are still relatively nascent and as yet unproven in terms of effectiveness, stability and ability to funnel benefits to those who need climate-resilient development the most.

Non-climate financial mechanisms

Financing for development – from healthcare programmes to trade pacts to infrastructure – is likely to be the most significant source of funding for TCAR management within existing AU and REC policy mechanisms and projects. This funding can be leveraged from within national economic development budgets if earmarked by parliamentarians, REC and AU projects and in public–private ventures. There are a number of potential financing mechanisms, as outlined in Table 6.

Table 6. Some non-climate financing options for managing TCARs, project entry points and potential implementing partners

Public–Private finance	Projects / programmes	Recipients / implementing partners
Bilateral finance	**Infrastructure development** • Industrial park • ICT • Road networks • Energy	Private sector associations
Multi-donor funds	**Private sector development** • Marketing • Standards (SPS) • Extension services • Technology transfer • Training	Government ministries and line agencies
National development funds (development banks)	**Trade facilitation** • Improved customs operations • Harmonisation	Universities and Vocational Training Schools
Public–private partnerships	**Movement of people** • Mutual recognition of skills • School exchange programme	

Source: Authors' review

Participants at the Policy Dialogue stressed that RECs should consider aligning economic development financing and programmes for TCAR management by tying these to current and future economic development objectives. This will involve revisiting TCAR management strategies and mainstreaming them into current national and regional economic development plans. Member states' financing can be more effective at contributing to resilience and have greater value if they pool funds to finance projects that address direct neighbour-to-neighbour and regional risk transmission. Indeed, countries could synergise the financing of TCAR management in a manner that optimises regional programmes, which would bring greater benefit to countries than if they were to individually pursue projects.

Roads, ports, railways, multi-country electricity transmission and ICT networks are critical for meeting Agenda 2063's and RECs' socioeconomic development objectives; these are typically financed through non-climate sources. TCAR risk assessments and management conditions can be built into the loan terms for infrastructure or development projects of bilateral lenders

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such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the World Bank, or those under the rubric of China's Belt and Road Initiative. Some examples of where TCAR management can be further embedded in financing mechanisms are the AUDA-NEPAD Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility (NEPAD-IPPF), and the projects funded within AfDB's *2021–2030 Climate and Green Growth Strategic Framework*. The latter initiative prioritises financing toward water and sanitation, energy, transportation and infrastructure development, as well as other sectors which complement other regional and national initiatives.

RECs have their own financial mechanisms for multi-country infrastructure projects; these should be leveraged and expanded to incorporate the management of TCARs. One such mechanism is COMESA's Regional Infrastructure Finance Facility, which offers long-term finance for infrastructure projects. Risk-informed foreign direct investment should be leveraged to develop climate-resilient infrastructure to reduce certain types of transboundary climate risks – particularly the risk of increased sovereign debt should loan terms dictate repayment even if the infrastructure is damaged or destroyed in a climate event (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2021). Tying TCAR management to infrastructure financing also helps to protect trade networks that could be disrupted by damage to regional transportation, ICT or electricity grids in the event of extreme climate events and reduce the risk of economic losses cascading through a multi-country region.

The African Union and RECs can also leverage their existing trade policies – such as those outlined in Tables 3 and 4 – and their existing funding to begin managing TCARs under the trade and biophysical pathways (e.g. phytosanitary and sanitary policies governing import and export of livestock and livestock products). Additionally, they can use their voice to elevate the salience and importance of TCAR into international trade in discussions at the World Trade Organisation. Such initiatives as the Action on Climate and Trade and the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD) under the World Trade Organisation are entry points at which TCARS can be inserted into efforts to reform international trade and to secure opportunities for financing management of trade-related TCARS in African countries.

The private sector, though considered well resourced, connected, and efficient, has been largely absent from discussions around climate adaptation (Crick et al., 2018), and thus absent from management of TCARs within their respective sectors. Policy Dialogue participants suggested that regional and pan-African firms be brought into the discussion; this will require improving the regulatory environment and creating the markets to accommodate their effective participation in addressing and managing such risks. The AUC, its departments, and the RECs and member states can jointly engage with the private sector and use public–private partnerships to secure financing through such transnational and regional entities as telecoms companies. With returns on investment in adaptation interventions possibly taking a few years to become evident, the AU and RECs may consider offering de-risking mechanisms to secure private sector investment. Continental and regional trade agreements and other policies can serve as the frameworks for member states to adopt and create programmes that encourage the private sector to invest in strengthening supply chains as a form of managing TCARs; this will be critical especially for matters of food security and materials needed for net zero economic transitions. In addition, governance reforms and other changes will be needed if a more suitable environment for private investment in the management of TCARs is to be created.

Other, innovative forms of finance will also be necessary. This may involve, for example, insurance risk-pooling mechanisms such as the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Group. The ARC was established to help African member states improve their capacities to better plan, prepare and respond to disasters triggered by extreme weather events, and provides insurance coverage for the most vulnerable states. As of 2023, ARC has paid out $65 million in claims (WEF, 2022). Between 2019 and 2020, $2,923,935 was paid to Côte d'Ivoire to cushion the impacts of drought on vulnerable families (ibid.). Indeed, 'ARC aims to provide cost effective contingency funding very early in the drought cycle to enable governments and households to protect individual and national development gains' (COMESA, 2020: 5). The ARC group can better integrate TCARs into capacity building at the state level for planning, preparing, and responding to extreme weather events.

However, traditional national and regional budgetary processes remain critical and are likely to constitute significant mechanisms for financing the management of TCARs within national to regional economic community sectoral policies and programmes. REC budgets are derived from member states' dues and other contributions, a portion of which could be dedicated to TCAR management and tagged as such. Member states can also leverage their own funding when voting on national budgets or by setting aside national funds to be used in conjunction with external funding – the Rwanda Green Fund (RGF) being an example. The RGF is a climate investment fund that facilitates access to financing from international (donor funding) and domestic sources (Development Bank of Rwanda) and channels it toward the private sector, NGOs, civil society, government agencies, and academic institutions. The RGF issues public calls for proposals, and applicants submit project concepts that may qualify for funding under one of three financing instruments: grants, innovation grants, or a credit line below market rates. Funded projects must provide a return on investment that contributes to the country's climate resilience.

National budgets need to actually earmark funds to cover the adaptation actions and projects articulated in NAPs. In many member states, it is the office of the president that sets budgetary priorities; national parliaments ratify the budgets and can influence budget allocations by ratifying (or not) various budget items. Many NAPs remain unfunded, as parliamentarians do not press offices of presidents to allocate sufficient budget to them when debating and approving annual spend. It is up to each individual member state to find the appropriate process for bridging gaps between offices of presidents, ministries of finance, and ministries of environment (the ministry under which climate policies are commonly developed in many countries) and for finding ways of funding adaptation actions. National budgets could be used to earmark the assessment of transboundary climate risks within policies and sectors, and seek to manage these within subnational to national policies and programmes regarding trade, livestock, fisheries, electricity, water management and so on.

Opportunities for managing TCARs in existing mechanisms

At the Policy Dialogue, representatives from the AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, AGNES and four RECs identified a number of needs and opportunities for managing transboundary climate risks within existing policy mechanisms and for overcoming some of the inertia around leveraging finance and action (Table 7).

These needs and opportunities, aligned within existing AU and REC policy mechanisms, gave rise to a roadmap for action. Adaptation Without Borders worked with the AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, AGNES and representatives from four RECs at the Policy Dialogue to propose a possible roadmap, published as A *roadmap for African resilience: addressing transboundary and cascading climate risks.* It sets out 25 key actions across five strategic axes: i) recognising risks, ii) knowledge and data, iii) governing together, iv) implementing Africa-wide adaptation and v) mobilising resources for resilience. These actions aim to facilitate policy guidance for enhancing coordination as per the AU climate strategy with a view to addressing and managing TCARs. Given the multi-scale governance arrangements and policy frameworks across the AU, RECs and member states, the roadmap helps identify those actors who can lead and drive actions and those who have a critical supporting role (Adaptation Without Borders et al., 2023).

Supported by this report, the roadmap presents the opportunities already in place for leveraging existing governance arrangements, policy frameworks and stakeholder mandates in order to address and manage TCARs, and the current enabling conditions for enhancing coordination, especially between regional bodies and member states. The roadmap's driving and supporting actions are synopsised in Table 8, along with the AU and REC bodies that have the mandate to deliver on such actions.

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Table 7. Needs and opportunities for managing transboundary climate risks

Needs and opportunities identified
As AU and REC policies are revised through regular planning cycles, revisions need to include climate change risks at a variety of scales and the ways in which they could impact policy objectives, while assessing the risks the policy itself might generate
An integrated AU and REC policy framework that brings together trade and commerce, freedom of movement and environment/natural resources
Strengthening of human resources capacities and weak institutions, while addressing the challenges of corruption and bribes
Awareness raising among member states, to understand the benefits of harmonised and climate-resilient policies related to movement of goods through free trade, strengthening of regional transportation and ICT infrastructure, and addressing mismatches in freedom of movement (including transhumance) policies
Regional policies should be correlated with national policies and vice versa; while addressing gaps in national policies that propagate upwards into REC policies

Source: Policy Dialogue participants

Table 8. Multi-scale TCAR governance: driving and supporting actions in the roadmap

1 Actions with specific implications for AU organs to lead	2a Actions with specific implications for RECs to coordinate, drive or lead	2b Actions in which RECs have a critical supporting role	3 Actions with specific implications for member states to lead or have a critical supporting role
Facilitation of a pan-African transboundary climate risk assessment (which includes stakeholder mapping and the allocation of responsibilities across institutions at different scales to build resilience to these risks) (AUC/AUDA-NEPAD)	Pilot guidance on integrating TCARs into assessments/adaptation plans in collaboration with member states, and coordinate bottom-up and local engagement	Support the AU and mobilise relevant regional research organisations to contribute to the TCAR Africa-wide assessment and development of indicators, as well as supporting AU to convene a research symposium by leading regional dialogues on TCARs	Identify which TCARs are national priorities by convening ministerial dialogues, including interests, potential barriers and/or constraints that might hinder implementation or opportunities to overcome them
Develop indicators on TCARs (severity, likelihood) and levels of progress towards building resilience; and feed this into designing a monitoring, reporting and learning dashboard (AU institutions)	Drive regional action (by leveraging established treaties, agreements, and policy frameworks) via the piloting of regional adaptation programmes or provision of cross-sectoral support to governments, informed by experiences (e.g. the Regional Coordination Centres of Disease Prevention)	Support member states by helping to identify cross-state constraints that hinder implementation	For existing transboundary adaptation projects: map and evaluate good practices
Produce and pilot guidance for integrating TCARs in vulnerability and risk assessments and adaptation plans at different scales (AGNES, AUDA-NEPAD)	Establish demonstration projects that address TCARs (informed by AUDA-NEPAD work programme)	Support AU to raise the profile of RECs such that they can apply for multilateral climate finance as an accredited body, and raise the need for direct access to climate finance for regional programmes that build resilience to TCARs	Raise bilateral and regional climate finance, and review national budgets to explore the financing of adaptation to TCARs
Design a data management plan – to support data accessibility, tracking and monitoring TCARs (AU institutions, ministerial bodies)	Develop a review framework (with support from research organisations) to evaluate national adaptation projects and programmes for TCARs		
Enhance high-level political commitment and leadership via ministerial bodies and their meetings	Build capacity to invest together – developing bankable projects, brokering relationships, mobilising capacity and implementing training programmes		
Pioneer a work programme on building resilience to TCARs in collaboration with RECs and national governments (AUDA-NEPAD)			
Raise the need for investments and unlock MDB finance flows to address TCARs, including designing innovative finance for shared risks and engagement with new initiatives (e.g. New Global Financing Pact)			
Embed climate risk management within the *African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA)* and work with the RECs to create the regulatory frameworks and markets to engage and encourage the private sector in contributing to TCAR management			

The African Union and the regional economic communities recognise the socioeconomic development, governance and human security challenges facing member states that are interacting with TCARs across scales – from the subnational, national, regional to continental level. The *African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032)* recognises these complex networks of climate risks, and calls for strengthening coordination among the African Union and its structures, as well as key regional partners, in supporting member states to achieve climate action. More specifically, it commits to 'coordination between the regional economic communities and member states in addressing and managing transboundary and cascading climate risks' (AU, 2022).

Regional bodies are key actors that can drive action towards coordinating regional bodies and member states with the aim of building resilience to TCARs (Table 8: 2a and 2b). Regional policy frameworks (see Table 3) provide a good entry point to highlight shared TCARs across multiple member states within and between RECs. RECs can build on these policy foundations and their mandates to foster and enhance more coordination cross-regionally and between member states.

Member states of different RECs should be involved in participatory governance arrangements; they also have important roles to play as implementing agents, and in ensuring diverse national interests are taken on board across networks of TCARs (Table 8: 3). This would foster multi-scale risk ownership and clarity on the allocation of roles and responsibilities across national sectoral ministries and regional bodies.

Regional climate plans and strategies – such as the EAC *Climate Change Master Plan 2011–2031*, ECOWAS' *Regional Climate Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2030)* or COMESA's *Strategy on Climate 2020–2023* – could be leveraged by RECs to coordinate with their member states in designing and piloting regional adaptation projects that address TCARs, while screening NAPs, NDCs and other national policies for various transboundary climate risks.

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For example, climate-related risks relating to cross-border human mobility, including pastoral transhumance, are integrated across multiple regional policy frameworks (climate, human mobility protocols, water management schemes and environmental treaties). This cross-sectoral and multi-country adaptation challenge could leverage multiple financing mechanisms (e.g. climate finance and ODA) and, eventually, applications to the Loss and Damage fund in areas where such traditional livelihoods are no longer possible.

Regional agriculture (climate-smart) and related issues of trade and food security are also critical, and relevant policy instruments can be leveraged to address and manage TCARs at a regional level. A first step would be for RECs together with knowledge brokers — e.g. research institutions and universities — to support member states to gain awareness, develop data and information and then integrate actions to address TCARs into sectoral policy portfolios and foster cross-sectoral dialogue/ mainstreaming. By aligning RECs' policy frameworks on agriculture, trade and water, multiple TCAR pathways can be identified. Member states can work with RECs to design the necessary coordination mechanisms that would help prepare, manage and build resilience to these risks. Such action could support the expansion of MDB-financed agricultural projects already taking place (e.g. the aforementioned World Bank project in Kenya) or strengthening multi-country natural resource management initiatives – like the Great Green Wall – to a regional or multi-regional scale.

This report demonstrates that new policies, including climate policies, are not necessarily needed at the national to continental levels to manage cross-border and cascading climate risks. Existing mechanisms can be leveraged by integrating assessments of TCARs and management options into implementation plans of existing climate strategies and sectoral policies, especially given current regional cooperation mechanisms in place via the RECs and under the African Union.

There are a number of challenges to the domestication and implementation of policies and delivery mechanisms, including attention to member state sovereignty and interests, that have been outlined in this report; new policies will not change the current political economy of managing climate risks. Nevertheless, introducing the significance of 'shared risks' demonstrated by TCARs can strengthen and accelerate the implementation of existing mechanisms and the interventions outlined within. This could be achieved through enhancing dialogue, support and coordination between member states and the RECs, as facilitated by the AUC, including building capacities to access resources and invest them. This also requires assessment of TCARs within existing sectoral policies, regional coordination on the mainstreaming of climate risk management within policies and programmes and assistance by the African Union in brokering dialogue and multi-country cooperation around TCARs, particularly those with geopolitical natures.

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Adaptation Without Borders

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Adaptation Without Borders is a global partnership working to strengthen systemic resilience to the cross-border impacts of climate change. We identify and assess transboundary climate risks, appraise the options to better manage those risks and support policymakers, planners and the private sector to develop climate-resilient and inclusive solutions. We catalyse new alliances and forms of cooperation on adaptation that pave the way towards a more sustainable and resilient world.

This report is produced by ODI on behalf of the Adaptation Without Borders partnership

Adaptation Without Borders is directed and managed by three founding members – SEI, ODI and IDDRI – and supported by the contributions of a growing number of partners. For further details on the partnership, visit adaptationwithoutborders.org

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