



Press release

For immediate release: 22 /07/2020

Virtual Kick-off Event for Enhancing the Resilience of National Infrastructure Systems Project

A total of EUR 500,000 worth of funds is mobilized by the Global Center on Adaptation for analytic study on improving national-level capacity to plan and manage climate-resilient infrastructure in Ghana.

On 22 July 2020, a virtual event was held to kick off the *“Enhancing the resilience of Ghana’s national infrastructure systems”* project. The project has been developed by and will be implemented in close partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), Global Center on Adaptation (GCA), University of Oxford (Environmental Change Institute), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNOPS. It will be implemented over a 12-month period starting from July 2020.

The project will undertake an analytic study to support Ghana in identifying its infrastructure adaptation needs and provide a roadmap on how those needs can be met. It aims to enhance the long-term resilience of Ghana’s infrastructure against the threats of climate change, with a particular focus on the transport, water and energy sectors and on nature-based solutions for delivering services and enhancing the resilience of infrastructure systems. The project will help ensure that infrastructure development is integrated across different sectors aligned with Ghana’s national development priorities, including achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change. The output is further expected to help identify opportunities for post-project implementation, such as a pipeline of climate-resilient projects, and support strengthened capacity for mobilization of funding for prioritized projects and activities.

The meeting was chaired by Mrs. Ifeoma Esther Charles-Monwuba, Director of UNOPS Ghana, and Mrs. Linda Agbesi, Infrastructure Specialist at UNOPS, and was attended by various ministries, government institutions, development partners and International Financial Institutions (IFIs)

The project kick-off event was in two main parts: High Level Launch, followed by a Technical Working Group Meeting.


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The first session started with welcome by Mrs. Cynthia Asare Bediako, Chief Director of the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), who called for cooperation, commitment and timely responses from all stakeholders especially the Technical Working Group members to leverage the benefits of this initiative. Mr. Charles Paul Iheanacho Abani, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Ghana, gave the opening remarks, followed by further remarks on the project's vision by Prof. Patrick Verkooijen, CEO of the Global Center on Adaptation, and Mrs. Marian Kpakpah on behalf of Hon. George Yaw Gyan-Baffour, Minister of Planning.

Mr. Charles Paul Iheanacho Abani, United Nations Resident Coordinator, recognized the Government of Ghana's leadership and foresight in this initiative. He stressed that "We must take concrete measures to consolidate and build on what we have started. Ghana's vision for self-reliance must be at the heart of the response. This project, which runs over the next 12 months, will support Ghana to identify its infrastructure needs and provide a roadmap to how these needs can be met in the transportation, water and energy sectors. But also, I believe it will reveal the linkages to other sectors as Ghana builds back to become more resilient and capable in the future." He continued, "The UN will leverage its expertise to strengthen national-level capacity and help plan and manage climate resilient infrastructure, going forward, by offering trainings on the principles of infrastructure adaptation planning, including using nature-based solutions and developing capacity on the usage of the resilient infrastructure assessment tools that are expected to be developed under this project."

Prof. Patrick Verkooijen, CEO of Global Center on Adaptation, said "Working with an excellent set of partners, I'm delighted that the Global Center on Adaptation has been able to initiate this project to play a catalytic role in strengthening resilience across Ghana's energy, water and transport sectors. We hope this will be the first of many projects across the African continent to be managed by GCA Africa and look forward to sharing the emerging results from this study at the Climate Adaptation Summit in January 2021."

Prof. Kwabena Frimpong-Boateng, Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, delivered a keynote speech and highlighted that "The government recognizes that responses to infrastructure challenges, resulting from climate change, require long term planning and greater coordination in the new infrastructure assets to be prioritized, planned, designed, and operated to account for climate change and its impacts over its lifetime. Climate resilient infrastructure has the potential to improve the reliability of service provision and increase asset life and protect asset returns. And so as decision-makers, we need to have access to high quality information, consistent data and the capacity to use this information to inform planning. The use of platforms and online tools can provide accessible, credible and transparent information on past and future climate behaviour."

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In the second session, Mr Peter Dery, Director, Environment Division, MESTI, introduced and closed the session reiterating the need for committed and proactive participation of all stakeholders to ensure the Project's success.

Mr. Michael Mullan, Programme Lead for Infrastructure and NBS at GCA, briefed the project background, which was followed by a presentation on the project overview by Dr. Scott Thacker, Infrastructure Sustainability and Resilience Specialist at UNOPS. Mr. Fulai Sheng, Head of the Economic and Trade Policy Unit at UNEP, gave a presentation on resilient infrastructure for a sustainable future. Mr. Geoffery Morgan, Infrastructure Sustainability and Resilience Specialist at UNOPS, elaborated on the approach to assessing the enabling environment, in particular for providing resilient infrastructure in the face of climate change. Lastly, Ms. Lena Fuldauer, a Researcher at the University of Oxford (ECI), spoke about the built and natural environment drawing on an example of a recent study from St. Lucia, followed by a Q&A session and discussion of the next steps for the project.

This session provided an opportunity for Technical Working Group members to meet each other and established a common and mutual understanding of the project. The kick-off meeting ended with a fruitful and informative discussion.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UNOPS Executive Director, Grete Faremo, on her views on the project stated "This is a key step in supporting Ghana's efforts to develop resilient infrastructure that is aligned with national priorities, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We are delighted to be part of this project."

This outlook is shared by Professor Jim Hall at the Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford, who said: "I am very excited by the launch of this significant collaboration between the University of Oxford, the Government of Ghana and our partners in the GCA, UNOPS and UNEP. This is the latest step in our co-development of methods to improve decision making for sustainable and resilient infrastructure systems. Ghana is at a crucial point when the right choices about infrastructure development will benefit sustainable development for years to come. I hope that our research will assist decision makers in Ghana to make better choices for a sustainable future."

Notes to the editors:

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About UNOPS

UNOPS mission is to help people build better lives and countries achieve peace and sustainable development. We help the United Nations, governments and other partners to manage projects, and deliver sustainable infrastructure and procurement in an efficient way. Read more:


www.unops.org

About any partner mentioned in the press release

Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI): The Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) exists to promote sustainable development by deepening and strengthening market driven Research and Development (R&D) for sound Environmental Governance, Science, Technology and Innovation through intensive awareness creation, collaboration and partnership. Read more: <https://mesti.gov.gh>

Global Center on Adaptation (GCA): The Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) is an international organization which works as a solutions broker to accelerate action and support for adaptation solutions, from the international to the local, in partnership with the public and private sector, to ensure we learn from each other and work together for a climate resilient future. Founded in 2018, the GCA is hosted by the Netherlands, working from its headquarters in Rotterdam with a knowledge and research hub based in Groningen. The GCA is establishing a worldwide network of regional offices in Africa, Asia and the Americas. Through this evolving network of offices and global and regional GCA teams, the organization engages in high-level policy activities, new research contributions, communications, and technical assistance to governments and the private sector. Read more: <https://gca.org/home>

University of Oxford (Environmental Change Institute): The Environmental Change Institute at University of Oxford was established in 1991 'to organize and promote interdisciplinary



research on the nature, causes and impact of environmental change and to contribute to the development of management strategies for coping with future environmental change'. Read more: <https://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/about/>

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): UNEP is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. Read more:

<https://www.unep.org>