

UNDERSTANDING AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES' CAPACITY FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION RESEARCH: CO-CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A CLIMATE-FOCUSED ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL (CO-CAT) USING A LIVING LAB APPROACH

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Introduction

African universities and research institutions are essential to leading locally relevant climate adaptation research. Yet many face institutional capacity challenges – including fragmented systems, limited funding, and underdeveloped governance structures. The CO-CAT project brings together African institutions and partners in a collaborative process to co-create and pilot an assessment tool that helps identify gaps, strengthen institutional systems, and support inclusive, impactful research environments.

Research Question

How can African universities and research institutions assess and strengthen their institutional capacity for climate adaptation research?

Our Approach

- Phase 1: Literature review and stakeholder consultations to inform the CO-CAT framework.
- Phase 2: Virtual Living Lab - a participatory, peer-learning environment to foster co-creation and collaborative implementation of climate adaptation solutions.
- Phase 3: Use of CO-CAT to identify institutional challenges.
- Phase 4: Gender-equity focused solution development and leadership training o pilot capacity strengthening actions based on co-cat findings
- Phase 5: Refinement and dissemination of final tools and strategies.

CO-CAT embeds gender equality and inclusion at every stage – from stakeholder engagement and institutional self-assessment to leadership development – supporting more equitable institutional research systems across Africa.

Geographic Scope and Scale

- 20 universities & research institutions across Central, Eastern, Northern, Southern, and Western Africa.
- Bilingual delivery in English and French

Expected Impact

- Improved institutional capacity for climate adaptation research.
- Scalable and open-access tool for long-term institutional transformation
- Strengthened leadership and inclusion of local and female researchers.
- Established mentorship programs and Living Labs.
- Enhanced alignment of African universities with national and global climate policies.
- Sustainable networks and collaborative research culture.



Conclusion

This project strengthens the foundations for climate resilience across Africa by empowering universities with the tools, frameworks, and partnerships necessary to lead locally relevant climate adaptation research. Through inclusive engagement and innovation, it aims to drive long-term impacts on policy and governance, organisational development and capacity building, knowledge sharing, social equity, and community development.

Learn more or connect with us

En: <https://clareprogramme.org/co-cat>

Fr: <https://clareprogramme.org/co-cat>



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Partners

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