

Low Carbon Development Strategies - a reality check

Bonn August 2010

Xander van Tilburg, Laura Würtenberger



www.ecn.nl

Project “Paving the way for Low Carbon Development Strategies (LCDS)”

What is the project about?

- Low carbon development strategies (LCDS) proposed as an international instrument in the climate negotiations but still vague
- Project aims to bring clarity on how LCDS can be operationalised
- Ghana and Indonesia tracks: how could LCDS work in practice
- Project does **not** develop an LCDS

Project output

- Project report & side events at climate negotiations: targeted at negotiators and research community – contribute to clarity on the concept
- Two countries : capacity on linking national and international climate issues
- Two countries: reports and policy briefs presenting concrete methodological guidance / addressing country specific issues

LEDS as an instrument under the UNFCCC

Proposed by the EU (April 2009)

[...] The EU proposes to include in the negotiation text the concept of low-carbon development strategies (LCDS), as the structure for developing countries to indicate their contribution to the global mitigation effort and to describe the nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) they intend to undertake”
(Paper 15: A negotiating text for consideration at AWG-LCA 6, EC, April 2009)

LEDS in the negotiations

EU 2009-proposal, supported by other countries

- Mandatory instrument: all countries would do an LCDS
- Prerequisite for support
- International review (registry)
- Accountability (framework for MRV)
- New: link to national communications

Objections

- Additional barrier for obtaining support
- Sovereignty: influence development direction
- Link to legally binding commitments
- Tension between national and international preferences and priorities

LEDS in the negotiations

Copenhagen Accord

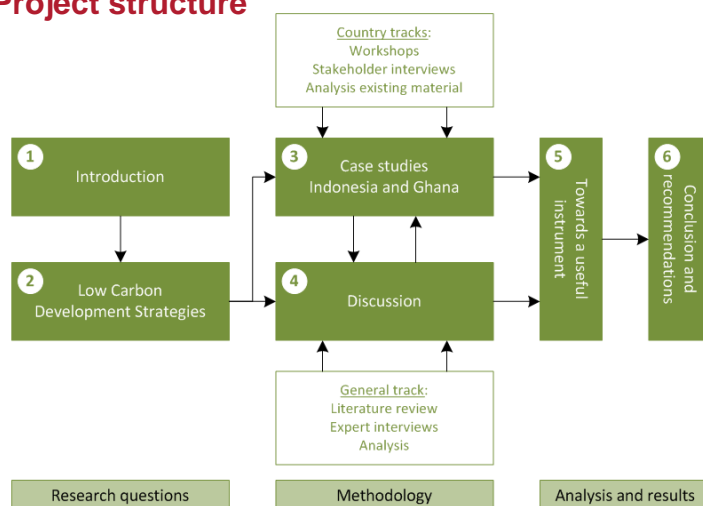
"[...] bearing in mind that social and economic development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries and that a low-emission development strategy is indispensable to sustainable development"
Copenhagen Accord FCCC/CP/2009/L.7 par. 2

AWG-LCA draft text

"[Developing country Parties will prepare low-emission development plans. These plans will not be a precondition for support for nationally appropriate mitigation actions. Least developed country Parties and small island developing States may prepare low-emission development plans at their discretion.]"
AWG-LCA text to facilitate negotiations among Parties FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/8 par. 48

Main challenge is to operationalise the rather abstract concept to something practical ...

Project structure



What is an LCDS?

What can be the national purpose/benefits?

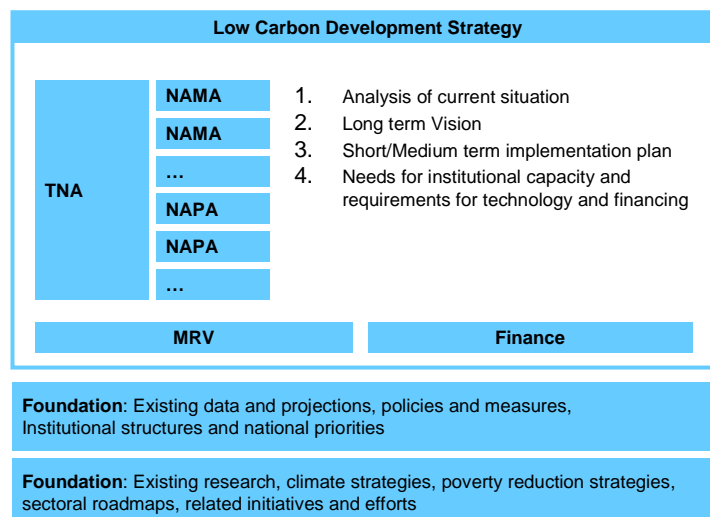
- Strategic approach to integrating economic and climate related policies
- Making the case for international public support
- Making the case for (international) private investments

What can be the international purpose/benefits?

- Countries signal their mitigation ambitions – does it add up?
- Countries comply to reporting on actions
- Increase support effectiveness by allowing for coordination

How can it relate to the other instruments?

- General strategic document
- Not detailed on components, but shows how it fits together (interlinkages)
- NAMAs and the carbon market
- MRV and finance



Case studies

Case study Ghana

- Low income (developing) country West Africa – relatively stable
- Limited analytical capacity, fact base and political awareness
- Integrated approach to simultaneously build (1) fact base, (2) technical capacity and (3) political awareness

Case study Indonesia

- Very diverse and large lower/middle income country in Asia
- Political awareness exists, institutions are quite weak
- Fact base and capacity exist, but limited – main problem is coordination
- Strategies exist (12), but gaps and overlap, stakeholders and ownership challenge

Preliminary conclusions

Greatest benefit from creating an LCDS might come from the process, which potentially involves stakeholders, links different sectors and deepens understanding (and buy-in).

Preliminary conclusions

- **An LCDS is too specific for a template approach**
 - Differences in starting position (knowledge, information) and national priorities
 - Different focus of the strategy, or even composition
 - More sense to have best practices guidance per element

Preliminary conclusions

- An LCDS is too specific for a template approach
- **An LCDS is not to be made a mandatory instrument under UNFCCC**
 - LCDS is not an aim in itself, getting mitigation actions started is
 - Risk is that it becomes a tick-a-box instrument
 - Making it voluntary ensures countries doing it to further their own interests

Preliminary conclusions

- An LCDS is too specific for a template approach
- An LCDS is not to be made a mandatory instrument under UNFCCC
- **An LCDS should not be mixed up with National Communications**
 - A process [involving stakeholders](#) can be an important benefit of having an LCDS
 - An LCDS is a [political strategy](#), NC is used for international reporting purposes

Preliminary conclusions

- An LCDS is too specific for a template approach
- An LCDS is not to be made a mandatory instrument under UNFCCC
- An LCDS should not be mixed up with National Communications
- **An LCDS could address intragovernment and interdonor coordination**
 - [Intra government coordination is difficult](#), resulting in lack of focus and potential redundancy. [Coordination across levels of governance](#) pose a challenge.
 - [Donor coordination is a challenge](#)
 - [For getting fast, initial results](#) start by identifying actions that involve only one ministry
 - Setting up an [institutional structure](#) and assigning realistic mandates and resources

Preliminary conclusions

- An LCDS is too specific for a template approach
- An LCDS is not to be made a mandatory instrument under UNFCCC
- An LCDS should not be mixed up with National Communications
- An LCDS could address intragovernment *and* interdonor coordination
- **An LCDS could in parallel build capacity and political awareness / buy in**
 - Political, senior level buy-in is often mentioned as a prerequisite
 - Mitigation is (understandably) not on the top of senior political decision makers.
 - The process of developing an LCDS can be used to improve the fact/evidence base, the analytical capacity and improve awareness and buy-in from political leadership.

Preliminary conclusions

- An LCDS is too specific for a template approach
- An LCDS is not to be made a mandatory instrument under UNFCCC
- An LCDS should not be mixed up with National Communications
- An LCDS could address intragovernment *and* interdonor coordination
- An LCDS could in parallel build capacity and political awareness / buy in
- **Expect it to be tedious. Do not expect fast results**
 - There is an understandable tendency for politicians to support an LCDS and then promise to deliver on a deadline.
 - Time pressure on the process is known to go at the cost of stakeholder consultation and of government ownership.

Preliminary conclusions

- An LCDS is too specific for a template approach
- An LCDS is not to be made a mandatory instrument under UNFCCC
- An LCDS should not be mixed up with National Communications
- An LCDS could address intragovernment *and* interdonor coordination
- An LCDS could in parallel build capacity and political awareness / buy in
- Expect it to be tedious. Do *not* expect fast results

LCDS can be a tool to reap the potential benefits outlined above and could be supported under the UNFCCC, either through spreading of best (and bad) practices or by allocating resources.

Thank you!

Xander van Tilburg
ECN Policy Studies
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
vantilburg@ecn.nl
+31(0)6 53149465