

The treatment of climate change impacts and adaptation in the environmental impact assessment of the Standard Gauge Railway Project in Tanzania

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Abstract

Transport remains one of the essential infrastructures, crucial for socio-economic development. However, climate change threatens the transport infrastructure development gains already achieved globally. The incorporation of climate change and adaptation capabilities into environmental impact assessment (EIA) processes has been extensively discussed and linked to enhanced project climate resilience. However, a considerable research gap remains unexplored, and that is assessing whether and how EIA has been used to climate-proof development proposals in Africa. This study examined how climate change impacts and adaptation capabilities featured in the EIA of a major transport infrastructure project in Tanzania. It draws on reviewing the project's environmental impact statement (EIS) using review criteria derived from the literature. The findings revealed that all EIA stages addressed climate change in one way or another, with some of the criteria more comprehensively treated than others. A closer examination unveiled several good practices, which evidence appreciation for climate science and considerable strength in climate change preparedness. The results highlight EIA's potential to steer climate efforts among vulnerable communities systematically. This paper will contribute to the international discussion on this issue and offer a basis for further research towards deeper engagement between the actors within EIA, transport planning and climate networks.

Keywords; Transport infrastructure, climate change, adaptation, environmental impact assessment

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