PROJECT SUMMARY

APIICC Project *(Institutional innovation for climate governance)*

A CIRAD project, funded by the French National Research Agency (ANR)

Project lead: Gilles Massardier (CIRAD) **Grant:** ANR-23-CE53-0008 gouvernance-climatique-apiicc-projet.fr · apiicc@cirad.fr

9	30+	24+	5	2024–27
countries studied	instruments analysed	researchers	work packages	project duration

IN BRIEF

Climate plans and policies exist almost everywhere; their consistent and rapid implementation does not. APIICC studies the governance dimension of the climate crisis — how institutional innovation in procedural instruments can help close the gap between commitments and action — through a large-scale comparative study of agricultural adaptation.

Context and problem

- IPCC reports and UN SDG 13 stress the urgency of climate action; states rely mainly on climate plans and policies to respond.
- Climate risk is compounded by a governance risk: the incremental implementation of policies leads to repeated failures and “myopia”, turning the climate “super wicked problem” into a “tragedy” as time runs out.
- Two core governance challenges: (1) integrating long-term climate impacts into current policies, and (2) accelerating the implementation of existing climate plans and policies.

Literature and core hypothesis

The literature offers two contrasting responses to this governance failure: institutional innovation or the reinforcement of authority (some authors argue that authoritarian environmentalism outperforms democratic approaches and open governance).

CORE HYPOTHESIS

Through the study of agricultural adaptation, APIICC's core hypothesis is that institutional innovation in the procedural instruments of climate governance is the key to resolving the “tragedy”.

Scientific barriers addressed by APIICC

- Scarce literature on institutional innovation in climate governance.
- Existing work sets out general principles but lacks empirical grounding.
- Procedural instruments, in particular, are rarely studied empirically.
- The dichotomy between authority and open governance is an obstacle to thinking about the “super wicked” climate problem and to solving it.
- Key themes — institutional innovation, procedural instruments, political temporalities — are rarely addressed by climate research.

Objectives

01 · Know and measure (WP2 and WP3)

Produce new empirical knowledge on innovative procedural instruments, analyse their capacity to accelerate implementation, to integrate the long term and to strengthen their legitimacy, and develop a model for assessing institutional innovation.

02 · Co-construct and publish (WP4)

Co-construct with stakeholders, in working groups and then at the final seminar, recommendations for innovative governance of the transformational adaptation of agriculture, then publish them.

Work packages

WP0	Project management and harmonisation of the research protocol / data collection in the 9 countries.
WP1	Refines the key variables, builds an analysis grid and a research protocol, and selects at least 4 innovative procedural instruments per country to be studied.
WP2	Fieldwork: at least 2 innovative national procedural instruments and their innovation process per country.
WP3	Fieldwork: at least 2 innovative local procedural instruments and their innovation process per country.
WP4	Recommendations and guidelines for the governance of transformational adaptation.

TEAM

More than 24 researchers in the 9 participating countries.

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Gabon, Georgia, Mexico, Senegal, United Kingdom, United States.

Procedural instruments studied

- Procedural instruments are the procedures used to design, decide and adjust policies, where implementation most often stalls.
- At least 4 innovative instruments per country (more than 30 in total): national and local, financial and non-financial.
- Each instrument is analysed with a common 251-item grid.
- Examples: Climate Change Council and green taxonomy (Georgia), Landscape Recovery (United Kingdom), Rennes–Haute-Bretagne territorial cooperation contract (France), CNAAS and La Banque Agricole credit-insurance (Senegal).

Final seminar

7–9 JULY 2027 · CIRAD, PARIS

Three days with at least one speaker per country, guest talks, round tables and networking time. Participants will discuss the project's results, including research results by country, and how to improve the draft policy briefs and guidelines. Co-constructed with stakeholders in working groups from October 2026, these documents, along with others, will be published in open access by the end of 2027.

Frequently asked questions

Why these 9 countries?

They were selected to capture significant contrasts in governance systems, development contexts and exposure to climate risk — the diversity needed for a credible North–South comparison.

Does this only concern agriculture?

Agricultural adaptation is the empirical case study; the model and findings on procedural instruments are designed to be generalised to climate governance more broadly.

How many procedural instruments will be studied in total?

At least 4 per country — at least 2 national (WP2) and 2 local (WP3) — in the 9 countries, giving a base of at least 30 cases for the comparative analysis. More info: gouvernance-climatique-apiicc-projet.fr/le-projet/instruments-apiicc

Why focus on procedural instruments rather than on the content of climate policies?

Plan content already receives attention; the procedures used to design, decide and adjust policies over time are where implementation most often stalls, and they remain rarely studied empirically.

What is the "model for assessing institutional innovation" (Objective 1)?

A structured framework, built on the analysis grid and research protocol of WP1, for comparing procedural instruments across countries on a common basis.

Why is governance so important in the face of the climate "super wicked problem"?

Climate change is a "super wicked problem": time is pressing, those responsible for it must also solve it, no central authority can impose a solution, and short-termism holds back long-term action. Under these conditions, the incremental and myopic implementation of climate plans and policies fails repeatedly, turning risk into "tragedy" as delays accumulate. As states already rely on climate plans and policies, what is missing is not more content but the governance capacity to design, decide and adjust these plans and policies quickly and reliably enough — which is why APIICC focuses on governance itself, and more specifically on the procedural instruments that determine whether implementation moves forward or stalls.

Why look at innovation "niches" for climate governance through innovative procedural instruments?

Rather than waiting for a single, system-wide overhaul of governance, institutional innovation in climate governance tends to emerge first in bounded "niches" — specific national or local procedural instruments where new ways of designing, deciding or adjusting policies are tested. These niches matter because that is where the dichotomy between reinforcing authority and opening up governance can actually be tested and overcome in practice, and because the innovations that work at this scale are those that can then be extended or replicated elsewhere. As procedural instruments remain rarely studied empirically, examining these niches closely — as APIICC does across more than 30 national and local cases — is what allows the project to build the empirical grounding needed to understand what makes institutional innovation succeed, and to draw governance recommendations from it.