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Agriculture is both “villain and victim” when it comes to climate change. The sector contributes an estimated 13.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions and land use change for food production is responsible for 75% of deforestation worldwide, while also driving land degradation. But agriculture will be heavily impacted by climate change, with severe implications for livelihoods, the availability of food and economies. Multilateral climate funds have channelled $744 million to support agriculture, with an overwhelming focus on adaptation and resilience building. These sums are relatively modest compared with the role Official Development Assistance (ODA) plays in the sector. Climate funds target geographic regions with the highest potential for emission reductions and most likely to suffer from the impacts of climate change.

However, there are untapped opportunities in highly food-vulnerable fragile states and the highest agricultural GHG emitters. Given the challenges in mobilising public and private climate finance at scale, the broad suite of sectors needing support and the scale of reported bilateral agricultural ODA available, this paper recommends climate finance should take a more integrated approach, with greater incentives to capture and support both mitigation and adaptation outcomes. In addition, climate finance should focus on mainstreaming climate mitigation and resilient approaches in countries and regions with high potential, or in countries where there are significant levels of non-climate specific ODA or domestic spend on agricultural development.

Download the working paper "Food and livelihoods in a changing climate" here.

Overseas Development Institute