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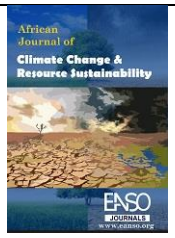

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Original Article

Politics and Climate Change: Exploring the Integration of Climate Services into General Election Political Parties' Manifestos in Tanzania

Elifadhili Vicent Shaidi[1*], *Veronika Gerald Kimario*[1], *Mkama Thomas Manyama, PhD*[1], *Boniventure Herman Mchomvu*[1] *& Sixbert Simon Mwanga, PhD*[1]

[1] Climate Action Network Tanzania, P. O. Box 32900, Tanzania.
[*] Author for Correspondence ORCID ID; https://orcid.org/0009-0004-2513-9970; Email: veronika@cantz.or.tz

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Climate Services, Climate Change Adaptation, Political Party Manifestos, Electoral Politics in Tanzania, Governance Mechanisms.

ABSTRACT

Climate change poses significant risks to climate-sensitive sectors in Tanzania, underscoring the need to mainstream adaptation measures such as climate services through effective governance mechanisms that enhance resilience. Climate services, which translate climate information into actionable decision-making, have become critical tools for preparedness and vulnerability reduction. However, their integration into political processes, particularly electoral platforms, remains underexplored. This study investigates how climate services are articulated, prioritised, or omitted within the political party manifestos of Tanzania across three general election cycles: 2015–2020, 2020–2025, and 2025–2030. Guided by agenda-setting theory and principles from the Global Framework for Climate Services, the research employs qualitative content analysis of party manifestos, complemented by expert perspectives gathered during the 2025–2030 election cycle. The analysis focuses on three major political parties that shape national electoral competition and policy debates in mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar: Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), Alliance for Change and Transparency – Wazalendo (ACT-Wazalendo), and Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA). Findings reveal uneven integration of climate services across parties and election periods. CCM demonstrates incremental progress, increasingly embedding climate change within its development agenda, though its approach risks being supply-driven, limiting user relevance and uptake. ACT-Wazalendo shows the most substantive advancement, embedding climate services comprehensively in its 2025–2030 manifesto through proposals for district-level climate service centres, enhanced information systems, and user-centred approaches. In contrast, CHADEMA's 2020–2025 manifesto acknowledges climate resilience but omits climate services entirely, and its absence from the 2025 election restricts longitudinal comparison. Overall, the study highlights growing but inconsistent political recognition of climate services in Tanzania. It underscores the need for stronger political commitment, institutional capacity, and evidence-based advocacy to ensure climate services are mainstreamed within governance and development agendas, thereby strengthening national resilience to climate risks.

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INTRODUCTION

Climate change is among the pressing global challenges of our generation. Continually rising Land Surface Temperature (LST) increases climate variability by intensifying impacts across ecological, social, and economic systems (Kara & Yauz, 2025). These impacts are particularly pronounced in developing countries, especially in the global south, including Sub-Saharan Africa. In this geographical region, livelihoods and national economies remain highly dependent on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and forestry. Limited adaptive capacity coupled with structural development constraints renders these countries disproportionately vulnerable to climate change shocks (Afzal et al. 2024). In a nutshell, the observed continual devastating effects of climate change on vulnerable communities in the global south are perpetuated by socio-economic and political inequalities (Sarkodie & Strezov, 2019). Such inequalities display non/weak interventions to adapt and mitigate climate change effects to vulnerable communities.

In response to these challenges, countries such as the United Republic of Tanzania are compelled to strengthen governance mechanisms that support climate change adaptation and risk management in the context of growing uncertainty (Abbas, 2025). In Tanzania, climate variability and extreme weather events increasingly threaten livelihoods, food security, and economic stability (Abbas, 2025). The call for effective and coordinated climate governance is shaped by several actors, including technical institutions, political and decision-making actors, civil society actors, the private sector, and the media, to mention a few, all interacting across sub-national, national, regional, and global levels (Haque et al., 2025).

Political actors such as presidents, parliamentarians, local government officials, and parliamentary committees are profoundly significant in shaping priorities, allocating resources, and providing political legitimacy (Sarkodie & Strezov, 2019). In a democratic political system and space, political parties play an influential role, as they articulate societal interests, expound policy priorities, and translate political commitments into government agendas and public policy once in office (Agusmawanda et al., 2025; Klüver & Sagarzazu, 2016). Thereby influencing national policy directions and institutional structures within the government machinery and societies at large.

Across various political spaces, the level of political parties' attention to an issue, including strategies on how to address it, are central element for understanding the development of public policy in relation to that matter (Brás et al., 2024).

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Such strategies on various matters are composed to form political election tools referred to as an election manifesto. Political party manifestos represent a central instrument through which parties communicate their policy intentions, priorities, and measures to be taken to address each facet of the policy campaigned for in a political election to govern a country or part of it (Agusmawanda et al., 2025). In recent decades to date, climate change effects are among several political agendas that continue to shape general election campaigns as well as public policy. The extent to which climate change and related policy instruments are addressed in election manifestos offers important insights into political commitment, agenda-setting, and the institutionalisation of climate action into political discussions (Brás et al., 2024).

However, political parties may opt to adopt strategies of indifference, whereby an issue, for example, climate change, is not explicitly articulated as a policy priority or a point of electoral differentiation in a manifesto (Bernauer, 2013). One consequence of this type of strategy is that when climate policy issues reach the political or legislative agenda, they tend to "crosscut" mainstream political parties or coalitions. Given the lack of a defined party position on the issue, this results in fragmented or inconsistent positions shaped by legislators' and party leaders' interests or views, sectoral interests, stakeholder influence, short-term political considerations, or contextual considerations at a given time (Farstad, 2018). This dynamic has important implications for the coherence, continuity, and effectiveness of national climate responses.

Within the climate change agenda, the provision and utilisation of climate services have emerged as a critical and pro-poor mechanism for building climate resilience, particularly in climate-vulnerable contexts. Climate services involve the generation, translation, and use of climate and weather data, information, and knowledge to support decision-making across sectors and scales in the context of climate variability and change (Hewitt, 2020). Its core function is to translate climate science information into actionable, decision-relevant information that enables governments, communities, and sectors to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to climate risks and variability, taking into consideration end-user context.

When effectively designed and utilised, climate services enhance preparedness, improve planning, and support timely responses to climate risks and variability. For example, a smallholder farmer utilises seasonal rainfall forecasts issued by the Tanzania Meteorological Authority to adjust agricultural practices such as planting dates and seed selection to reduce the risk of crop failure during erratic rainfall seasons. Another recent national example is anticipatory actions in response to cyclones such as Hidaya, demonstrating the potential of climate information and early warning systems to reduce impacts on communities, key sectors, and the national economy. Strengthened climate services therefore contribute not only to improved preparedness, planning, and decision-making for immediate risk reduction and the identification of development opportunities (capitalisation on situation), but also to longer-term sustainable development by reducing vulnerability and enabling informed, climate-responsive decision-making (Leal Filho, 2023).

Research Problem

Despite the critical role climate services play in strengthening climate adaptation, their integration into political and governance processes, particularly electoral policy instruments such as political party manifestos, remains poorly understood. Existing literature has largely focused on technical, institutional, and sectoral dimensions of climate services, especially through the Global Framework for Climate Services. There is limited empirical attention to how political actors frame, prioritise, or overlook these services within electoral platforms. This gap is especially pronounced in Sub-Saharan Africa, where climate vulnerabilities are severe, yet political commitments to climate services are often implicit, inconsistent, or absent. The lack of clear empirical evidence on how political parties

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articulate climate services in their manifestos constitutes the central research problem addressed in this study.

Study Objective

To address this problem, the study pursues the following specific objectives:

- To examine the extent to which political parties in Tanzania articulate and prioritise climate services in their electoral manifestos across three election cycles (2015–2020, 2020–2025, and 2025–2030).
- To analyse how climate services are framed within broader climate governance and development agendas across these manifestos.
- To assess whether political attention to climate services has evolved over time and identify patterns of continuity or change among political parties.
- To explore opportunities for strengthening evidence-based climate advocacy through political engagement.

While the focus is on Tanzania, the findings have broader relevance for other Sub-Saharan African countries such as Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia, which face similar climate vulnerabilities and development constraints driven by reliance on climate-sensitive sectors.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is guided by agenda-setting theory and is enriched by principles from the Global Framework for Climate Services to systematically assess how climate services are positioned in political party manifestos and their implications for climate governance and resilience-building. Political party manifestos are understood as governance instruments that signal policy priorities, institutional commitments, and pathways through which climate action may be operationalised once parties assume political power. Climate governance emphasises the role of political and institutional arrangements in shaping how climate risks and responses are integrated into development planning, policy formulation, and public decision-making processes (Brás et al., 2024).

The formation of these manifestos, which is a key focus of this study, is analysed through agenda-setting theory, which focuses on interpreting how and why climate services emerge, or fail to emerge, as significant political issues within electoral platforms. Political parties prioritise issues in their manifestos based on perceived urgency, electoral incentives, political competition, and external pressures rather than purely technical considerations (Jakobschwörer, 2024; Garcia Hernandez & Bolwig, 2021). This means that the presence, framing, or absence of climate services reflects broader political calculations rather than purely technical considerations. This framework helps explain variations across parties and election cycles in the articulation of the climate service agenda. Building on this theoretical grounding, the study applies four analytical indicators that translate agenda-setting concepts into operational tools for manifesto analysis: (1) The prominence with which climate services are mentioned across manifestos (measured through where and how extensively they appear within manifesto structures, whether as dedicated sections, recurring themes, or brief mentions. Having higher prominence, it indicates having elevated political salience. (2) How climate services are conceptualised/framed and justified, whether as development enablers, technical infrastructure, disaster risk reduction tools, community resilience strategies or sectoral support mechanisms. Based on its conceptualisation and justification reveals the political logic behind their inclusion. (3) The level of detail in climate service commitments ranges from vague statements to concrete implementation strategies. Greater specificity indicates higher internal prioritisation and agenda commitment. (4) Changes in attention to climate services across the 2015-2020, 2020-2025, and 2025-2030 election cycles, indicating shifts in political priority. Together, these indicators grounded in agenda-setting theory illuminate the political dynamics shaping how climate services enter (or fail to enter) electoral agendas.

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To assess the substance (quality) and orientation of climate service commitments, the study further draws on principles of the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS). This framework emphasises scientific credibility, relevance, accessibility, timeliness, sustainability, inclusiveness, and co-production between information providers and users (World Meteorological Organisation, 2014). These principles work towards enhancing the quality and adoption of climate services to support effective, informed decision-making. The GFCS principles are operationalized as 5 analytical categories that are; (1) scientific and institutional credibility towards realizing emphasis on evidence-based systems such as examining references to meteorological institutions, partnerships, and climate service infrastructure; (2) user relevance and sectoral integration, assessing whether manifestos connect climate services to sectoral needs and whether commitments address the realities of key user groups such as smallholder farmers and pastoralists (3) accessibility and communication mechanisms, focusing on proposed channels for timely and targeted dissemination of climate information reaching diverse populations including marginalized groups (iv) sustainability and institutional support, capturing commitments for sustainable climate service delivery through elements such as long-term financing, institutional strengthening, capacity building, and system maintenance (v) inclusiveness and co-production, evaluating participatory approaches that engage communities and vulnerable groups in the design and use of climate services.

Bringing together agenda-setting theory and GFCS principles produces a comprehensive analytical approach that captures both political prioritisation and technical substance. Agenda-setting theory illuminates the political logic and drive behind the presence, placement, and framing of climate services, while the GFCS provides a structured lens to assess the quality, relevance, and user-orientation of commitments, showing what this implies for climate governance and resilience-building in Tanzania.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Area

This study is situated in the United Republic of Tanzania, an East African country characterised by a diverse, predominantly tropical climate, affected by high climate vulnerability, and has a multiparty political system. The United Republic of Tanzania (U.R.T), a sovereign state, is formed through the union of Tanganyika (Tanzania Mainland) and Zanzibar, whereby each conducts independent electoral processes, although environment agenda, inclusive of climate change are classified as a Union matter. The country is increasingly affected by climate variability, which significantly impacts national development and the socio-economic well-being of communities. U.R.T presents a relevant context for examining the integration of climate services into political party manifestos due to its evolving political system, high exposure to climate-related risks, and increasing need for reliance on climate-informed governance for national development planning. Through political changes from the colonial era to date, the country has kept redefining its political identity, and each era has left an imprint of social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Under the multiparty framework, general elections are held every five years, and political parties are required to develop/present election manifestos for each electoral cycle. These manifestos serve as formal policy instruments through which parties articulate their policy priorities, governance commitments, development strategies, and responses to prevailing social, economic, and environmental challenges. As the country faces increasing climate variability that affects climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, water, health, fisheries, and energy, climate change considerations and related policy instruments have gained prominence in national political discussions. This study analyses national political party manifestos for the 2015-2020, 2020-2025, and 2025-2030 electoral cycles, during which Tanzania increased its focus on climate change. Key milestones include the establishment of the

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2012 Tanzania mainland National Climate Change Response Strategy and the 2014 Zanzibar Climate Change Strategy, reflecting growing climate impacts and a commitment to adaptation and resilience.

Sampling Strategy and Sample Size Justification

By 2025, there were 19 registered political parties (Office of the Registrar of Political Parties, 2025), and this analysis focuses on the 3 major political parties that significantly influence national electoral competition and policy discussions in both mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. Together, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), Alliance for Change and Transparency – Wazalendo (ACT-Wazalendo), and Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA) account for over 95% of valid votes cast in presidential elections and over 98% of parliamentary seats across the three election cycles studied, confirming their dominance in Tanzania's political landscape.

These parties include Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), which has governed Tanzania continuously since independence, controlling over 80% of parliamentary seats across the study period (2015-2030) and winning all presidential elections. As the ruling party, CCM's manifesto commitments directly translate into national policy and governance priorities, making its climate service articulation particularly consequential for actual implementation. Alliance for Change and Transparency – Wazalendo (ACT-Wazalendo) and Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA) are the largest and most competitive opposition party securing most parliamentary seats among opposition parties, thus serving as the primary alternative political voice. CHADEMA's manifesto represents the most significant counter-narrative to CCM's policy agenda.

Study Design

The study adopts a qualitative research design to examine the extent to which climate services are articulated, prioritised, or omitted within political party manifestos in Tanzania. A qualitative approach using content analysis is utilized given the study's focus on discourse, framing, agenda setting, and policy signalling within political documents. The analysis combines document-based content analysis with technical stakeholder perspectives to strengthen interpretive depth and contextual understanding. A longitudinal comparison of the two most recent election cycles was conducted to identify changes and trends.

Consistent with qualitative research principles (Patton, 2015; Saunders et al., 2018), the study prioritises analytical depth over numerical breadth. Preliminary review of the three major parties' manifestos across three election cycles yielded nine manifesto documents with sufficient thematic richness and variation to enable. Further expansion of the sample would provide diminishing marginal analytical returns, given the dominance of these parties and the comprehensiveness of their manifestos.

Data Sources

The primary data sources for this study are official political party manifestos issued for the 2015-2020, 2020–2025 and 2025–2030 general election cycles. Manifestos were obtained from official party publications, party websites, and publicly available archives to ensure authenticity and completeness.

To complement the document analysis and capture contemporary perspectives on manifesto formulation and climate policy prioritisation, the study also incorporated expert insights. Its strengthen interpretation of manifesto content, drawing on perspectives from 10 members of political party teams directly involved in drafting the 2025 manifestos and 3 civil society actors engaged in climate governance. These experts participated through semi-structured interviews and focused discussions conducted during the 2025 manifesto development period, offering clarification on the intent behind specific commitments, the political and institutional drivers of prioritisation, and the feasibility of proposed climate service actions. Their inputs were integrated into the qualitative analysis to

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contextualise variations across parties and enhance the explanatory depth of the findings.

Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was used to systematically examine manifesto texts by using ATLAS.ti version 23 (Scientific Software Development GmbH). An initial coding framework was developed deductively, based on concepts related to climate services. This framework included areas such as early warning systems, climate data and information systems, forecasting, decision-support tools, and user-oriented delivery mechanisms. Afterwards, inductive coding was applied to identify emerging themes, implicit references, and contextual nuances related to climate services. The content of the manifestos was analysed across different election cycles to identify patterns of continuity, change, and divergence among political parties. Special attention was given to the explicit use of climate services terminology, as well as indirect references that suggest the use of climate information without formal conceptual framing.

Scope

The scope of the study is limited to national-level political party manifestos, rather than sub-national political agendas or implementation outcomes. The analysis focuses on explicit and implicit references to climate services rather than broader environmental or climate change rhetoric. This delineation allows for a focused assessment of how climate services are framed, prioritised, or omitted within Tanzania's electoral politics, providing insights into the extent to which climate information is mainstreamed into political agenda setting at the national level.

Ethical Considerations

Political party manifestos are publicly available documents intended for wide dissemination and public scrutiny. Their analysis for research purposes does not require consent from parties or authors. However, the study accurately represents manifesto content without distortion or selective misrepresentation. Distinguishes clearly between descriptive reporting (direct quotations) and analytical interpretation. Maintains objectivity by avoiding partisan language or politically biased framing. Acknowledges limitations and presents alternative interpretations where applicable, also uses findings responsibly to inform constructive dialogue rather than partisan critique.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's findings and discussion using the analytical framework developed from agenda-setting theory and the scientific principles of the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS). They are structured according to the framework's indicators, and the discussion interprets these findings in light of relevant literature and broader political and climate governance debates.

As shown in Table 1 below, all selected political parties participated in the 2015 and 2020 general elections and produced official election manifestos. In contrast, during the 2025 election cycle, CHADEMA did not participate in the general election and therefore did not produce a manifesto. This limited longitudinal analysis for CHADEMA in the 2020–2025 period only highlights how political and organisational dynamics can interrupt policy learning and continuity on emerging issues such as climate service.

Table 1: Political Parties Participated in the General Election

Name of Political Party	Participation in the General Election		
	2015	2020	2025
Chama cha Mapinduzi / Revolutionary Party (CCM)	√	√	√
Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA)	√	√	X

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Alliance for Change and Transparency – Wazalendo (ACT Wazalendo)	√	√	√

The tables below present the findings from the analysis of the different party manifestos in the three electoral cycles.

Table 2: CCM Analysis

Electoral cycle	Section of Manifesto	Content of Interest	Focus Region, if mentioned
2015-2020	Section 41	The intent is to continue improving weather and climate services by starting the construction of a national weather forecasting centre, and further enhancing weather and climate services to meet international standards by procuring at least five weather radars.	Both
2020-2025	Sections 58 and 59	The section highlights the focus of strengthening forecasting technology through several key initiatives. These include the procurement of two radars and modern meteorological equipment, such as lightning detection sensors. Additionally, there are plans to construct a national weather forecasting centre and implement a project to upgrade the infrastructure of the National Meteorological Training Institute. These efforts are part of a strategic development plan aimed at enhancing national infrastructure for overall development.	Mainland though effect will be in both
	Section 192. J	Among measures planned to be introduced to build resilience and address environmental concerns is strengthening systems for monitoring and issuing early warnings on climate variability, as well as outbreaks of pests and diseases.	Zanzibar
2025–2030	section 3.1.7.3, part iv	highlights the intention to establish and enhance early warning systems that leverage modern technologies to monitor, forecast, and provide timely information to citizens on potential disasters, thereby reducing their impacts	Both
	section 2.5, part ix	Outlines plan to develop and launch strategic satellites into high orbit for multiple applications, including communications, weather monitoring, and planetary observation	

Table 3: CHADEMA Analysis

Electoral cycle	Section of Manifesto	Content of Interest	Focus Region, if mentioned
2015-2020		No content related to the climate service or climate change	Tanzania Mainland
2020-2025	Section 10.3	Outline the intention for investment in a satellite, which, among its multiple uses, shall be for weather forecasting and ensure the community receives weather information to build climate resilience and disaster management.	Both

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	Section 9.2	Section 9 focuses on Environment, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management, with 9.2 (b) highlighting general intentions of having climate adaptation measures in place.	Both

Table 4: ACT Wazalendo Analysis

Electoral cycle	Section of Manifesto	Content of Interest	Focus Region, if mentioned
2015-2020		No content related to the climate service or climate change	Tanzania Mainland
2020-2025		Has no element of climate services, although it considers climate change	Both
2025-2030	Section 07	Proposes establishing Climate Service Centres at the district level and developing modern systems to provide weather forecasts and early warnings in collaboration with the private sector, enhancing disaster preparedness and resilience	Mainland
	Section 23.2	Highlights the establishment of a Climate Service Unit to provide education and promote effective use of climate services in planning and implementation. It emphasises the use of SMS messaging to ensure that weather and climate information reaches users in real time, regardless of location. The manifesto also proposes the creation of a formal national information system to provide public access to weather forecasts, fire disaster alerts, environmental pollution updates, and emergency contact information, with SMS alerts for timely warnings to relevant users.	Zanzibar
	Section 30.2	Commits to purchasing, installing, and utilising modern meteorological equipment in collaboration with regional and global authorities. It also proposes a user-friendly integrated information system that combines scientific knowledge to enable communities and key sectors, including agriculture, water, transport, and tourism, to develop and implement adaptation measures based on projected weather patterns. These provisions reflect a comprehensive approach to strengthening climate monitoring, early warning, and data-driven decision-making for enhanced resilience and preparedness.	Zanzibar

The findings indicate that all political parties, at a high level, recognise the importance of addressing climate change, as reflected in their manifestos across election cycles. Focusing on climate services, there is observed variation in approaches in how climate services are integrated into their platforms.

Analysis Based on Analytical Indicators

Following the indicators for analytical framework developed from agenda-setting theory and the scientific principles of the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) its observed;

A. Prominence across Manifestos

Across the three electoral cycles (2015–2020, 2020–2025, 2025–2030), the prominence of climate services varies. CCM consistently includes climate-services related content,

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typically embedded within sections on strategic infrastructure with the 2025–2030 cycle, visibility increases as climate services appear in multiple sections referencing early warning systems and satellite programs. Meanwhile, ACT-Wazalendo's visibility sharply increases in 2025, with climate services featured prominently in dedicated sections. In contrast, CHADEMA's visibility remains minimal, with climate services referenced only indirectly in the 2020–2025 manifesto through satellite-based weather forecasting. CHADEMA provided no climate-related content in 2015 and no manifesto in 2025.

B. Conceptualisation/Framing and Justification of Climate Services

CCM across the election cycles has consistently framed climate services as part of national development, modernisation and infrastructure investment. The 2015 and 2020 manifestos describe radars, forecasting centres, and meteorological equipment as strategic assets supporting economic development and disaster preparedness. The 2025 manifesto extends this framing by highlighting advanced technologies, including high-orbit satellites and early warning systems.

ACT-Wazalendo adopts a different framing in the 2025–2030 manifesto, positioning climate services as an enabler of community resilience, socio-economic empowerment, and improved decision-making across sectors such as agriculture, water, transport, and tourism. This reflects a user-centred governance orientation.

CHADEMA offers a more limited framing, referencing weather-related satellite services only as a tool for disaster preparedness rather than as part of broader climate governance or development objectives.

C. Specificity and Depth of Commitments

CCM's commitments are detailed in terms of technological and infrastructural investments and institutional strengthening. institutions (Tanzania Meteorological Authority), and infrastructure projects (training institutes, forecasting centres). However, specificity regarding user engagement or application of climate information remains limited. ACT-Wazalendo provides the most comprehensive and specific commitments, including district climate service centres, integrated information systems, SMS-based alerts, community education, and dissemination plans. Clear institutional responsibilities are outlined in several sections, particularly within the Zanzibar commitments. CHADEMA presents vague commitments, lacking detail on institutional mechanisms or implementation strategies.

D. Temporal Evolution Across Election Cycles

For the temporal evolution of climate service attention, climate services emerged gradually across manifestos cycles between 2015 and 2025, with notable acceleration in the most recent cycle. The 2015-2020 cycle showed minimal attention, whereby only CCM included substantive content with CHADEMA and ACT-Wazalendo on mentioning on climate change. Whereas by 2025-2030, both CCM and ACT Wazalendo featured detailed climate service commitments. This temporal pattern aligns with Carter's (2013) observation that environmental issues follow "issue attention cycles" in electoral politics, wherein salience increases following visible climate impacts or international climate negotiations. ACT Wazalendo's 2025 manifesto demonstrates the highest policy specificity, while earlier manifestos across parties remained relatively general.

Focusing on the alignment with GFCS Scientific principles, the following was observed;

E. Scientific Credibility

CCM strongly aligns with scientific credibility, emphasising improved forecasting technologies, radars, satellites, and modern meteorological equipment. ACT-Wazalendo's commitments also align well through references to integrated information systems and data-driven decision-making, while CHADEMA is moderately involved in the 2015-2020 election cycle.

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F. User Relevance

CCM shows moderate alignment, focusing more on national-level systems for the generation of weather information without specifying its relevance. On the other hand, ACT-Wazalendo demonstrates the highest user relevance, focusing on tailoring and meeting community and sectoral needs for higher adoption, coupled with evidence-based policymaking. CHADEMA has no mention of the above in all its election cycles.

G. Accessibility

CCM, though consider generation and adoption of early warning systems with less detail on dissemination channels. ACT-Wazalendo has placed more emphasis on accessibility, proposing district climate centres and SMS alert systems, which align strongly with GFCS accessibility principles. CHADEMA has no mention of the above in all its election cycles.

H. Sustainability

CCM addresses sustainability through long-term infrastructure and institutional investments. ACT-Wazalendo proposes decentralised systems and strengthening of infrastructures that could enhance long-term adoption.

I. Inclusiveness and Co-Production

CCM and CHADEMA show limited attention to co-production or participatory processes, while ACT-Wazalendo emphasises community education and inclusive dissemination.

Political Prioritisation and Agenda-Setting Dynamics

The observed variation among parties aligns with agenda-setting theory, which posits that political actors prioritise issues based on perceived electoral relevance, strategic differentiation, and institutional capacity. CCM's consistent prioritisation of development, modernisation, and disaster response agenda reflects its governance mandate and need to demonstrate continuity in national development planning. ACT-Wazalendo's shift toward detailed climate service content indicates strategic positioning as a policy innovator to gain electoral advantage and resonate with constituencies concerned about climate vulnerability. This is evident in the tone of voice and its other chapter presentation, its showcase it drives in addressing community issues. CHADEMA's limited engagement is consistent with global findings that climate issues are often low-salience topics in electoral competition unless linked to immediate voter concerns.

These patterns mirror international studies showing that incumbent parties emphasise infrastructure and state-centred solutions, while opposition parties seek to differentiate themselves through socially oriented or participatory policy innovations (Schulze, 2021; Basseches et al., 2022).

Interpretation Through GFCS Principles

Comparing results against GFCS principles reveals a clear differentiation between parties. CCM aligns strongly with scientific and technological aspects but lacks user-centred and inclusive approaches, which may limit practical uptake. ACT-Wazalendo's commitments demonstrate a more holistic alignment with GFCS, suggesting a deeper understanding of climate services as tools for socio-economic transformation. CHADEMA's minimal integration indicates limited institutional traction or prioritisation.

These variations underscore the importance of bridging the gap between scientific production of climate information and its social application, an issue widely documented in climate services literature.

Observed differences in party positions are influenced by several structural and contextual drivers.

- Institutional capacity and legacy play a significant role. As the ruling party, CCM's attention to climate services is marked by continuity and institutional path dependency, consistent with its longstanding governance role in technological infrastructure, aligning with a state-led development model

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showcased in the national vision. In contrast, opposition parties operate with fewer technical resources but maintain a strong legacy and strategic position of community engagement and representation of vulnerable groups.

- Growing climate impacts have increased the electoral relevance of climate services, shifting them from previously low-salience, non–vote–winning issues toward emerging areas of political attention.
- External support and increased knowledge on climate services gained through engagement with external stakeholders and sectoral experts during manifesto development. This is reflected in ACT-Wazalendo's shift toward evidence-based, user-oriented climate governance proposals aimed at voter appeal, contrasting with CCM's emphasis on national infrastructure development following the national vision.
- Manifesto development often occurs outside major climate crises, reducing political urgency and influencing the depth of commitments.

Together, these factors demonstrate that variations in climate service commitments are not solely ideological but shaped by differing capacities, incentives, and timing conditions.

The study contributes to broader climate governance scholarship by demonstrating that climate services remain only partially integrated into electoral platforms in Tanzania, despite their growing importance for national resilience. The findings align with regional patterns in Sub-Saharan Africa, where climate services increasingly appear in national policy documents but remain inconsistently reflected in political and institutional structures. Similar dynamics have been observed in other countries where ruling parties emphasise technology and infrastructure, while reform-oriented parties emphasise more user-centred/community approaches. (Harvey et al., 2019).

Overall, the findings indicate that climate service mainstreaming within Tanzanian political manifestos is emerging but uneven. CCM's emphasis on technological advancement contrasts with ACT Wazalendo's comprehensive, user-driven model, while CHADEMA remains marginal in its engagement. These distinctions reflect differing political strategies, institutional capacities, and orientations toward climate governance. Following the October 2025 election, where CCM won presidential and significant parliamentary seats, suggests that enhanced collaboration between political actors, TMA and other stakeholders is needed to steer a holistic approach in climate services following GCA principles.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the intersection of politics and climate change, focusing on the integration of climate services into general election political parties' manifestos in Tanzania. The findings reveal gradual but uneven progress in climate service mainstreaming, with significant variations in framing, policy specificity, strategic orientation and quality across parties and over time.

The assessment demonstrates notable advancement in climate service articulation, particularly in the 2025-2030 cycle. CCM's manifesto approach has consistently focused on technocratic and supply-driven approaches, emphasising meteorological infrastructure and national forecasting systems. ACT-Wazalendo shows a distinctive and transformative shift, presenting the most comprehensive, user-centred, and multi-sectoral integration of climate services in the 2025–2030 cycle in alignment with Global Framework for Climate Services principles. CHADEMA demonstrates limited and inconsistent engagement, reflecting a lag in climate service institutionalisation within its electoral agenda. Additionally, the findings reveal theoretical and governance contradictions: despite escalating climate impacts in Tanzania, climate services do not gain proportional electoral salience, illustrating an agenda-setting paradox in which high public risk does not translate into

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political prioritisation. The analysis also shows a disconnect between advances in climate science and institutions and their reflection in electoral commitments, echoing global debates on gaps between climate governance frameworks and democratic accountability. Variations across parties further demonstrate that commitments are shaped as much by institutional capacity, political incentives, and timing as by ideology.

Unresolved Contradictions and Research Gaps

Despite Tanzania experiencing repeated climate shocks, political attention to climate services does not rise consistently across election cycles. This weak relationship highlights a key paradox: severe climate impacts do not automatically translate into sustained political prioritisation of climate information systems. A second contradiction emerges between alignment of Tanzania's strong international and national commitments, such as the National Climate Change Response Strategy and National Climate Service Framework, and its reflection in the electoral manifesto, which is currently limited. This suggests incomplete vertical policy diffusion (international → national → electoral platforms) where climate services are embedded within technical agencies but not fully integrated into electoral platforms, creating a democratic accountability gap.

Scholarly Contributions and Limitations

This study makes three primary theoretical contributions: (1) extends agenda-setting theory to climate services, demonstrating "low-salience" characteristics in electoral politics; (2) identifies supply-demand political economy, showing how political incentive structures bias climate governance; (3) documents opposition party policy innovation potential while questioning its sustainability.

However, these contributions come with important caveats. The study is context-specific (Tanzania, 2015-2030), focuses on a single policy domain (climate services), and examines only one dimension of political behaviour (manifestos). Generalizability to other countries, climate policies, or political processes requires cautious extrapolation. Moreover, the qualitative interpretive methodology, while appropriate for exploratory research, limits causal inference.

Moving Forward: From Analysis to Action

The findings underscore the critical role of continued evidence-based advocacy to ensure climate services are fully embedded in political platforms. However, moving from analysis to impact requires addressing the unresolved gaps identified above through implementation tracking, user perspective integration, comparative analysis, causal investigation, and longitudinal monitoring.

Ultimately, climate services will achieve sustained political prioritisation not through advocacy alone, but through demonstrated value—tangible evidence that climate information improves agricultural yields, reduces disaster losses, enhances water security, and supports economic development. Building and communicating this evidence base represents the next critical frontier in climate service governance.

Recommendation

- Climate services should be framed as contributors to productivity, risk reduction, and food and water security, rather than as purely technical tools. This shift will make climate services more politically salient by linking them directly to voter priorities and livelihood benefits. Such reframing strengthens parties' incentives to prioritise climate information in their manifestos.
- Political parties should form small advisory teams of climate and sector experts to strengthen the technical quality of their manifestos and generate toolkits to support their implementation. This approach enhances policy specificity and reduces reliance on generalist advisors.
- Enhancing tracking, accountability and transparency in monitoring implementation of climate service commitments. Publicly highlighting gaps and progress raises political

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cost for non-performance, enhances democratic accountability and encourages consistent delivery.

- The government should decentralise climate services by creating district-level access points that provide localised forecasts, training, and user support. These centres would close accessibility gaps faced by rural communities under centralised systems. This approach enhances climate service uptake and enables context-specific decision-making.

The study has demonstrated that comprehensive climate service mainstreaming is possible, as evidenced by ACT Wazalendo's 2025 manifesto, but not automatic. It requires deliberate strategy, technical expertise, civil society engagement, and political competition that rewards evidence-based policymaking. Building these conditions, while addressing the unresolved contradictions and research gaps identified in this study, represents the frontier challenge for climate governance in Tanzania and comparable contexts across Sub-Saharan Africa.

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