

Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation into the Local Development Planning Process in Nepal



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Photo: Left: Kamal Hari Bhandari/LI-BIRD, Right: LI-BIRD Photo Bank

Background

Climate change is widely recognized as a global phenomenon, however its impacts are felt locally. The impact of climate change cannot be neglected as its effects hinder the achievement of development goals around the world. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2012, climate change, and its associated climate extremes and disasters, have increased uncertainty in the livelihoods of people in the least developed countries. Therefore, the urgency of mainstreaming climate change adaptation activities to local development plans and policies is increasingly important.

Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation

To mainstream climate change adaptation into local development programmes, one needs to understand its importance firstly and then secondly understand exactly how it can be incorporated into local development plans (UNDP-UNEP, 2011). This can be done through integrating climate change adaptation actions/plans/strategy into policy-making, budgeting, implementation and monitoring processes at national and sub national levels.

Increasingly, it has been realized that climate change adaptation needs to be supported by an integrated, cross-cutting policy approach. Mainstreaming has been seen as a more sustainable, effective and efficient use of resources than designing and managing climate policies separately from ongoing

development activities. Mainstreaming climate change responses in different level of planning should be prioritised among key stakeholders and should entail working with a range of both governmental and non-governmental actors.

National Initiatives for Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation

Nepal, a highly vulnerable country to climate change, has taken several initiatives at national and sub national levels with participation of various stakeholders in order to build resilience of communities and institutions to climate change. The Government of Nepal has prepared key national documents that include: National Adaptation Programme of Action-NAPA (2010), National Climate Change Policy (2011) and National Framework of Local Adaptation Plans for Action - LAPA (2011).

Greater and more sustainable development for all is the key outcome of mainstreaming climate change adaptation as mentioned in the climate change policy 2011 of Nepal. The LAPA national framework envisages a pivotal role for local governments in the planning and implementation of climate change adaptation activities. It also helps to provide adaptation services adhering to NAPA priorities.

The LAPA framework provides guidance on the preparation and implementation of the LAPA plans and its mainstreaming into sectoral and development plans at different levels (Figure 1). The key programme for mainstreaming climate change adaptation into local level development

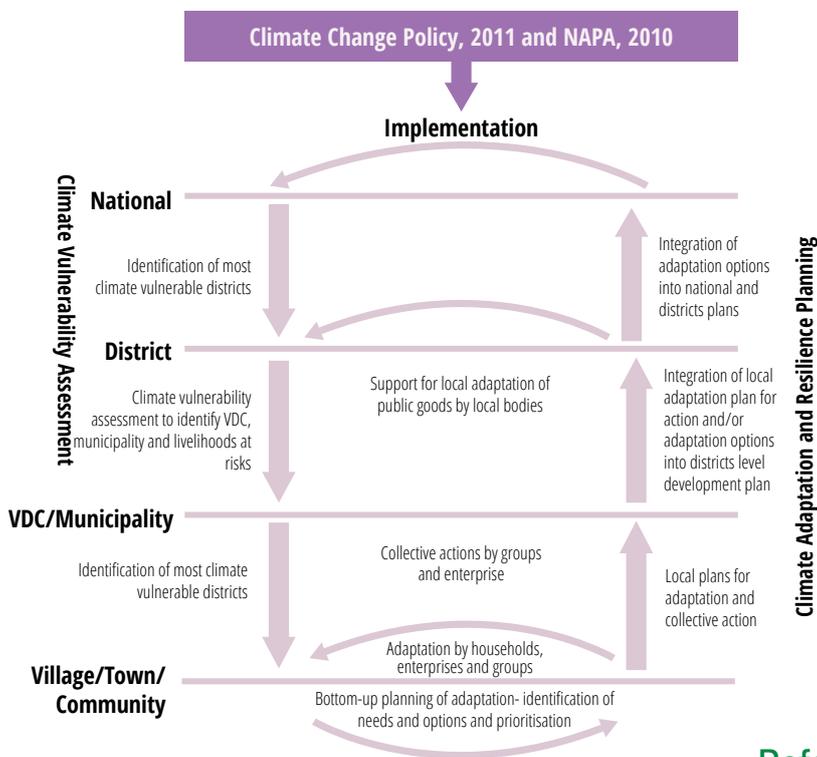


Figure 1: National Framework for Integrating Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience

planning, is the implementation of 70 LAPAs in the 14 districts of mid-western and far-western development regions of Nepal under Nepal Climate Change Support Programme (NCCSP). To date, an additional 30 LAPAs have been prepared in 10 out of the 14 districts.

The government of Nepal has also been launching other projects and programmes in compliance with NAPA priorities. Different line ministries and departments representing thematic sectors have already started mainstreaming climate change issues in their relevant policies and programmes. Furthermore, the current Three Years Plan (070/071-072/073) of the government of Nepal explicitly mentions that climate change adaptation is one of the key strategies for development interventions. There are other efforts from non-state actors such as Multi Stakeholder Forestry Programme (MSFP), Hariyo Ban Programme and Ecosystem Based Adaptation (EBA) programme to prepare local adaptation plans in the form of Community Adaptation Plan of Action (CAPA).

Despite all these initiatives, an insufficient climate database, poor understanding of climate change, its impacts and linkage with development, poor coordination mechanisms among related stakeholders, capacity gaps, absence of decentralized executive units and unclear roles, responsibilities and right of partner of development are some of the barriers for mainstreaming climate change adaptation plans into local level development planning process.

Conclusion and Ways Forward

Though inspiring, mainstreaming climate change into local development plans has a long way to go due to the limited knowledge of stakeholders on climate change and development at local level. It is crucial to mainstream the local adaptation plans into local development plans through identified operational structures of LAPA i.e. VDCs and DDCs. It is also important to develop further clarity on their implementation role in line with climate change policy.

As LAPAs are in their early stages of implementation, it is too early to analyse their true impact. However, from the present understanding, one can state that the best ways for effective and efficient mainstreaming of climate change adaptation into local level development planning are: generating climate change database, creating appropriate institutional mechanism, developing enabling policy environment, enhance coordination mechanisms, engaging stakeholders at all levels of project cycle and increasing willingness of policy makers and donors to provide necessary support.

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Supported by:



Citation:

Sharma, G.B. and K. Lamsal. 2014. Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation into the Local Development Planning Process in Nepal. LI-BIRD, Pokhara, Nepal.

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