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Mainstreaming climate change adaptation: dimensions, approaches, paradoxes

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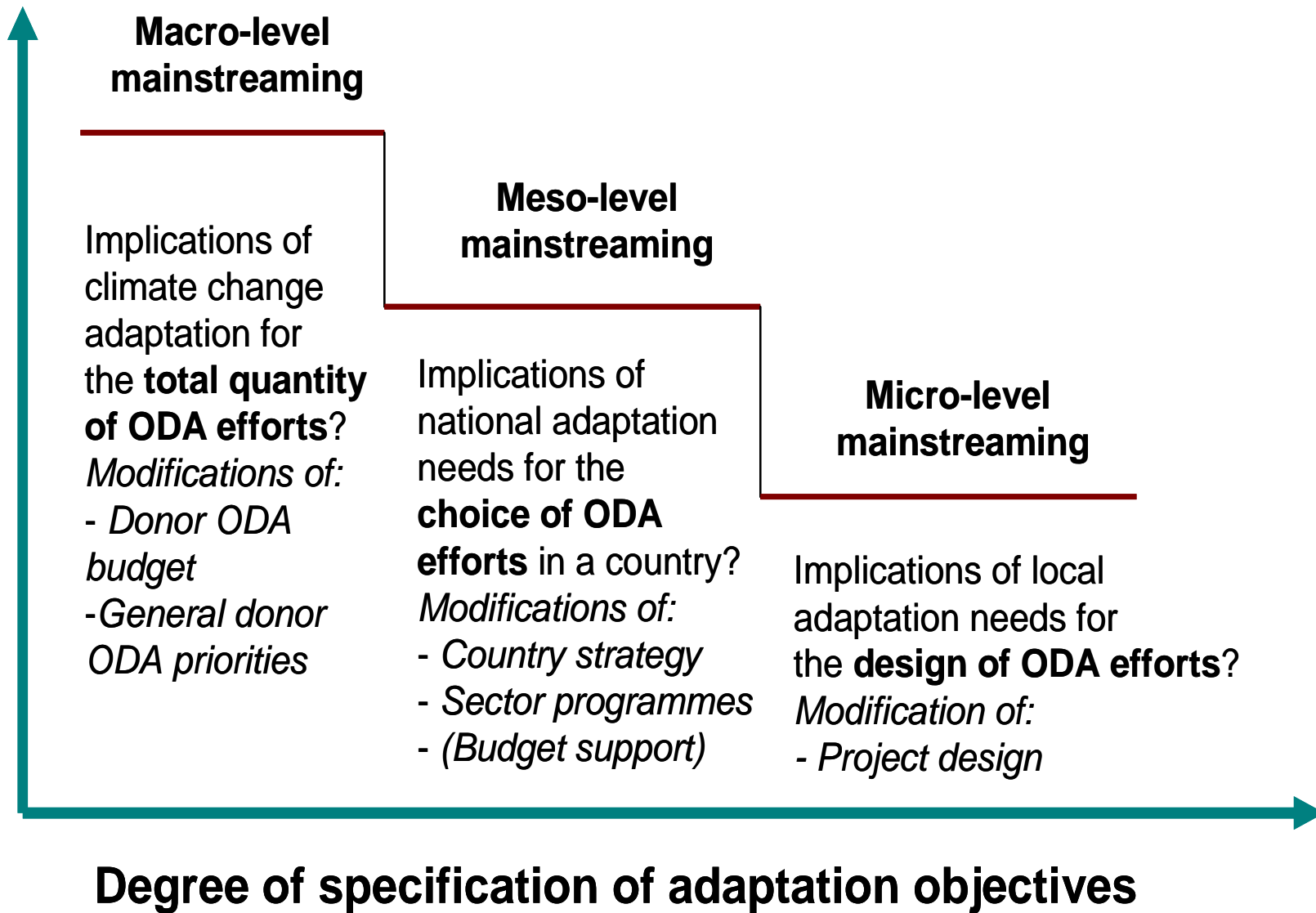
Mainstreaming

- Mainstreaming is the integration of policies and measures that address climate change into development planning and sectoral decision-making.
- The benefit of mainstreaming would be to ensure the long-term sustainability of investments as well as to reduce the sensitivity of development outcomes to both today's and tomorrow's climate.
- The question is no longer 'why', but 'how'!

Dimensions of mainstreaming

- **Horizontal dimension:** common to all kinds of policy integration involving issues currently placed within different policy sectors or departments.
- **Vertical dimension:** involves hierarchical administrative levels corresponding to the stages of policymaking – formulation of objectives and strategies, design of instruments, implementation and enforcement.

ODA policy implementation levels



Dimensions of mainstreaming

- **International dimension:** the relationship between the donor country and the partner country, requiring agreement between organisations and jurisdictions on responsibilities and outcomes.

Approaches to mainstreaming

- **Procedural approach:** introduce new or modify existing procedures (especially concerning the use of relevant information). Procedural tools include SEA, EIA, green budgeting, reporting systems, and stakeholder consultation.
- Procedures offer opportunities for mainstreaming, but there is no guarantee that substance will follow from procedure.

Approaches to mainstreaming

- **Organisational approach:** changes to organisational structure and context from the level of the individual to the organisation at large. These include staff training, amendment of responsibilities and mandates, and staff secondment, rotation and networking.
- The purpose is not only to ensure that the right expertise and competence is in the right place, but also to induce ownership and internalisation of the issues at hand.

Approaches to mainstreaming

- **Normative approach:** high-level commitment to the issue to be integrated. May be formalised and elaborated in strategies and policy frameworks, and the provision of additional resources.
- High-level policy frameworks rarely give clear guidance for concrete trade-offs and prioritisations that need to be made at the project design and implementation level.

Approaches to mainstreaming

- **Reframing approach:** helps to improve the understanding of the long-term outcome of and conditions for successful mainstreaming. A framing is not a top-down output of politicians (i.e., a high-level normative commitment) but a collectively developed mutual perception of the function and objectives of a sector within a community of stakeholders.
- Finding the “right” frame is a matter of conceptual and ideological debate, and several framings can co-exist and conflict.

Mainstreaming paradoxes

- **Paradox of visibility and ownership:** adaptation should become generalised and internalised across sector departments and decentralised in terms of ownership. This can lead to decreasing visibility, as targets and measures taken may not necessarily be labelled as adaptation.
- However, the original rationale for introducing mainstreaming requirements is that its significance and visibility need to be raised and that it deserves specific attention, high priority and specialised knowledge.

Mainstreaming paradoxes

- **Paradox of shifting priorities:** sectoral priorities may shift towards the issue that is subject to mainstreaming. This results in seeing mainstreaming primarily as a funding and budgeting choice, and less as a planning and project-design choice.
- There is a need to distinguish between ‘high-politics’ funding issues and more ‘low-politics’ administrative processes, as well as between various levels or stages of the planning process.

Conclusions

- It is important is to understand the context into which adaptation is mainstreamed: the organisational structure, incentive structure, knowledge support and political priorities.
- Existing guidance on mainstreaming identifies entry points for mainstreaming and the application of tools. By emphasising the formal structure and hierarchy of development plans, programmes and projects, it assumes that mainstreaming introduced as a top-down process will have effects at lower levels.

Conclusions

- Adaptation remains a relatively abstract concept, so it seems fruitful to focus on sector-specific mainstreaming efforts and requirements, rather than on initiatives applying across the board.
- It appears that most mainstreaming guidance and tools have focused on the project level. There is a need to understand better how mainstreaming can be achieved for budget support and sector programmes.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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