

INSTITUTIONS FOR ADAPTATION

TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE MULTI-LEVEL INTERPLAY



Brief Summary

Different institutions play a crucial role in order to promote adaptation to climate change in developing countries. The Cancún Adaptation Framework includes provisions on institutions on the global, regional and national level, with the Adaptation Committee first to operationalize. In order to promote adaptation effectively, the interplay of the institutions on the global, regional and national level is pivotal.

As a contribution to the current political debate, in particular in the UNFCCC negotiations, this paper analyses key institutional approaches on the different levels and makes a number of concrete suggestions with a view to optimising the interplay between institutions on the different level.

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Executive Summary

The current level of low ambition in mitigating climate change requires the world, in particular vulnerable developing countries, to adapt to a more severe level of negative impacts from global warming than what has been politically promised. Science reveals that global warming trends and their proxies are happening faster than expected. Adaptation is increasingly becoming a compulsion for people and ecosystems, governments and communities, public and private sector stakeholders around the world.

With the adoption of the Cancún Adaptation Framework, for the first time, almost all governments of the world have agreed to a joint set of principles and actions to be pursued in the coming years. Institutions play a crucial role in governing actions as well as sharing experience and lessons learnt for an uncertain, decade-long journey. For this reason, it is not surprising that institutional issues play an important role in the Cancún decisions, reflecting year-long negotiations with inputs from many observers. One of the key tasks is to improve the coherence and increase the effectiveness of the global response to adaptation. This undoubtedly requires building up and advancing a thorough interplay of the various existing as well as new institutions on different levels – from global (under the UNFCCC and outside), regional to the national level.

This paper is meant to be a contribution to the ongoing negotiation process on adaptation under the UNFCCC, which in 2011 has on its agenda to work out and operationalize the Adaptation Committee. When addressing this task, negotiators and all who engaged in this process will have to take into account the role, strengths and weaknesses of institutions at the regional and last but not least in a country-driven manner, the national level. On all these levels there are different types of institutions that need to be considered, and that are needed to effectively respond to climate change:

- on the global level:
 - under the UNFCCC: the Adaptation Committee, relevant existing expert groups dealing with adaptation aspects, funds (such as the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Green Climate Fund);
 - outside the UNFCCC: the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, other UN agreements and agencies, the World Bank etc.
- on the regional level: intergovernmental regional organisations, UN regional commissions, regional science centres etc.;
- on the national level: intra-governmental coordinating bodies, country-level multi-stakeholder partnerships, national funding entities, national implementing entities, national centres, civil society networks and a broad range of organisations with adaptation expertise.

In the UNFCCC process, the focus in 2011 will lie on the elaboration of the Adaptation Committee. But the role of regional centres as well as national-level arrangements, which the authors regard as crucial, is not explicitly on the agenda and yet lacks attention.

Based on the analyses made in this paper, the following specific key recommendations are drawn. The objective is to advance the interplay between the institutions on different levels, building on the functions and responsibilities already performed by existing institutions, rather than proposing a streamlined architecture with top-down hierarchies:

On the Adaptation Committee:

1. Set-up a strong Adaptation Committee as the adaptation node under the UNFCCC, which can become the driver for a more coherent, effective and ambitious approach to adaptation under the UNFCCC and oversee the implementation of the Cancún Adaptation Framework. Key functions would be to ensure an effective management of information provided by other bodies under the UNFCCC, including funds, preparation of recommendations to the COP and other bodies under the UNFCCC, and the preparation of international overviews and synthesis. It should also be the key institution to point to gaps identified in adaptation finance (in coordination with the Standing Committee on Finance), such as inconsistencies between different adaptation funding mechanisms, while a direct involvement in the activities of the Green Climate Fund (e.g. as reviewer of funding proposals) for instance, seems less advisable. Building up a strong Adaptation Committee will also require developing a high-quality profile, be open to a wide range of inputs and work in a transparent and open manner. The Adaptation Committee could regularly convene an **international conference** (for example every two years) to gather and reach out to experts from other IGOs, NGOs or the private sector.

2. Shape the Adaptation Committee in a complementary manner: In order to build up an effective division of labour, when designing the Adaptation Committee the particular strengths of the national and regional level need to be taken into account. Fleshing out which functions can be carried out best where could also help to straighten the negotiating agenda and thereby facilitate that an agreement on the operationalization of the Adaptation Committee can be reached at COP17 in Durban. As part of the *vertical* complementarity, the Adaptation Committee could contribute to advancing the overall interplay through

- assessing what kind of assistance Parties would need in order to establish national-level arrangements, regional centres and networks;
- developing a work programme to facilitate institutional capacity-building at various levels, including proposals for the most effective ways for its execution through different stakeholders such as regional centres and networks;
- Preparing recommendations to the COP on how to advance the role of regional centres and networks, and the overall interplay with the national level arrangements; potentially building on new submissions by Parties.

Of course, all this has to happen on the basis of views expressed and information provided by the key beneficiaries – the Parties.

On the *horizontal level*, the Adaptation Committee should seek to build its work on the adaptation relevant information provided by other bodies, including funding institutions.

Overall it should provide to the COP recommendations on how to improve the coherence on adaptation under the UNFCCC.

3. Reflect lessons from shaping the Technology mechanism: Setting up the Technology Mechanism under the UNFCCC bears similar challenges to the Adaptation Institution. Developing the Adaptation Committee should take into account the (early) lessons from shaping the Technology Mechanism and consider implications for the institutional set-up in adaptation. This could include holding a workshop¹ focused on regional centres and networks and the interplay with national-level arrangements and the UNFCCC level.²

On regional cooperation and climate change adaptation:

4. Strengthen and support regional cooperation: Particular roles and responsibilities for regional level institutions are, a) responding to stakeholders within the region, particularly to national institutional arrangements and their organisations on their adaptation needs, rather than the Adaptation Committee providing such direct advice; b) coordinating exchange of lessons learnt in the region; c) promoting transboundary adaptation approaches and required assistance; d) collect national experiences to feed to the international level. While an increase in the support for regional cooperation activities is generally required, currently multilateral adaptation funds set little incentives for e.g. transboundary cooperation projects.

5. Consolidate and enhance the views on, and the role of regional centres and networks: In order to sketch out the role of regional institutions in the UNFCCC context, the following activities should be pursued in the short-term:

Mapping regional centres³: prepare an overview (as a report and/or a database) of regional centres that work on aspects related to adaptation.⁴ Such a database could for example be developed by the UNFCCC Secretariat and would facilitate the effective use and improvement of linkages between the centres.⁵

Advance the basis for negotiations through a call for submissions on the specific roles, expectations and modalities of regional centres. This would also require governments to advance their thinking and specify their expectations towards regional centres. The call could also include the request to identify regional institutions with a mandate relevant for the adaptation agenda. Parties are advised to take into account the extensive work that has happened on regional coordination in the UNCCD process and the lessons learnt therein.⁶

¹ Content and format could be similar to the technology-workshop prior the 14th LCA session in Bangkok.

² This workshop could build on the workshop held under the Nairobi Work Programme in 2010, compare FCCC/SBSTA/2010/8.

³ Regional in this context means comprising several countries (not regional within a country).

⁴ This proposal was already made during the 2010 NWP workshop on regional centres, see FCCC/SBSTA/2010/8.

⁵ See <http://maindb.unfccc.int/public/adaptation/>.

⁶ See e.g. UNCCD 2009a, 2009b and 2009c

6. Promote regional transboundary adaptation cooperation: The need for regional cooperation is particularly obvious where transboundary resources are impacted through climate change, such as in the case of water. Regional institutional approaches, including in the context of high-level political cooperation such as regional economic cooperation, should support

- coordinated actions among countries sharing lakes and river basins;
- awareness raising among stakeholders at various levels within a river basin;
- capacity building and research programmes to build up the workforce that is qualified to understand and manage the complexities of transboundary systems and the impacts of climate change;
- development of comprehensive multi-country action plans;
- specific adaptive and infrastructure interventions.

On national-level arrangements:

7. Support and enhance country-level multi-stakeholder partnerships for national coordination: The establishment and strengthening of country-level multi-stakeholder partnerships for coordinating national action on adaptation or climate change in general should be supported. While there should be no prescription on how these arrangements should look like in detail, they should follow general principles, such as full participation of relevant stakeholders in national adaptation strategies, planning and implementation processes. The important role of these mechanisms should also be taken into account in the design of the new Green Climate Fund. Furthermore, they are key to gather and identify sub-national adaptation needs.

8. Strengthen national and sub-national civil society networks: National and sub-national civil society networks play a very important role in gathering and dispersing information on adaptation practices as well as funding channels both downstream, from the global and national level to the local level, as well as upstream, from the local level to the national and global level. Strengthening these networks is important in order to allow them playing this role in an independent manner.

9. Increase capacity building through concrete adaptation projects funded internationally: Concrete adaptation projects and programmes should, where appropriate, also be linked to institutional capacity building. In this sense building institutional capacity is also learning-by-doing.

10. Improving and rationalising the financial mechanism under the Convention: The interplay of the different institutional levels can be a crucial source of knowledge on how best to increase the effectiveness of the financial mechanism under the Convention with regard to adaptation. Feeding back experience from the national level e.g. on how to develop coordinated responses to the different adaptation funds, and suggestions how to streamline the financial mechanism would be important to simplify access for developing countries.

1 The adaptation challenge: Adapting to a 4°C world?

In the wake of reported mitigation actions by developed and developing countries that feature a significant gap in emission reduction to be consistent with a 2°C let alone 1.5°C pathway and that commit humanity to a world of 2.5 to 5°C temperature above pre-industrial levels⁷ it is high time for Parties to consider the implications of this policy failure to prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference. There are a range of potential thresholds in the climate and ecosystem that might tip over as the climate warms to 4° degrees and beyond. This impacts the foundations of many poor communities, ecosystems and people worldwide.

Risks of negative transitions such as the loss of large proportion of coral reefs and the service it provides, large scale transformation and deterioration of ecosystems such as a potential dieback of parts of the Amazon rainforest, inundation and salinization of coastal areas, and abnormal weather phenomena, will strain the livelihoods of billion of people and result in loss of life and property.⁸ Small-scale agriculture is the backbone of rural livelihoods and indeed many developing countries' economies. Small-scale agriculture is said to be particularly affected, for example by widespread rain-fed crop failures. This in conjunction of ever increasing population world-wide, draws a bleak picture regarding future food securities. Altogether, it is likely that changes towards 4°C may start to shift from incremental to large-scale and transformative.

Transformative changes in the climate and earth system, and its subsequent impacts on human lives and livelihoods, call for an equally transformative response by the international community, by developed and developing country governments and in fact by all stakeholders of the society down to the individual level. Limiting climate change to 2°C will likely bring profound impacts and challenges worldwide, nonetheless these might be within institutional and societal memory and existing organizational capacities at least in the more developed world. To enter a 4°C world and to respond adequately is entirely unknown territory for humanity. This underscores the need to do our utmost for avoiding such dangerous climate change, while at the same time preparing for what seems more likely to come as a matter of precaution.

With emission reduction commitments way below those necessary to limit us to 2°C average warming, and with significant adaptation needs and challenges already recognised in many parts of the world, there is an urgent need to address this challenge particularly through an effective multi-level institutional response to adaptation. Unfortunately, the institutional response related to adaptation in the UNFCCC process as well as outside so far has been largely insufficient and fragmented. This fragmentation can be assessed in different regards:

⁷ UNEP, 2010

⁸ Compare the special edition "Four degrees and beyond: the potential for a global temperature increase of four degrees and its implications" by News. et al., 2011 published in the *Philosophical Transaction of the Royal Society*, London.

- **Funding:** there is a fragmented funding architecture, with a number of funds supporting adaptation under the Convention (Adaptation Fund, Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund), and outside of the Convention (like bilateral initiatives or the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience), and financial means provided that lag far behind the expected needs;
- **Institutions:** under the Convention, different expert groups exist which have to deal with adaptation-related issues, in particular the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), but also the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT, dissolved in Cancún and substituted by the Technology Executive Committee) and the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE);
- **Agenda:** adaptation-related issues are scattered across SBI and SBSTA as agenda items, which have mostly emerged from programmes decided on at specific COPs with a limited scope, such as the “Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability (NWP)” or the “Buenos Aires programme of work on adaptation and response measures” (usually referred to as 1/CP.10);
- **Legal:** adaptation has gained much more significance today (largely because of the failure to deliver meaningful mitigation) than compared to the state of the debate when the most significant legal agreements were established (such as the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol). As a result, the nature and urgency of adaptation is not adequately reflected in these agreements.

Furthermore, there exist multiple initiatives outside the Convention. While of course there have been attempts to increase coherence – e.g. through the “action pledges” that multiple types of organisations can feed into the NWP - there is no doubt that adaptation still suffers from fragmentation.

This paper seeks to advance the understanding of the interplay of relevant institutions on the different levels – global, regional, national – and to provide recommendations in particular for the UNFCCC process. It thereby also builds on the experience that Germanwatch and WWF International have gained in this process illustrated through previous publications.⁹ While it does not provide a comprehensive mapping of all the existing institutions, it uses case examples to highlight certain aspects that need to be considered in the institutional interplay, as well as building on governments’ views and preferences as expressed in submissions to the UNFCCC.

Chapter 2 summarises key principles for the work and role of institutions on different levels, putting emphasis on a “form follows function” approach as well as the need to design a flexible approach given the fact that a) adaptation will continue to be a learning experience for everybody, that has to build on national and sub-national level experience in particular, and b) that managing climate risks will always have to face the inherent uncertainties, including that a potential increase of 4°C will mean unknown territory for humankind.

Chapter 3 summarises the institutional implications of the Cancún Adaptation Framework which should be seen as a milestone in the international approach to adaptation. While a

⁹ Harmeling et al. 2010, Harmeling and Vaughan, 2008

concrete mandate has been given to advance the institutional set-up on the international level through the establishment of the Adaptation Committee, the equally important regional and national-level arrangements lack a concrete way forward in the negotiations.

Chapter 4 provides in-depth consideration of the key roles and responsibilities of the international, the regional and the national levels. These roles build on existing experience and examples also from non-climate policy processes. What also becomes clear is the important role of the regional level to assist countries in their approach to adaptation, as well as the varying tasks and options that national-level arrangements need to fulfil.

Chapter 5 then concludes the paper with a list of recommendations on the different levels.

2 Principles for institutional arrangements: Between top-down and bottom-up

In assessing the institutional interplay in adaptation, the key purpose of this paper, it is generally useful to look at the needs and associated functions from different perspectives, from top-down as well as from bottom-up. A top-down perspective assumes that blueprints for action are developed and then translated into action on the ground, which is often the approach by policymakers. In many developing countries, such an approach can yield first actions on the ground, when the level of awareness within the country is not very high. By contrast the bottom-up perspective recognizes the importance of additional actors other than policymakers at the top of the decision-chain in shaping action on the ground¹⁰.

Furthermore, the interplay should aim to provide coherence on a horizontal and vertical scale. The horizontal interplay already entails different existing institutions on the international level. Within the UNFCCC, following the Cancún Agreement, it includes existing institutions and programmes (e.g. the Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, the Least Developed Countries Expert Group or the Consultative Group of Experts) as well as new bodies established in other building blocks (e.g. the Technology Mechanism with the Technology Executive Committee, Climate Technology Centre and Network). Furthermore, the interplay of institutions within the UN system (e.g. with the other Conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity or the Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as with relevant UN bodies such as UNEP or UNDP) needs to be considered, as well as with other institutions outside of the UN.

The vertical interplay defines how the adaptation institutions of the UNFCCC link down to the national and subnational level. Here it is important to consider the mentioned top-down (i.e. a downwards diffusion of policies and successful approaches) and the bottom-up perspective (the strengthening of domestic in-country implementation through tailored support). This paper aims to provide more thoughts on this vertical interplay, also because Parties' thinking seems to be less advanced regarding this issue¹¹.

In constructing the interplay of adaptation institutions it is important to acknowledge the specifics of adaptation. In mitigation, however politically and economically challenging, pathways of political and technical action towards a greening of economies can be constructed, for example on the basis of long-term emission reduction objectives. In adaptation the prospect is a messier one. Firstly, adaptation choices have to be taken in the contexts of uncertainties regarding the future of climate variability, adding to general socio-economic uncertainties. Secondly, the choice for adaptation is much more a matter of context, with high variation of actions and policy choices between urban and rural subsets, between poor developing, advanced developing and developed countries. Thirdly, the eventual choice of adaptation action needs to lie with the local level, of

¹⁰ Compare Urwin and Jordan, 2007

¹¹ This is a reflection on previous negotiations and submissions prepared by Parties, which provide little details on the expectations towards institutional arrangements on the national and regional level.

course informed by the best available knowledge. Unlike mitigation, where the international community faces a common problem, adaptation is a localized response to a global phenomenon¹². Understanding adaptation as a local phenomenon, however, should not lead to the false conclusion, that less action and coordination by the international community is required. On the contrary, besides providing predictable resources at the required scale, specific implementation must be supported by actions in the broader context, such as enabling environments, policy reform and general exchange of workable approaches.

Adaptation has come a long way since its mentioning in the UNFCCC and first operational decisions at the COP 7 in 2001. Whereas it has to be recognized that the guidance for the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) and the support provided by the Least Developed Country Expert group was crucial and indeed a primer for adaptation actions and subsequent processes in many countries, the starting conditions in 2011 are very different to those in 2001. Many countries with their own resources have established their own institutional responses to the adaptation challenge.

To establish a very rigid and prescriptive adaptation interplay would be ill-advised, since it would ignore the crucial relevance of the bottom-up perspective. Therefore, in designing the interplay of different adaptation institution, one should not only follow general principles articulated in the adaptation negotiations¹³, such as country-drivenness, form follows function, precautionary principle, prioritizing the particularly affected, or aiming for non-duplication, but also the principles developed by McGray (2009a), which widen the scope of the adaptation institutions and their services considerably (see Box 1).

Box 1: Principles for adaptation interplay

- **Recognize that adaptation is a capacity-building process.** Adaptation will be ongoing for decades – if not centuries – with distinct but interrelated needs at the short-, medium-, and long-term timescales. In this context, building the capacities that enable countries to be adapting on an ongoing basis is just as important as undertaking particular adaptation activities.
- **Take a “learning by doing” approach.** Given the many uncertainties associated with climate change, countries will inevitably make mistakes with adaptation. Being ready to quickly adjust activities based on lessons that emerge from mistakes should be seen as a core aspect of what it means to be adapting.
- **Involve many different actors.** The specific roles of key players in adaptation will be different in different countries, but almost all countries will need to involve a range of ministries, a range of non-governmental stakeholders, and decision-makers at national, sub-national, and local levels (including to understand social, developmental, economic and environmental needs, impacts, choices and trade offs).
- **Recognize that each country starts in a unique place and will take a unique path.** Some countries will start adapting based on a national political mandate or plan; others will begin “from the bottom up” based on a diversity of local projects or other stand-alone activities. In some places, particular sectors or particular segments of the population will move forward more rapidly than others, depending upon their needs and strengths. Any globally shared approach to adaptation needs to recognize that any of these starting points can provide a good basis upon which to build an effective national approach to adaptation.

¹² Dovers and Hezri, 2011

¹³ See for instance FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/3.

- **It should not require that plans be delivered in a specific format.** Some countries already have National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPAs); others are working on comprehensive national adaptation strategies. Others will choose to “climate-proof” existing national planning documents. Still others will call for important planning to be done at state, provincial, or district levels, rather than producing a central national plan.

- **It should not require that countries undertake a specific planning process.** Given the diversity of possible approaches to adaptation, and the wide array of national circumstances across countries, no single step-by-step planning sequence is likely to apply equally well in a large number of countries. While some aspects of adaptation planning may be similar across countries, effective planning requires each country to craft a unique planning process that its citizens and institutions can “own.”

- **It should not make assumptions about the institutional arrangements countries will use for adaptation planning and implementation.** Just as different countries will use different formats and different planning processes, they will also engage different sets of domestic institutional players. Moreover, this picture is likely to be very dynamic in many places for some time to come. Mandates from the global community should be careful not to take a one-size-fits-all approach as this institutional evolution unfolds.

- **Engineering a social consensus on adaptation requires a partnership approach based on local ownership.** Many actors with different interests position themselves to play a role in the adaptation institutional arrangement. Especially with institutions from the outside this can only work with a strong partnership approach, not competition, and the willingness to subordinate their interest to local ownership. This should allow for coherence of the international response and help to reduce duplication of activities.

- **Put people and their action in the focus.** People have successfully adapted to climate variability for centuries. All institutions and interventions should be based on the imperative to acknowledge and increase this competence and ability.

Expanded from McGray (2009a)

Reflecting and acknowledging these principles becomes increasingly important at a time when attention for adaptation is increasing, both on the national level as well as on the international level, in particular after the climate summit of Cancún. One example is the development of modalities for more comprehensive and longer-term oriented national adaptation plans (in particular for Least Developed Countries). Here a key starting point has to be national climate change strategies that were elaborated domestically in some developing countries, independent from an internationally-driven planning exercise. Experience shows that there is often a mismatch between the expectations on the national level and the international level, if such strategies are prepared according to international guidance, in particular if linked to a fund:

“If national planning exercises are viewed as an elaborate fund raising exercise, their potential for developing a national road map in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders may not be fully internalised. A formulaic approach is adopted to tick all the right boxes to meet requirements and donor expectations, instead of developing or building upon processes suited to national circumstances.”¹⁴

Thus it would be important to allow existing procedures in developing countries, including institutional arrangements, at best to fit into guidance and recommendations that are developed internationally.

¹⁴ Sharma, 2009

3 The Cancun Adaptation Framework: a milestone in the adaptation response

The adoption of the Cancun Adaptation Framework (CAF) marks a milestone for international action on adaptation, since for the first time it provides an umbrella agreed under the UNFCCC which aims to provide guidance on various aspects of international cooperation on adaptation. It can be regarded as a good, yet not sufficient outcome.¹⁵ The way the CAF has been designed, and the fact that all Parties to the Convention have agreed to it, also establishes its relevance for institutions and stakeholders outside the UNFCCC. These actors, inter alia, have been explicitly invited to contribute to the implementation of the CAF, in a “*coherent and integrated manner, building on synergies among activities and processes, and to make available information on the progress made*”.¹⁶

A number of processes have been put onto the negotiation track and will be further elaborated in 2011 and beyond (see Figure 1).

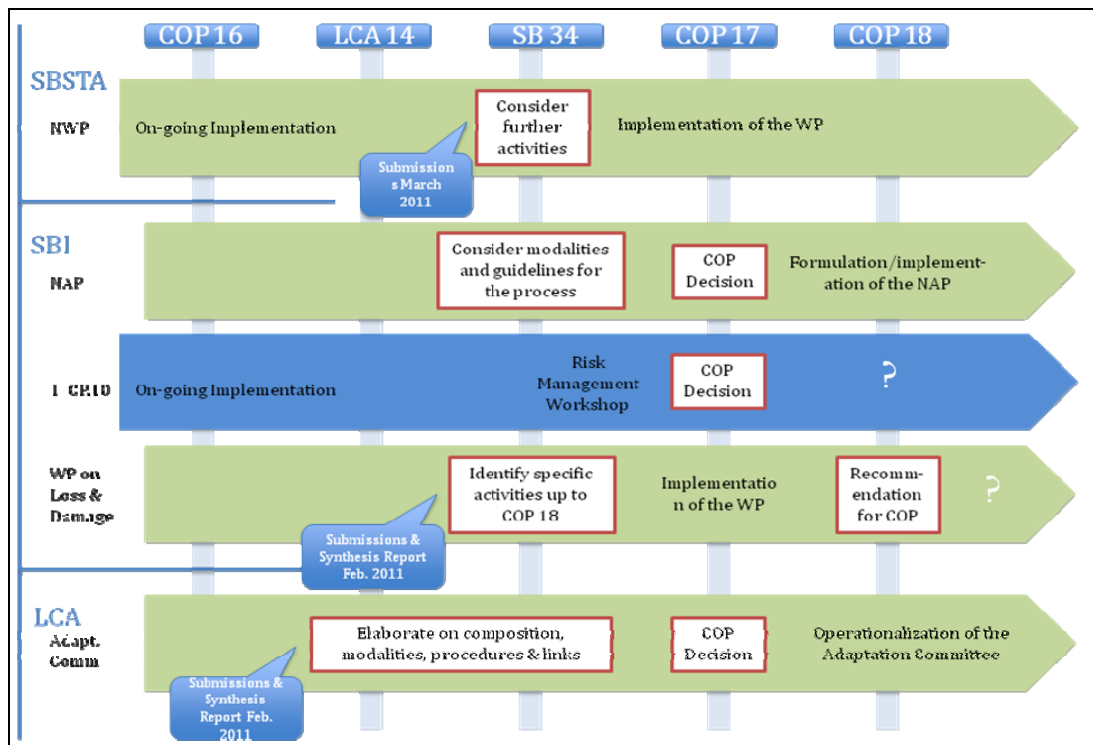


Figure 1: The adaptation negotiation agenda post-Cancun (based on Kato, 2011)

The CAF entails implications for the international institutional set-up on adaptation on the international, regional and national level, addressing both existing institutions as well as new approaches (see Table 1). One operational outcome which was agreed with clear guidance and results to be achieved by COP17 in Durban was the establishment of an Adaptation Committee, an institutional arrangement which aims to “*promote the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner under the*

¹⁵ See Harmeling et al. 2010 for different scenarios identified in the run-up to Cancun.

¹⁶ Decision 1/CP.16, para 34

Convention". This has been a key demand by developing countries for several years.¹⁷ The elaboration of further modalities, to be undertaken in the AWG-LCA process in 2011, will have to identify and consolidate the "*proposed linkages with other relevant institutional arrangements*". Thereby, while the decision on the CAF itself does not provide further substance on the institutional interplay, it will undoubtedly be a key issue to be discussed this year. However, as this paper will show, there is also the need to further conceptualise and consolidate within the UNFCCC process the roles of regional and national-level institutional arrangements and their linkages.

The elaboration of a work programme on loss and damage (para 28) may also result in the set-up or adjustment of certain institutional elements, such as a Climate Risk Insurance Facility. However, it is yet too early to discuss these given the early stage of the considerations of the work programme.

Table 1: Institutional implications of the Cancún Adaptation Framework

Institutional level	Elements in the Cancún Adaptation Framework	Key functions
<i>International</i>	Existing institutional arrangements and expertise under the Convention (para 19) ¹⁸	Strengthen, enhance and better utilize existing arrangements
	Establishment of the Adaptation Committee, with further modalities to be worked out in 2011 (para 20)	Promote the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner
	possible establishment of an international centre (para 31) ¹⁹	Enhance adaptation research and coordination in a developing country (para 31)
<i>Regional</i>	Strengthen and, where necessary, establish regional centres and networks, in particular in developing countries (para 30)	To facilitate and enhance national and regional adaptation actions, in a manner that is country-driven, encourages cooperation and coordination between regional stakeholders and improves the flow of information between the Convention process and national and regional activities;
<i>National</i>	Strengthen and, where necessary, establish and/or designate national-level institutional arrangements (para 32); strengthen institutional capacities and enabling environments for adaptation (para 14c)	With a view to enhancing work on the full range of adaptation actions from planning to implementation;

Source: own compilation based on 1/CP.16, FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1

¹⁷ FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1

¹⁸ These include for example the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) or the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE).

¹⁹ The mentioning of this international centre is primarily a concession to Bangladesh, which is already setting up an International Centre for Climate Change and Development (www.icccad.org) and wanted to have it recognised.

There are three additional aspects in the CAF, which will be relevant for the setting-up and the interplay of the different institutions, namely:

- a) principles guiding adaptation, as contained in para 12, such as “*follow a country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems*”. Given the scope of the CAF one could argue that this is the first time that principles to guide adaptation activities were agreed on a global scale, which is quite significant;
- b) the invitation to multiple stakeholders to support the implementation of the CAF (para 34);
- c) The central role of the UNFCCC Secretariat in supporting the implementation of the CAF, including its institutional arrangements (para 35).

There are three additional institutional decisions contained in the Cancún Agreements which will necessarily have to be taken into account.

- a) the newly established Technology Mechanism, which will consist of a Technology Executive Committee and a Climate Technology Centre and Network;
- b) the Green Climate Fund (GCF): the details of the Fund should be worked out in 2011 by an ad-hoc Transitional Committee (TC), with a view to operationalise the Fund by COP17.²⁰ While not formally agreed, the underlying expectation is that the GCF will become much bigger in scale than the funds already existing under the Convention. 1/CP.16 also includes the provision that a significant share of new multilateral funding on adaptation should go through the GCF;
- c) The Standing Committee on Finance which aims at improving the coherence and coordination of the financial mechanism; however, its operationalisation is not yet in sight.

Overall, one can summarise that the Cancún Agreements have the objective to institutionally step up the role of adaptation in the UNFCCC process and beyond, and to promote greater coherence. In the end, the level of progress through these institutional arrangements will be benchmarked on their effective design and performance, including their interplay.

Thus the following chapter will look more into the details of the institutional approaches and required functions from the international to the regional and national level.

²⁰ See Harmeling and Griesshaber, 2011 for a briefing on the first meeting of the TC.

4 Key institutional approaches on different levels and their roles

4.1 The Adaptation Committee and the UNFCCC level

With the establishment of the Adaptation Committee agreed in Cancún, a long expressed demand by developing countries was fulfilled, namely to step-up the institutional reinforcement of adaptation. According to the decision agreed in Cancún, the overarching function of the Adaptation Committee will be to “*promote the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner under the Convention*”.²¹

The Cancún decision contains five functional areas (see Box 2). What these exactly mean in practice, and how the Adaptation Committee will be asked to exercise its functions remains to be seen in the negotiations in 2011. More than 30 Parties and Party groups in addition to observer organisations have submitted their views on the further details of the Adaptation Committee to the UNFCCC Secretariat.²² A synthesis paper prepared by the UNFCCC Secretariat condenses a broad range of proposals made by the Parties on functions of the Adaptation Committee into five areas and also summarizes the proposals in other areas, such as in composition, governance modalities.

Box 2: The Cancún decision on the Adaptation Committee

20. *Decides* to hereby establish an Adaptation Committee to promote the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner under the Convention, inter alia, through the following functions:

- (a) Providing technical support and guidance to the Parties, respecting the country-driven approach, with a view to facilitating the implementation of adaptation activities, including those listed in paragraphs 14 and 15 of this decision, where appropriate;
- (b) Strengthening, consolidating and enhancing the sharing of relevant information, knowledge, experience and good practices, at local, national, regional and international levels, taking into account, as appropriate, traditional knowledge and practices;
- (c) Promoting synergy and strengthening engagement with national, regional and international organizations, centres and networks, to enhance the implementation of adaptation actions, in particular in developing country Parties;
- (d) Providing information and recommendations, drawing on adaptation good practices, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties when providing guidance on means to incentivize the implementation of adaptation actions, including finance, technology and capacity-building and other ways to enable climate-resilient development and reduce vulnerability, including to the operating entities of the financial mechanism of the Convention, as appropriate;
- (e) Considering information communicated by Parties on their monitoring and review of adaptation actions, support provided and received, possible needs and gaps and other relevant information, including information communicated under the Convention, with a view to recommending what further actions may be required, as appropriate;

Source: FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1

²¹ Para 20 of 1/CP.16, FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1

²² See http://unfccc.int/meetings/ad_hoc_working_groups/lca/items/4578.php for download of the submissions.

For the context of this paper it is useful to look in particular at principles that are suggested to guide the work of the Adaptation Committee, as well as the relationship to other institutional arrangements.

In terms of suggested principles, the synthesis report reflects that there are diverging views with regard to the question whether the Adaptation Committee would serve as a “leader” in implementing the CAF²³, a rather top-down perspective, or whether it would be organised starting from what already exists, soft-governing to avoid duplications and to fill gaps.²⁴ Given the central role of the country-driven as well as the bottom-up perspective, a strong role for the Committee can best be argued for within the UNFCCC system, assuming that the Committee would be the key responsible actor for preparing recommendations to the COP in order to improve the coherence of the set of institutions.

Furthermore, previous debates in the negotiations suggest that in particular the following two aspects may remain subject to controversial discussions:

- the question whether the Adaptation Committee should give direct advice to specific countries on their adaptation efforts, upon their request, or whether it should only provide general guidance based on the experience of countries to “the Parties”, which may be interpreted as the whole group of countries, which are Parties to the Convention;
- whether the Adaptation Committee should have any direct relationship to elements of the financial mechanism of the Convention, such as the Adaptation Fund or the Green Climate Fund, or whether it should only provide recommendations to the Conference of the Parties which would then have to decide whether to provide guidance to the funds on this basis.²⁵

The principles outlined earlier in this paper build on the clear understanding that adaptation will be a learning exercise on all levels, which will include trial and error lessons and which has to give particular attention to the bottom-up perspective. The national and local level should be supported as much as possible by the sharing of experience and information sharing from adaptation practice. Moreover, collecting and synthesizing the available information from all-over the world is something, which needs to be done also on the global level. The Adaptation Committee can play a central role here and contribute to building capacities in developing countries. It could be overburdened when expected to directly advice governments, and the regional level can play a particular role here. The Adaptation Committee can furthermore become central when it comes to assessing the quality of, and identifying gaps in, the overall financial

²³ FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/3, page 4: “providing leadership in catalysing and supporting country-driven adaptation actions”

²⁴ FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/3

²⁵ FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/3, page 8: “several Parties pointed out that the Committee should not have an operational role in relation to the Green Climate Fund or any operating entity of the financial mechanism, such as on issues related to the prioritization of funds or on initiatives to be funded, but that it should rather support the COP in its work.” Considering the exact language of the Cancún decision which states under function d) “for consideration by the Parties” this appears to be a legally convincing interpretation.

mechanism with regard to adaptation, and on the basis of its assessment provide recommendations to the COP to improve the financial architecture.

Whatever the exact details of the arrangements of the Adaptation Committee will look like, it should be designed in a way that it can contribute to an overall effective institutional set-up for the benefit of primarily, but not exclusively the developing countries and its citizens.

4.1.1 Link to other institutional arrangements on the horizontal level

One area which will have to be considered in order to avoid duplication of work as well as harness the expertise and experience from a broad range of views is the relationship to existing institutions under the Convention. A recent submission by the Climate Action Network International, to which both WWF and Germanwatch have contributed, provides such an outline (Box 3).²⁶

Box 3: The Adaptation Committee and other institutional arrangements under the UNFCCC

- **The Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG)**, has developed particular knowledge for the LDC context, including the development of NAPAs and in the future, implied through para 15 of 1/CP.16, for the National Adaptation Plan process. Since the LEG mandate is limited to work with LDCs, it would be the responsibility of the Adaptation Committee to make relevant aspects of this knowledge and experience available to non-LDC developing countries. The knowledge from the LEG is both about national adaptation planning as well as the identification of concrete adaptation projects (like in the NAPAs).

- **Consultative Group of Experts (CGE)**: the key role of the CGE is to provide technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties for the preparation of National Communications, which includes also reporting on vulnerability, adaptation, support received etc. This group could contribute information and experience relevant to adaptation that has been gathered in the National Communications process.

- **The Technology Executive Committee (TEC)** was established in Cancun, (succeeding the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT)), as one element of the Technology Mechanism. It is to facilitate the implementation of the Convention with regard to technologies, including technologies for adaptation. The Adaptation Committee should take into account the work and syntheses provided by the TEC on issues related to adaptation technologies (in particular in functions b) and e)). Similarly, the Adaptation Committee should be able to request information or support from the TEC on the development and the dissemination of adaptation technologies.

- **The Standing Committee on Finance**: 1/CP.16 established a Standing Committee on Finance. While the details for the operationalisation of this committee still have to be worked out, it seems clear that when the Adaptation Committee provides recommendations for the COP on means of implementation linked to adaptation that there may be information/input from the Standing Committee on Finance which should be taken into account. This can of course also be a result of a specific request for information from the Adaptation Committee to the standing committee.

Source: CAN International, 2011

²⁶ See CAN, 2011

Regarding the interplay with other institutions, most of the submissions only address institutions on the international – the horizontal – level. A particular emphasis lies on the linkages with other bodies under the UNFCCC. In addition, the linkages for example with other UN institutions and policy frameworks, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) or the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) are mentioned but lack specifics so far.²⁷

4.1.2 The interplay with the regional and national level

Reflecting the further functions of the Adaptation Committee defined in the Cancún Adaptation Framework, in particular for the “(b) *Strengthening, consolidating and enhancing the sharing of relevant information, knowledge, experience and good practices, at local, national, regional and international levels [...]*” and “(c) *Promoting synergy and strengthening engagement with national, regional and international organizations, centres and networks, to enhance the implementation of adaptation actions, in particular in developing country Parties*”, the institutional interplay with the regional and national level is important to look at, as well as the linkages mentioned above with, for example, other UN institutions and policy frameworks such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), UNEP and UNDP that offer specific expertise or experience.

Overall, relatively fewer attention is paid in the country submissions to the specific interplay in a *vertical dimension*, with “*Regional and national centres, agencies or hubs of adaptation*”²⁸, meaning with regional and national institutional arrangements on adaptation, with a few exemptions (Malaysia, New Zealand, Panama, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, USA). The synthesis report prepared by the UNFCCC Secretariat provides the following summary:

“(i) *Assisting Parties in establishing national-level institutional arrangements, regional centres and networks and in improving the flow of information between the Convention process and national and regional activities;*”


Summarising the syntheses by the Secretariat about the linkages between the Adaptation Committee and the regional and the national level, and considering both directions top-down and bottom-up, results in Table 2. The consideration of the bottom-up linkages (para 9) is derived indirectly from the reference to specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances, which would require the flow of information from these levels to the Committee. These can then inter alia contribute to better informed recommendations to the COP on further action.


However, these deliberations already show that consolidating the linkages between the Adaptation Committee and the other levels remains a task to be undertaken soon, to make the Committee design its work as effective and efficient as possible. For this it is also

²⁷ An interesting, already existing mode of linkage is the Joint Liaison Group of the three Conventions. However, it does not meet very frequently, the last high-level meeting happened in 2009 (http://unfccc.int/cooperation_and_support/cooperation_with_international_organizations/items/3464.php). But with regard to adaptation a joint report was published which gives an overview of the different approaches and identified potential synergies, see JLG 2008.

indispensable to reflect the specific roles of the regional and national level and potential institutional arrangements on these levels, which is the content on the next sub-chapters.

Table 2: Overview of linkages with regional and national institutional arrangements

Adaptation Committee to regional and national institutions	
	11c) "(i) Assisting Parties in establishing national-level institutional arrangements, regional centres and networks and in improving the flow of information between the Convention process and national and regional activities;"
	(ii) Developing a work programme to facilitate capacity-building at various levels and for different stakeholders, including capacity-building for national institutions to benefit from direct access modalities for adaptation funding;
	"14c) (c) Facilitating interaction between experts and creating a network of national, regional and global centres of information on adaptation in order to enhance the flow of information and to allow for the collection and compilation of relevant data and best practices, on which different adaptation stakeholders could draw.
	45) "the Committee should also consider the provision of guidance and advice through the COP, including (c) To regional centres and networks, including on how they can be strengthened and on how cooperation can be enhanced in order to improve the dissemination of knowledge and the implementation of adaptation actions."
	The Secretariat "(g) Acting as liaison between the Committee and Parties, and with national and regional centres;"

Regional and national institutions to Adaptation Committee	
	9 (d) Performing its functions and providing support in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and with specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances;

Source: own compilation based on FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/3:

4.2 Regional centres and networks of excellence

4.2.1 Crucial link, little conception

On the regional level the CAF encourages Parties to strengthen or establish regional centres and networks that facilitate national and regional adaptation action and that improve the flow of information between the international and national or regional activities. However, unlike other components of the adaptation framework (namely the Adaptation Committee and the guidelines for national adaptation planning), the regional centre debate has not received a clear signpost how to progress in the negotiation agenda in 2011. In the outcome on technology transfer and development in Cancun, Parties already provided a link between the global and regional level, namely a centre and network approach, which will be fleshed out further in 2011 (compare Box 4). In

²⁸ FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/3

designing the interplay and linkages in adaptation between the Adaptation Committee and the national level institutional arrangements, however, Parties should already create an understanding of the functions and set-up of regional centres.

Box 4: Regional coordination in the UNCCD process

One of the sister conventions of the UNFCCC, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), has since its early days been considering and addressing the need for regional coordination through institutional mechanisms. Interestingly, the UNCCD itself contains much stronger language on regional coordination than for example the UNFCCC.²⁹

The UNCCD process has been working since the 1990s through Regional Coordination Units (RCU), closely linked to the Regional Action Programmes (RAPs). For Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, three RCUs were set up “in order to enhance the effectiveness of the services provided to the developing countries concerned.”³⁰ These RCUs perform a number of functions, from the promotion of capacity-building for activities which are better implemented at the regional level to educational activities, from promotion and dissemination of information to the follow-up to the relevant decisions of the COP.³¹ The RCUs function as decentralized units which receive their guidelines from the Convention secretariat, and which are hosted by regional institution (such as the African Development Bank, UN regional office for Asia, CEPAL in Mexico).³²

In the run-up to UNCCD COP9 in 2009, a consolidated review of the current approach took place, identifying the value of significantly strengthening regional coordination through different means. Regional groups had prepared detailed submissions³³, and the UNCCC Secretariat provided an important input through a paper on “Evidence-based options for improving regional coordination arrangements”.³⁴ COP9 then highlighted the need to strengthen regional coordination.³⁵

In further elaborating a system of regional cooperation for different purposes in the adaptation context, it is highly advisable to take into account the experience under the UNCCD.

Recent country submissions on the Adaptation Committee overwhelmingly stated the idea of linking the Adaptation Committee with the regional centres. However, most of them provide little substance on the nature of that linkage.³⁶ Some countries go further and ask to task the Adaptation Committee with the development of guidelines for the regional centres.³⁷ AOSIS made a few suggestions regarding the functioning of the regional centres. However, to obtain a better understanding of countries’ views on the role of regional centres, one has to go back to country submissions that were submitted before the Copenhagen climate summit (COP15).

²⁹ “Articles 11, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 25 and 26 further emphasize the need for effective regional cooperation and coordination on key issues such as policy consultations, preparation of action programmes, information sharing, improving research capacity, capacity-building and reporting.”, see UNCCD, 2009a: p. 4

³⁰ UNCCD, 2005: 9

³¹ UNCCD, 2005

³² See <http://www.unccd.int/secretariat/menu.php?newch=113> for contact information

³³ UNCCD, 2009b

³⁴ UNCCD, 2009a

³⁵ UNCCD, 2009c

³⁶ See FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/MISC.1: Countries calling for linkages are Belarus, Bolivia, Canada, Colombo, EU, Egypt, India, Israel, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Panama and the Philippines.

³⁷ Among others Bolivia, Egypt and Israel

When looking at the interplay of adaptation institutions, it is evident that both perspectives – top down and bottom-up - require a link in between national level institutions and the international level. On the bottom-up side (that is the implementers' perspective) for instance some countries might require technical advice for the successful implementation of adaptation projects and programmes. Responding to this need on an international level, however, would likely result in overburdened institutions or unfulfilled requests, assuming a large number of countries would use this option. Mandating and strengthening regional institutions to do such kind of capacity building might be a more effective arrangement.

On an international level, approaches of successful adaptation actions should be compiled and shared. However, adaptation is highly site-specific which means that there is the distinct need for sharing of information on a more regionalized scale. Also from a top-down (i.e. the policymaker) perspective, regional cooperation in adaptation is a prerequisite for successful adaptation initiatives, especially in such areas as catchment management or other kinds of transboundary activities. For example, many ecosystems spread across borders and their successful adaptation can generate multiple livelihood and environmental benefits; whilst ignoring this could lead to increased poverty and cross-boarder conflict over natural resources. However, it is clear that national level institutions or bodies at the international level do little to incentivize such regional cooperation. Hence, there is a role for regional level institutions to enable coherence of adaptation action in the regions.

Subsequently, some functions for regional centres and networks are listed.³⁸ These are largely based on pre-Copenhagen country submissions and the proceeds of a workshop under the Nairobi Work Programme held in Apia, Samoa, in spring 2010.³⁹ However, functions pertained to the Adaptation Committee are also included, where in the authors' view they might be more effectively addressed by a regional centre arrangement.

³⁸ This largely reflects an earlier analysis by the authors, see Kreft and Harmeling, 2010. The analysis is largely based on country submission submitted in the run-up to the Copenhagen Conference.

³⁹ The theme of the workshop was on collaboration among regional centres and networks. The report of the workshop is available under FCCC/SBSTA/2010/8.

Box 5: The Cancun Technology Mechanism and its architecture

In Cancún Parties decided to establish a Mechanism to support technology development and transfer. Two institutional bodies were created.

The Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN)

The CTCN will consist of a centre and network, possibly including regional units. Where the centre will be situated, how the network will look like, and how they will operate and interact with existing institution still needs to be defined in 2011. At a pre-session workshop at the climate talks in Bangkok, Parties elaborated also on the question of how to ensure linkage to national entities.

The Technology Executive Committee (TEC)

Cancun also created a Technology Executive committee consisting of 20 experts - 11 from developing and 9 from developed countries - who will identify technology needs, coordinate international efforts, and make recommendations to the COP.

Whereas the TECs role – make recommendation and providing overview- is close to an oversight body, which is directed to the UNFCCC and its Parties, the CTCN with its network is directed towards the implementing level and should serve as a help desk for developing countries. In providing these structures and in devoting negotiation time to its arrangement in 2011, the discussion in technology development and transfer could probably be viewed as a forerunner to those under adaptation.

4.2.2 Interface function between global knowledge supply and local needs

Regional centres should be a core element to link global expertise and support with local needs. In this sense adaptation centres have to filter global top-down knowledge with what is demanded by regional, national and local actors. At the same time, regional centres have to backfeed the articulated needs of the users to the global level to ensure that information generation there is generally compatible with the required needs of regional stakeholders and to ensure feedback about the required and delivered means for the implementation.

Participants of the aforementioned Samoa-workshop recognized that in order to tackle the disconnect between work on adaptation at the local level and that at the global level, there should be a mandatory requirement or framework to feed knowledge from the ground upward to regional centres, and for the information available at the global level to trickle down to the local level.⁴⁰ Such mechanisms can also be facilitated through service initiatives, such as the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) – an initiative by the WMO that strives for providing climate information for adaptation purposes in developing countries.⁴¹

⁴⁰ See FCCC/SBST A/2010/8.

⁴¹ The GFCS was established at the 3rd World Climate Conference (WCC) in August 2009 with the aim to “*to strengthen the production, availability, delivery and application of science-based climate prediction and services*”. WCC also inaugurated a task force to develop the GFCS. The report of the task force was presented to the annual meteorological congress in April 2011, and can be accessed at <ftp://ftp.wmo.int/Documents/SESSIONS/Cg-XVI/English/DOCS/>

4.2.3 Capacity building and technical support

Another function pertaining to regional centres is the building of capacities within the adjacent countries to facilitate and implement national adaptation strategies and actions.

On a general level, activities could encompass

- promotion of professional exchange between technical personnel from different countries and regions;
- enhancement of professional development opportunities, through scholarships, fellowships and access to other forms of training;
- strengthening of information networks through 1) the establishment and maintenance of databases and repositories of adaptation-related information; 2) preparation and dissemination of compilations and syntheses of best practices in adaptation;
- support of public information and awareness-raising activities at national level;
- disseminating of information through peer-reviewed documents and journals.

On a specific level, regional centres could do backstopping by⁴²:

- providing advice on the development of country-driven national and sectoral adaptation strategies and the prioritization and implementation of adaptation actions;
- providing technical backstopping for funding proposals and advising on channels through which funding can be accessed, including capacity building to enable direct access to climate funds;
- giving guidance on evaluation methods for adaptation;
- providing capacity building on direct access modalities for adaptation funding;
- providing decision making tools for different sectors and levels of government to strengthen the legislative framework for adaptation;
- providing combined approaches to harness synergies with other Rio conventions (especially the CBD) and to increase the role for protected areas and landscape scale approaches.

4.2.4 Information generation and delivery

One key function to be fulfilled by regional centres is the generation and dissemination of information necessary for adaptation planning and action. Prior to Copenhagen this has been asked for by a large variety of countries⁴³. General statements of countries included to

- enhance endogenous knowledge and foster sharing of it within a region;
- promote the rescue, diffusion and transfer of traditional and local knowledge relevant and appropriate for adaptation. A concrete proposal could be to establish seed banks for regional crop varieties and (agro)forestry species;

⁴² The secretariat in its synthesis-report on the Adaptation Committee (FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/3) lists these functions under 'Provision of technical support and guidance to the Parties'.

⁴³ See FCCC/AWGLCA/2008/16/Rev.1: AOSIS, Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Russian Federation; China, AOSIS, Australia, New Zealand, African Group, LDC.

- build on north-south as well as south-south R&D cooperation and partnerships;
- promote information for short-, medium-, and long-term climate change challenges and risks in the region and use analytical tools to enable scenario generation and downscaling for current and future impact assessments;
- use the regional centres as clearing-house of information for that region.⁴⁴

4.2.5 Cooperation, coordination and alignment of adaptation actions

Regional centres could pursue a role in coordinating adaptation efforts by different countries of a region. Especially in creating synergies to objectives of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) and to forge transboundary resource planning, regional adaptation approaches are paramount. Unfortunately, the country submissions suggest that there is only little awareness on this issue.

Box 6: SPREP as a regional adaptation centre?

The Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is an intergovernmental organisation responsible to build capacity within their 25 member states to manage environmental issues. It serves as the secretariat for international and regional environmental conventions and their protocols, such as the UNFCCC, CBD, CITES or RAMSAR. Also regional conventions, like the Noumea Convention to protect natural resources in the region, are housed in the SPREP.

The SPREP has a long history in supporting Pacific Island states on adaptation issues and conducting climate change related projects and programmes. It served a pivotal role in enabling countries to draft national communications to the UNFCCC as well as in the implementation of GEF funds and NAPA projects. It also helped in establishing a regional framework for action on climate change between 2006 and 2015, which act as a reference point for national adaptation plans.

SPREP largely act as technical backstopping facility. It provides technical and legal advice to States (for example in drafting national legislation), assists in preparing briefing papers for international negotiating conferences, coordinates pre-conference consultations to determine regional positions, and strengthens regional legal frameworks. It conducts research, offers training courses, and develops materials for awareness raising and project implementation.⁴⁵ In enabling adaptation action in Pacific island states, which often lack political and implementation capacities, the SPREP could be seen as a prototype for other regions that feature vulnerable countries with an equally low adaptive capacity.

One approach to encourage regional cooperation is to mandate regional international organisations and their centres to serve as an adaptation centre. Many regional treaties and organisations exist, which govern sectors or issues that are very relevant for a region's adaptation actions (compare case-study SPREP, Box 6).

⁴⁴ See FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/MISC.1 AOSIS.

A particular role in this regard would also be the field of support for transboundary resource and adaptation planning, which will become especially relevant for water-related climate change challenges. An interesting example here is the “Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change”, which was developed under the leadership of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), based on the regional “Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention)” which entered into force in 1996 and so far has been ratified by 37 countries and the European Union.⁴⁶ This guidance has also led to the initiation of a number of transboundary adaptation projects in the water sector in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South-Eastern Europe and Asia.

4.2.6 Establishment of Regional Centres

Countries will face difficult questions regarding the set-up of regional centres. Different degrees of institutional arrangement are possible, ranging from “light” to “heavy”. A “light” regional centre could build on a “virtual” roster like arrangement, in which different experts and institutions are enlisted with regular meetings between the (already existing or new) partner institutions taking place.⁴⁷ The “heavy” version would be a regional centre, which conducts own research, creates own data and is directly engaged in the implementation of activities and which has a physical base.

Another critical question is that of where to place the centres? Needs regarding scope and function vary very much from country to country and from region to region. This means that for some contexts a national centre may be rather appropriate than a regional one. The UNFCCC negotiations so far lack concrete proposals with regard to this question (how many centres, what regional aggregation etc.). In order to ensure country-ownership, a bottom-up system of countries nominating institutions to perform such regional centres seems reasonable. However, this could also result in more nominations than appear effective, due to the self-interest of countries expecting external financial support. When building on existing institutions, additional options are a) to build on centres which are already run by regional cooperation organisations (e.g. ASEAN, SAARC, CARICOM⁴⁸ etc.) or b) to use the existing (and potentially rammed up) regional infrastructure of existing UN organisations such as UNEP and UNDP. A thorough discussion on regional centres should be supported by a mapping of existing institutions, their portfolios and performances.

⁴⁵ See UNEP (n.d.)

⁴⁶ Koepfel 2010, see also <http://www.adaptationlearning.net/project/guidance-water-and-adaptation-climate-change>

⁴⁷ See McGray 2009b

⁴⁸ ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations; SAARC South Asian Association on Regional Cooperation, CARICOM Caribbean Community and Common Market

4.3 National-level institutional arrangements

4.3.1 National-level arrangements in the negotiations

As has been outlined earlier, the Cancún Adaptation Framework also aims to assist the enhancement and, where necessary, the establishment of national institutional arrangements on adaptation. While it would not be adequate to prescribe specific forms of institutional agreements through an international agreement, the so far agreed negotiation text does not provide a clearer understanding of what countries need such arrangements for. In order to substract potential different options from the negotiating process, one has to go back to the year 2009, to the negotiating text that was prepared before the AWG-LCA session held in Bangkok in September 2009. The adaptation chapter basically distinguished between three different options to enable an effective implementation of adaptation programmes (paragraphs 58 to 60):⁴⁹

- National focal points which would be designated or established (para 58);
- National (and regional) coordinating bodies, mechanisms or entities (para 59);
- National centres and networks (as well as regional ones) (para 60).

If one looks at the general practice under the UNFCCC, a **national focal point or designated authority** is usually a specific person within a government entity, mandated to serve as the contact point for the specific international process. This is the case with the UNFCCC focal points as well as the Designated Authorities under the Adaptation Fund or the Clean Development Mechanism, for example.⁵⁰

4.3.2 The role of national coordinating bodies on climate change

No prescribed system of a **national coordinating body or mechanism** exists in the UNFCCC context, but generally one can distinguish between two different types, a pure **government coordinating body** or a **multi-stakeholder body**. Table 3 lists some already existing examples from different developing countries which have emerged largely on their own initiative. In some instances, there is of course also the explicit demand by bilateral or multilateral donors, as it is the case for example in the Climate Investment Funds under the World Bank, and more specifically in this context of its Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR). It is a strategic priority of many donors to set up inter-ministerial coordination arrangements.

The notion of a multi-stakeholder body was first introduced into the negotiating process by the South African government. Its submission proposed a “national coordinating body” to support the implementation of climate change related actions that receive support from the UNFCCC process.

⁴⁹ See FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.2

⁵⁰ See <http://www.adaptation-fund.org>

Table 3: Examples of national-level institutional arrangements on climate change/adaptation

	Intra-Ministerial	Inter-Ministerial	Multi-stakeholder
<i>Bangladesh</i>	Climate Change focal points in all Ministries which plan and implement activities within their remit	National Steering Committee on Climate Change which “comprises the Secretaries of all climate-affected Ministries and Divisions, and representatives of civil society and the business community.”	
<i>India</i>		Advisory Council (chaired by Prime Minister) which “has a broad-based representation from key-stakeholders, including government, industry and civil society and sets out broad directions for national actions in respect of climate change.” ⁵¹	
<i>Kenya</i>	Environment Ministry: Climate Change Secretariat to assist two committees	<i>At Prime Minister’s office:</i> Climate Change Coordination Unit (CCCU) will continue to provide high-level political support to climate change activities in Kenya	Climate Change Activities Coordinating Committee (NCCACC) as advisory body National Climate Change Steering Committee to help Environment Ministry gather and collate input and advice from key climate change stakeholders
<i>Nepal</i>		Climate Change Council, chaired by Prime Ministry, national ministries along with academic, civil society representative	
<i>Philippines</i>		National Climate Change Commission, all national ministries along with private sector, academic and civil society representation on its advisory board as required by the law that created the commission.	
<i>Senegal</i>		National Committee on climate change (COMNAC), involving NGOs, Government bodies, private sector, researchers, donors,	
<i>South Africa</i> ⁵²		Government Committee on Climate Change (GCCC), comprising representatives of 10 government departments	The National Committee on Climate Change, led by the environment ministry, involving NGOs, provincial governments, business and industry
<i>Tanzania</i>		National Climate Change Technical Committee, comprising of government ministries members and a representative from CSOs.	
<i>Zimbabwe</i>		National CC Steering Committee, with Leadership from the Climate Change Office, housed under the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Management. This aims to comprise key line Ministries, NGOs and Industry. This will work towards a CC strategy and policy	

Source: own compilation based on Bangladesh, 2009; India, 2008; Kenya, 2009; Bhandari 2010

⁵¹India, 2008

⁵²http://www.environment.gov.za/documents/documents/2003may26/climate_change_sa_responsibility_26052003.html

The South African submission mentions the following key objectives:

- A country driven, coordinated and multi sector approach involving all national stakeholders, private and public;
- An equitable, efficient and effective use of funding;
- Transparent and inclusive involvement of all stakeholders;
- A programmatic approach to funding rather than a project based approach.

It is important to point out here that South Africa proposed a national coordinating body for climate change as a whole, not only for adaptation. This reflects the way that many developing countries are already approaching climate change coordination (see Table 3). What becomes also obvious is that many governments have chosen to set up multi-stakeholder bodies, to harness expertise from outside the government and to acknowledge that multiple actors play their part in responding to climate change. Furthermore, such a coordinating body and a national focal point are not mutually exclusive options, but serve different purposes and therefore are complimentary.⁵³

4.3.3 National-level arrangements in non-UNFCCC processes

Taking into account lessons learnt from other policy fora is important. Therefore, Box 6 provides some insights into other types of institutional arrangements.

Box 7: National-level institutional arrangements from non-UNFCCC processes

A. Country-coordinating Mechanisms (CCM) in the Global Fund

The objective of the multi-stakeholder CCMs is to ensure a participatory approach in the shaping of health policies and submission of proposals to the Global Fund. The CCMs are seen as central “to the Global Fund’s commitment to the principles of country ownership, participatory decision-making, inclusiveness, and partnership-building with a particular emphasis on the role of civil society in the design, management and implementation of grants.”⁵⁴ Their responsibilities generally include a) coordination of a submission of a national funding proposal to the Global Fund; b) selection of organisation(s) to receive funds from the Global Fund for further disbursement; c) monitor the implementation of activities and evaluate the performance of these programmes; d) ensure linkages between other related policy initiative in support of national priorities.⁵⁵ In the Global Fund systems, they are the bodies who submit funding proposals in the order of sometimes tenth of millions of USD, building on and including proposals coming from a broad spectrum of organisations within a country.⁵⁶ One of the results of an evaluation study of existing CCMs was that the CCM partnership model has contributed to a redefinition of the relationship between government and civil society in the area of public health, and that the greater the substantive participation of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in a CCM, the better the CCM performs.⁵⁷

⁵³ See also AOSIS, 2011.

⁵⁴ The Global Fund, 2009

⁵⁵ The Global Fund, 2011

⁵⁶ It also has to be noted that while the international structure of the Global Fund has developed guidelines, the obligatory CCMs are seen rather as a process than a specific institution. The design of CCMs varies from country to country and can be handled flexible, but the key quality requirements should be met. Building on similar, already existing mechanisms is reasonable, but should not compromise the independence of the CCM.

⁵⁷ The Global Fund, 2009

B. GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP)

The Small Grant Programmes of the GEF supports activities at the local level on different global environmental issues through small grants (up to USD \$50,000). The programme supports the participation of communities, local people, NGOs, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders in the programme planning, design and implementation. The programmes in each country are formed by a National Steering Committee (NSC) and a National Coordinator. The NSCs are voluntary groups that contribute to decision-making of the SGP and the development of the programme. Normally, NSCs are made of representatives from local NGOs, government, academia, indigenous peoples' organizations, the private sector, UNDP and occasionally co-funding donors and the media. The NSC is in charge of developing the country programme strategy and consider grant applications according to the SGP criteria. These committees are also responsible for the review of projects and they collaborate in the monitoring and evaluation of the projects. The most recent evaluation of GEF and UNDP Evaluation Teams found that the SGP has a slightly higher success rate in achieving global environmental benefits, and a significantly higher rate in sustaining them, than GEF medium- and full-size projects; has contributed to numerous institutional reforms and policy changes in recipient countries to address global environmental issues, and has made significant progress in targeting its poor and vulnerable parts of the population. An evaluation of the participatory monitoring systems found that while the monitoring and evaluation has improved, it could still be further enhanced⁵⁸.

C. Hyogo Framework National Platforms for disaster risk reduction (DRR)

National Platforms are coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) to build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters. They consist of the forum, which can vary in form (e.g committee, networks) to coordinate action for DRR in a participatory and cumulative process of initiatives and actions. Such a platform should be the coordination mechanism for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development policies, planning and programmes in line with the implementation of the HFA. It should aim to contribute to the development of a comprehensive national disaster risk reduction system, as appropriate to each country. According to ISDR, more than 30 countries have reported creating the platforms, and some have reported that these have been established through a nationally led participatory process involving main stakeholders under the guidance of the “Guiding Principles for National Platforms for Disaster Reduction National Platforms for DRR.”

The Guidelines provide throughout guidance on the process of the creating the platform, as well as the primary activities for these platforms, can be found online at www.unisdr.org/eng/hfa/hfa.htm

⁵⁸ GEF EO, 2008

Table 4 provides an overview of different features of these three types of institutional arrangements from processes outside the UNFCCC.

Table 4: Key features of national-level institutional arrangements in non-UNFCCC processes

	Country Coordinating Mechanism	GEF SGP National Steering Committee	Hyogo National Platforms
Main objective	coordination of a submission of a national funding proposal to the Global Fund	Multi-stakeholder mechanism to coordinate, identify and oversee activities funded through the GEF SGP	Multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development policies, planning and programmes
National policy coordination as objective	Indirectly through the size and thereby relevance of the submitted proposals	No ⁵⁹	Yes
Multi-stakeholder	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guidelines agreed internationally	Yes	Yes	Yes
Linked to a specific funding instrument	Yes	Yes	No
Scale	Larger scale programmes (up to hundreds of millions USD)	Small-scale programmes (up to 50,000 USD)	National

Source: own compilation

The most interesting features are the following:

- a key distinction is whether the respective body is linked to a specific funding instrument (in the case of the Global Fund and the SGP) or not (in the case of Hyogo platforms);
- all three are composed according to flexible but internationally agreed guidelines;
- all three are multi-stakeholder bodies.

The potential role of multi-stakeholder bodies should be looked at more closely.

An expert paper prepared by Least Developed Countries Expert Group in the context of assistance provided to LDCs for the preparation and implementation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) distinguishes two types of multi-stakeholder

mechanisms, a multi-stakeholder body and institutionalised mechanisms with stakeholder participation.⁶⁰ It also outlines some advantages and disadvantages. This shows that while one of the key advantages is likely a more broad-based representation of stakeholders, views and expertise, it is not necessarily a guarantee for the inclusion of the views of those most in need of adaptation, and institutional interest as well as lack of authoritative power may hamper its effectiveness. Thus, an adequate design of such multi-stakeholder bodies must be given careful consideration, to minimise the potential disadvantages and to harness their clear advantages in order to increase their effectiveness.

4.3.4 National entities for funding climate change and adaptation

Finally, two other types of institution should be mentioned here due to their increasing relevance for adaptation finance.

The first one is the **National Implementing Entity (NIE)** in the context of the Adaptation Fund. As in other cases, this does not describe a specific type of institution, but rather a set of institutional functions. In the case of the Adaptation Fund, the NIEs are the central element of the direct access approach and serve as an oversight institution – as do the Multilateral Implementing Entities where countries do not chose the direct access route. All three countries which so far have managed to accredit an NIE – Jamaica, Senegal, Uruguay – have chosen existing institutions of a very different kind.⁶¹

In the case of the AF, the formal selection of the projects is basically the role of the government, but the NIE has to submit it to the AF as it will oversee its implementation. In how far a government choses to select and design projects in a participatory manner is largely its own business, with a lack of guidance from the AF.⁶² The key requirement for the NIE accreditation is that they meet the fiduciary standards set by the AF Board, and they “*bear the full responsibility for the overall management of the projects*”.⁶³ The idea behind the NIEs, as explained above, is not that of a policy coordination body and thus it is very different from e.g. Hyogo’s national platforms or the Global Fund’s CCMs. While the CCMs are also a crucial element of the Global Fund’s direct access approach, the independent financial management functions which are the core of the NIEs are performed by other types of institutions in the Global Fund.⁶⁴

National funding entities for overall climate change or specific climate change purposes such as adaptation to some extent have a similar function, but are increasingly being set up independently of a specific funding mechanism in a country-driven manner. A recent paper prepared by Gomez-Etcheverri (2010) analyses such national funding

⁵⁹ The role of the National Steering Committee is restricted to the coordination of funding proposals up to 50.000 USD and does not target national policies

⁶⁰ UNFCCC, 2009

⁶¹ See <http://www.adaptation-fund.org/accreditedNIEs> for information

⁶² See Kaloga and Harmeling, 2011.

⁶³ Adaptation Fund, 2009

⁶⁴ See Craeynest, 2010.

entities from a number of developing countries.⁶⁵ Such entities are more and more being set up to serve as the key recipients of funds from different sources, donor contributions as well as national budget allocations, in order to fund the implementation of national or sector specific climate change strategies. Their intended function then is to disburse the money to those who are tasked to execute projects and programmes, and/or coordination of different financial flows. There are different design options regarding their governance – solely government-governed or by multi-stakeholder committees – as well as regarding the target groups to which funds are released (government institutions only or also to non-governmental stakeholders of a different kind).⁶⁶ Thus, neither an NIE nor a national climate change fund would be the substitute for a national-level institutional arrangement coordinating the national response to climate change, but would for example organise the disbursement of funds (e.g. from the Adaptation Fund or the Green Climate Fund). This could be based on submitted proposals by the national-level arrangement (such as a national multi-stakeholder coordination body). Strengthening both approaches, such funding entities as well as national multi-stakeholder coordinating bodies, is a key basis for an increased and effective devolution of responsibility of funding decisions to national levels, and Gomez-Etcheverri mentions advantages of such a devolution including a more appropriate response to the actual funding complexities than standardised formats at the global level could deliver, improved opportunities to leverage other funds, including those to support the mainstreaming of activities.⁶⁷

Summarising the different aspects analysed in this chapter one can argue that generally the principle “form follows function” seems to be adequate to guide the composition of the specific arrangements.

Furthermore, there are different functions a national-level arrangement can be designed for, and these can broadly be characterised as

- some form of policy coordination, either through a pure government approach or as a multi-stakeholder body; or
- coordination of funding proposals for a specific funding instrument.

The current practice in developing countries is that of an overall climate change approach, in which an adaptation focus can of course be embedded.

The proposal made by South Africa into the UNFCCC process can be seen as a hybrid, because its functions are limited to “support the implementation of climate change related actions that receive support from the UNFCCC process” and not to overall climate change activities (including the non-supported ones), but not being tied to one specific funding instrument.

⁶⁵ Gomez-Etcheverri, 2010

⁶⁶ See also Thornton, 2010

⁶⁷ Gomez-Etcheverri, 2010

5 Conclusions and recommendations

What has become apparent is that on the one hand the current institutional set-up is already complex. It encompasses numerous institutions and is made up of different flows (both information and finance), as can be seen in figure 2 which gives a comprehensive overview of the landscape. Yet it has to be added that some of the illustrated elements and linkage still need to be shaped. This holds for example for the way direct access will be designed under the Green Climate Fund: will the funding proposals be selected by a country-level multi-stakeholder partnership, or will it be a solely government-driven approach as it is the case in the Adaptation Fund? Or will such national coordinating bodies at the same time be the governance body of a national climate change fund? As outlined earlier, it would be ill-advised to follow a one-size-fits-all model, determined at the global level.

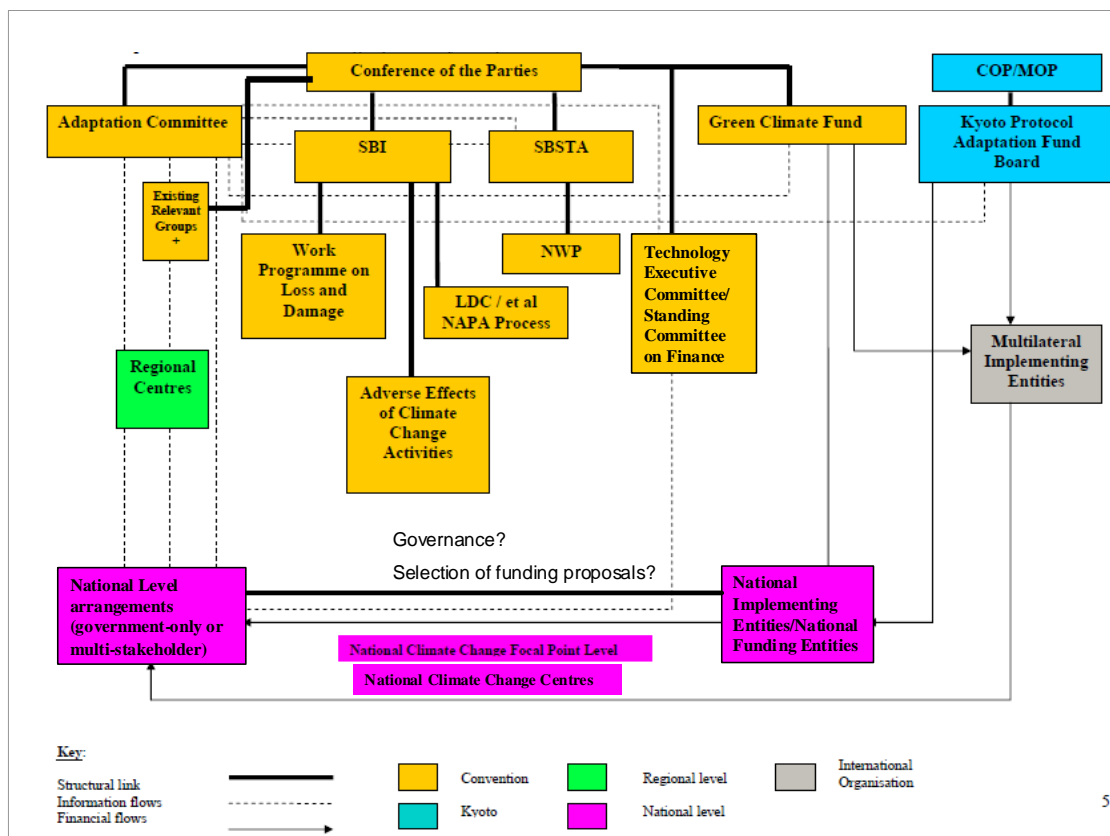


Figure 2: Set-up of adaptation institutions under the UNFCCC

Source: adapted from AOSIS 2011

Nonetheless at the international level guidelines should be developed, which define key process criteria and principles, such as the principles of inclusive participatory processes, building on what has been agreed in Cancún. The Country Coordinating Mechanisms under the Global Fund are an existing example for the combination of international guidelines with the principle of country-led processes.

Given the institutional complexity, the more important it will be to clarify the roles and functions of the different elements in order to increase the overall effectiveness of this institutional system. This is undoubtedly essential at a time of an ever growing adaptation challenge and scarce financial resources. This clarification is required both for the functions of each element as well for the modes of cooperation between them.

Figure 3 provides an outline of the general responsibilities of the different levels.

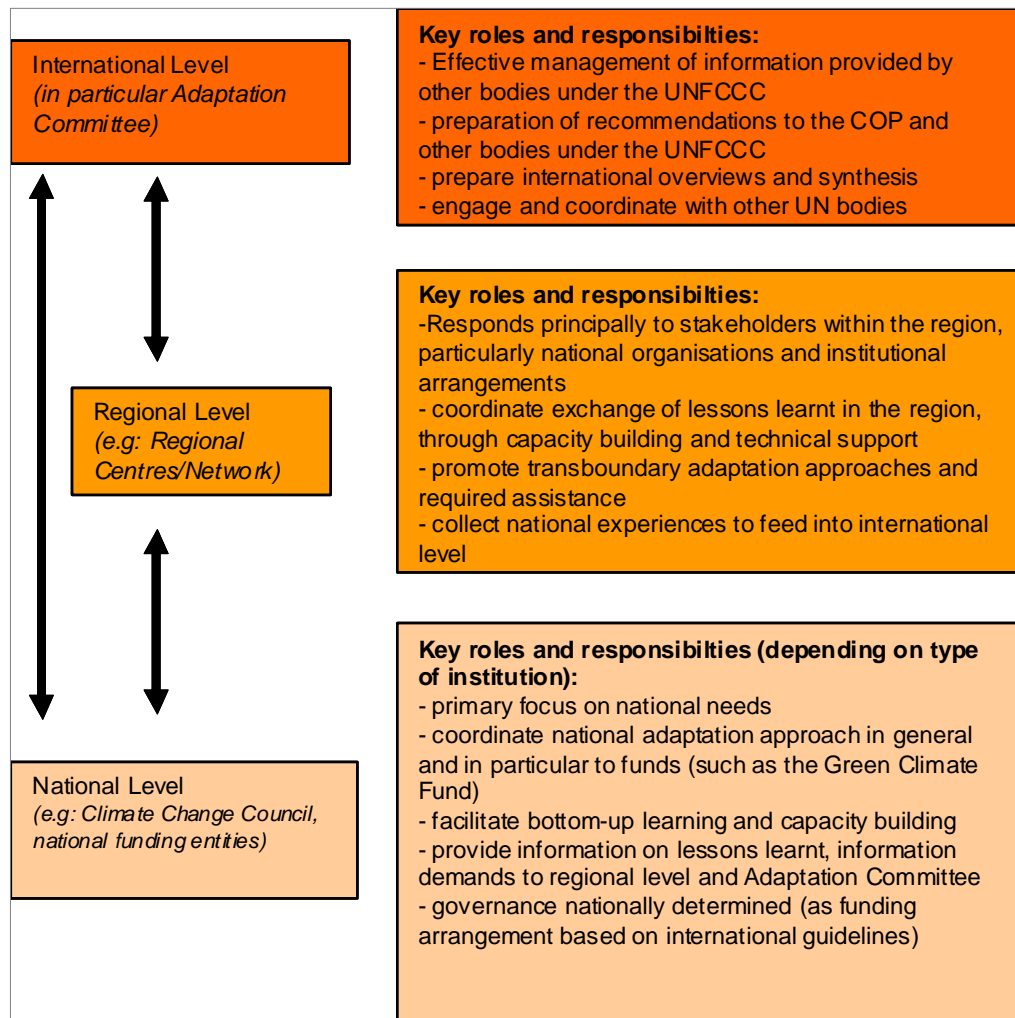


Figure 3: Key responsibilities of the international, regional and national level

Source: own illustration

Based on the elaborations in this paper, the following recommendations are suggested:

A. Recommendations for the Adaptation Committee:

A.1 Set-up a strong Adaptation Committee as the adaptation node under the UNFCCC:

In contrast to the arrangement of the regional and national level, the role of the Adaptation Committee is to be the driver for a more coherent, effective and ambitious approach to adaptation under the UNFCCC. Possible activities include ensuring an effective management of information provided by other bodies under the UNFCCC, including funds, preparing recommendations to the COP and other bodies under the UNFCCC, and preparing international overview and synthesis paper. It should play an important oversight role for the overall implementation of the Cancún Adaptation Framework. This should include evaluating on-going work on adaptation, in relation to the support Parties are receiving, and making recommendations for further action to the COP, SBI and SBSTA, including identifying gaps, and reporting on them. The Adaptation Committee should become the focal point for identifying gaps in adaptation information, research and support available, meaning in the climate finance architecture (in coordination with the Standing Committee on Finance). It must build on a range of experience and information provided by different actors, none of whom perform the full range of functions that the Adaptation Committee now has to undertake. In its work it can build on the existing work and thereby concentrate on *how* to make best use of it in performing its work.

Building up a strong Adaptation Committee will also require that the Committee is not only strong because of its role under the UNFCCC, but because it develops a **high-quality profile** in towards the different world of adaptation actors. Therefore it should seek to involve a broad range of stakeholders in its work in a transparent and open manner, to increase interaction with these and make best use of their experience. As a particular means for building up this profile, the Adaptation Committee could regularly convene an **International Conference** (e.g. every two years) to gather experts from other IGOs, NGOs, private sector etc. in order to share and highlight best practices, as well as review the implementation of the Cancún Adaptation Framework and progress in the adaptation finance architecture. Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction under the ISDR could be a model for this.⁶⁸

A.2 Shape the Adaptation Committee in a complementary manner:

When designing the modalities of the Adaptation Committee, the strengths and advantages of the different levels (national, regional, global) as well as the principles outlined in this report should form an important basis, in order to shape the Adaptation Committee in a complementary manner. Fleshing out which where functions can be carried out best could also help to straighten the negotiating agenda and thereby facilitate that a good agreement on the operationalization of the Adaptation Committee can be reached at COP17 in Durban.

⁶⁸ See <http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2011/>

This complementarity should be looked at at the vertical and the horizontal level:

Vertical level:

Regarding the interplay with the regional and national level, in addition to the general division of labour (see Figure 4), the following particular tasks seem relevant:

- to assess what kind of assistance Parties would need in order to establish national-level arrangements, regional centres and networks, and in improving the flow of information, building on past deliberations such as the 2010 NWP workshop on regional centres;
- Prepare recommendations to the COP on how to advance the role of regional centres and networks, including on how they can be strengthened and on how cooperation can be enhanced, and the overall interplay with the national level arrangements; however it seems to be useful to prepare such recommendations on the basis of more elaborated views by the Parties (see below).
- To develop a work programme to facilitate institutional capacity-building at various levels and for different stakeholders, including proposals to execute it in the most effective ways. Mandating and strengthening regional institutions to do such kind of capacity building might be an effective arrangement, taking into account their existing activities.

Of course, all this has to happen on the basis of views expressed and information provided by the key beneficiaries – the Parties.

Horizontal level:

On the horizontal level, the Adaptation Committee should seek to build its work on the adaptation-relevant information provided by other bodies, such as the different expert groups, as well as express specific requests to them on information that the Adaptation Committee requires to effectively perform its functions. With regard to adaptation-relevant funding institutions, it should take into account the experience and challenges identified for example in the Adaptation Fund or in the (future) Green Climate Fund. Overall it should provide recommendations to the COP on how to improve the coherence of adaptation under the UNFCCC, including the funding streams. Furthermore, it should seek to engage, coordinate and explore synergies with other bodies outside the UNFCCC, in particular other UN bodies such as CBD or UNCCD.

A.3 Reflect lessons from shaping the Technology mechanism: with its Technology Executive Committee and the Climate Technology Centre, which inter alia is tasked to “facilitate a Network of national, regional, sectoral and international technology networks, organizations and initiatives”, the technology negotiation process has to consider challenges very similar, and partially overlapping, to the adaptation debate. Thus, further deliberations should take into account the (early) lessons from shaping the Technology Mechanism and consider implications for the institutional set-up in adaptation. This could include holding a workshop⁶⁹ focused on regional centres and networks and the interplay with national-level arrangements and the UNFCCC level.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Content and format could be similar to the technology-workshop prior the 14th LCA session in Bangkok.

⁷⁰ This workshop could build on the workshop held under the Nairobi Work Programme in 2010, see FCCC/SBSTA/2010/8.

B. Regional cooperation and climate change adaptation:

Regional cooperation on climate change adaptation can have multiple facets, from sharing information and experience among neighbouring countries to concrete policy cooperation for example on transboundary issues such as water or regional insurance pools. Particular roles and responsibilities for regional level institutions are

- responding to stakeholders within the region, particularly national institutional arrangements and their organisations on their adaptation needs;
- coordinating exchange of lessons learnt within the region;
- promote transboundary adaptation approaches and required assistance;
- collect national experiences to feed to the international level.

B.1 Overall increase support for regional cooperation: Increasing support in particular for regional cooperation activities, including pilot projects, is required to expand lessons learnt beyond countries and borders. Currently, multilateral adaptation funds set little incentives for transboundary cooperation projects.

B.2 Consolidate and enhance the views on, and the role of regional centres and networks

For the role of regional institutions in the UNFCCC context, the following activities should be pursued:

Mapping regional centres⁷¹: prepare an overview (as a report and/or a database) of regional centres that work on aspects related to adaptation.⁷² Relevant information to be included could be: sectoral focus (e.g. agriculture, water, ecosystems etc.), scope (e.g. data collection, capacity building, policy & planning etc.), countries covered. Such a database could for example be developed by the UNFCCC Secretariat, which already maintains a database on local coping strategies, and could facilitate the effective use and improvement of linkages between the centres.⁷³

Advance the basis for negotiations through a call for submissions on the specific roles, expectations and modalities of regional centres. This would also require governments to advance their thinking and specify their expectations towards regional centres, in particular with regard to whether the establishment of new centres will actually be required or not. The call could also include the request to identify regional institutions with a mandate relevant for the adaptation agenda.

Learn from the UNCCD process: In the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, regional coordination has played an important role since its beginning. In particular in the run-up to COP9 of the UNCCD held in 2009, extensive work was undertaken to review the experience of regional coordination and to propose further enhancement of such coordination, including through submissions from regional groups. It is advisable to take these lessons into account when further considering how to improve regional coordination in the adaptation context, which of course has some significant overlaps with the battle against desertification.

⁷¹ Regional in this context means comprising several countries (nor regional within a country).

⁷² This proposal was already made during the 2010 NWP workshop on regional centres, see FCCC/SBSTA/2010/8.

⁷³ See <http://maindb.unfccc.int/public/adaptation/>

B.3 Promote regional transboundary adaptation cooperation:

Some existing examples have already demonstrated the importance of regional cooperation in the face of climate change, for example the SPREP or the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) as well as the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Facility (CCRIF). This need is particularly obvious where transboundary resources are impacted through climate change, such as in the case of water. From an institutional perspective, addressing such problems can be particularly achieved through⁷⁴

- coordinated actions among countries sharing natural resources, such as lakes and river basins;
- awareness raising among stakeholders at various levels within e.g. a river basin;
- capacity building and research programmes to build up workforce that is qualified to understand and manage the complexities of transboundary systems and the impacts of climate change
- development of comprehensive multi-country action plans
- specific adaptive and infrastructure interventions.

It has been recognised that in order to achieve coordinated action at the highest political level the politically strongest regional cooperation frameworks need to be taken into account, which often are regional economic cooperation institutions, such as for example Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) or the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

C. Strengthen national-level arrangements:

C.1 Support and enhance country-level multi-stakeholder partnerships for national coordination:

The establishment and strengthening of country-level multi-stakeholder partnerships for coordinating national action on adaptation or climate change in general should be supported. While there should be no prescription on how these arrangements should look like in detail, they should follow general principles, such as

- full participation of the full sway of stakeholders from different sectors and interests (development, environment, climate science, etc), including from civil society, local communities and marginalized populations, local governments, indigenous people, and parliaments in the development of national adaptation and climate change strategies and planning processes;
- support for effective facilitation to allow different voices and competing views to be heard and any difficult trade off managed to support effective decision making;
- full participation of all relevant stakeholders in the implementation process;
- complete reporting on participation and on the extent to which the views of these stakeholders were reflected in strategies and implementation; and
- a robust monitoring and evaluation process of the implementation of climate finance that includes full participation of stakeholders.

⁷⁴ Petermann, 2008

The important role of these mechanisms should also be taken into account in the design of the new Green Climate Fund. Furthermore, they are key to gather and identify sub-national adaptation needs, and this information will also be relevant for the Adaptation Committee to arrive at an overall picture of adaptation in developing countries.

C.2 Strengthen national and sub-national civil society networks

National and sub-national civil society networks play an important role in gathering and disseminating information on adaptation practices as well as funding channels both downstream, from the global and national level to the local level, as well as upstream, from the local level to the national and global level.⁷⁵ They are often also well connected across borders. Strengthening these networks, e.g. through international support, is important in order to allow them playing this role in an independent manner.

C.2 Increase capacity building through concrete adaptation projects funded internationally:

Given the overall challenges of adaptation it is crucial to significantly scale-up the support for adaptation in developing countries. Concrete adaptation projects and programmes should, where appropriate, also be linked to institutional capacity building. For example experience from the Adaptation Fund also suggests, where many submitted proposals include capacity building and are sometimes designed to contribute to national-level arrangements⁷⁶. In this sense building institutional capacity is also learning-by-doing.

D. Improving and rationalising the financial mechanism under the Convention:

The interplay of the different institutional levels can be a crucial source of knowledge and understanding on how best to increase the effectiveness of the financial mechanism under the Convention with regard to adaptation. Of course there is an overall intense debate on rationalising and reforming the financial mechanism, which can not be addressed in-depth in the limited scope of this paper.⁷⁷ However, what is important here is that an effective interplay of the institutions on the different level contributes to increasing the overall effectiveness of the financial mechanism with regard to adaptation, since the flow of large financial resources will in the end determine to a significant extent the actual impacts of international cooperation on adaptation in developing countries. For example, feeding back experience from the national level e.g. on how to develop coordinated responses to the different adaptation funds, and suggestions how to streamline the financial mechanism would be important to simplify access for developing countries.

With regard to the Green Climate Fund for example, this could mean that when the Green Climate Fund designs its access rules it should develop its guidance based on the already existing approaches of national-level arrangements – some of which have been outlined here, including national funding entities – to benefit from existing structures and experience developed domestically.

⁷⁵ See also Mueller and Sharma, 2011.

⁷⁶ The latter is for example the case in the Guatemala project, see <http://www.adaptation-fund.org/node/1354>.

⁷⁷ See e.g. Mueller and Gomez-Etcheverri, 2009.

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Germanwatch

Following the motto "Observing, Analysing, Acting", Germanwatch has been actively promoting North-South equity and the preservation of livelihoods since 1991. In doing so, we focus on the politics and economics of the North with their worldwide consequences. The situation of marginalised people in the South is the starting point of our work. Together with our members and supporters as well as with other actors in civil society we intend to represent a strong lobby for sustainable development. We endeavour to approach our aims by advocating fair trade relations, responsible financial markets, compliance with human rights, and the prevention of dangerous climate change.

Germanwatch is funded by membership fees, donations, grants from the "Stiftung Zukunftsfähigkeit" (Foundation for Sustainability), and by grants from a number of other public and private donors. You can also help to achieve the goals of Germanwatch and become a member or support our work with your donation:

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