

# Mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience

A integrated approach to help decision makers decipher and incorporate risk assessments into urban and regional planning



## Approach

Effective mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) across different sectors is vital for resilient development; “because DRM is not a sector in itself, but a process to protect development progress, reduce losses and support growth” (Mackay and Bilton, 2003). Mainstreaming is a social justice-led approach to policy making in which equal opportunity principles, strategies and practices are integrated into the everyday work of the government and other public bodies. It has three key characteristics: it is a deliberate process; there are multiple routes and/or outputs that can be targeted (e.g. policies, plans and legislation), and it should take place across multiple levels of government.

The decentralization of DRM “to local authorities is a critical element of good governance. However this is often undermined by constraints due to local capacity, financing difficulties, challenges with cross-government coordination and low levels of citizen participation in risk-management activities (William 2011). Experience has shown that in order for decentralization to be effective other supporting aspects are needed [such as:] strong national leadership on DRM; mechanisms to enforce DRM policies; high levels of public awareness about risks and risk reduction; adequate technical capacity to undertake risk-reduction actions; and incentives that create strong political interest in risk-informed planning” (Scott and Tarazona, 2011).

## Methodology

As a means to reduce risk and encourage the development of prosperous, equitable and sustainable societies, GeoAdaptive applies a specific mainstreaming methodology including processes that include the results of risk assessments and climate change adaptation within current planning documents at all levels of government (e.g. local: city master plans; regional: State Development Plans; and national: five-year plans). Through this approach diverse Risk Profiles are developed, indicating specific areas for investment and strategic priorities.

## MAINSTREAMING DEVELOPMENT

GeoAdaptive incorporates a robust approach that divides mainstreaming into three phases that provide planners and decision makers with a tool that allows them to understand climate risk, the application of natural ecosystem services, and the ability to run a cost-benefit analysis.

- **ORGANIZATIONAL MAINSTREAMING:** Most mainstreaming strategies fall under this category. Within this phase we develop a technical support system for the definition of priority actions and recommendations. Following the analysis of the political and institutional framework, we identify structural and non-structural measures for implementation. Finally we determine the economic viability of the investment, analyzing the specific risks and benefits. This process is conducted by our technical experts in coordination with local or national task groups, or units for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation.
- **INTERNAL MAINSTREAMING:** Our methodology supports the development of government-based decision processes that are based on local laws, are consensus oriented, participatory, efficient, equitable, transparent and accountable. We aim to increase the culture and effective practice of DRR amongst local institutional actors ensuring that the local and national authorities can function adequately during risk situations. The different risk profiles, combined with accessible and timely information on the economic returns of risk-informed decisions and risk-reducing investments can be a strong incentive for local policy. Considering that a lack of coordination and cooperation is still one of the key obstacles to achieving an effective mainstreaming process, we also encourage the active involvement of different stakeholders in the internal mainstreaming process, including the private sector and non-governmental environmental protection groups.

• **EDUCATIONAL MAINSTREAMING:** Our approach aims to promote a better integration of science policy with risk reduction and adaptation strategies. The participatory nature of our approach with universities, the private sector or representatives from community organizations provides us with expert knowledge on local conditions, the validation of analytical results, as well as the identification of site-based adaptation strategies and the opportunity to raise local awareness. Overall this phase begins with stakeholder validation of the results from the organizational and institutional mainstreaming phases (e.g. scenario results, forecasts from prior assessments, etc.).

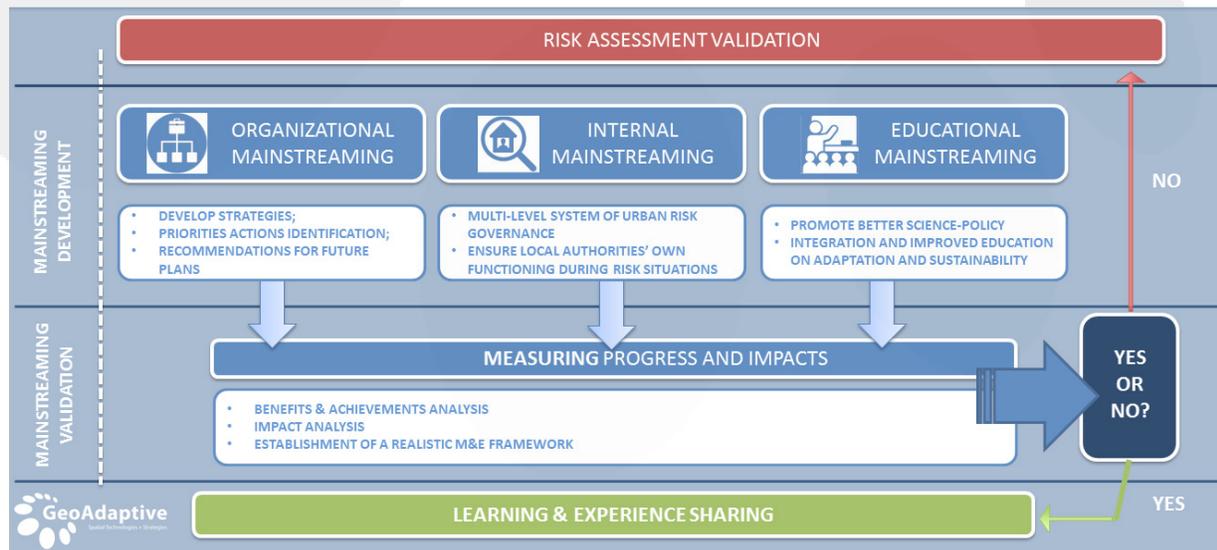
#### MAINSTREAMING VALIDATION

Parting from the results obtained by the Educational mainstreaming, we evaluate the benefits of the strategies and measures foreseen in the prior phases. Climate-related DRM legislation must be complemented with appropriate monitoring systems and enable strategies at the planning, execution and evaluation stages. However, monitoring mechanisms (particularly in developing countries) are often ad hoc, inconsistent, lacking transparency, or non-existent. This presents a challenge to policy-makers seeking to institutionalize risk-informed planning through national legislation. Therefore, our final validation is obtained through the identification of goals from local authorities, an evaluation of the impacts and the development of a monitoring and evaluation process.

## Our strengths

- 1. Implementing supportive policies:** Within Internal Mainstreaming we recognize the importance of strengthening political commitments, the implementation of policy and institutional frameworks that incorporate disaster risk assessment, facilitate the investment of requisite resources, and strengthen the social capital of vulnerable communities.
- 2. Utilizing local experience and wisdom in risk assessment:** We recognize the importance of people's experience of disasters and mitigation actions. Hence, mainstreaming traditional and local knowledge during our participative approach ensures that the process is responsive to the local conditions of the communities at risk, thereby enhancing its effectiveness.
- 3. Basing risk assessment on information management:** Starting with a risk assessment process that considers local information and data, we recognize the basic governance responsibility of providing information on potential and actual risks.
- 4. Ensuring professional management of risk assessment systems:** Ensuring professionalism in risk assessments requires investment in data, information and communication systems and in the development the requisite institutional and human capability to manage the process.

## GeoAdaptive's Mainstreaming Process



#### Main References

Benson, C. and Twigg, J. (2007) *Tools for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction: guidance notes for development organizations*. Geneva: ProVention

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