

Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)

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Ecosystem-based Adaptation in the Non-papers

IUCN welcomes the references in the negotiating texts before AWG-LCA to the several links between ecosystems and adaptation. These include references to ecosystem-based adaptation, to the vulnerability of ecosystems, and to the importance of ensuring that all adaptation interventions are environmentally sound. This position paper aims to clarify and strengthen references to ecosystem-based adaptation in particular.

What is Ecosystem-based Adaptation¹?

Ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) is the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services² as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. Ecosystem-based adaptation uses the sustainable management, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems to provide services that enable people to adapt to the impacts of climate change. It aims to maintain and increase the resilience and reduce the vulnerability of ecosystems and people in the face of the adverse effects of climate change. EbA is a means of adaptation that is readily available to the rural poor, can generate social, economic and cultural co-benefits, contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, and build on the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities. In addition, healthy, well managed ecosystems have climate change mitigation potential. For example, through the sequestration and storage of carbon in healthy forests, wetlands, and coastal ecosystems.

Ecosystem-based Adaptation activities should be part of a broader portfolio of adaptation measures.

Ecosystem-based adaptation can be applied at different geographical scales (local, regional, national) and within various time frames (short, medium and long term). It can be implemented as projects and as part of overall adaptation programmes. It is most effective when implemented as part of a broad portfolio of adaptation and development interventions, such as early warning systems, education, and physical infrastructure.

EbA promotes policy coherence

In promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, ecosystem-based adaptation strategies provide policy coherence with other national and international commitments. For maximum effectiveness, these strategies should be aligned with ongoing action under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other relevant international commitments.

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¹ This text draws from and is consistent with: *CONNECTING BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION*- Report of the Second Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

² Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from nature, such as food regulation, storm protection, food, clean water, fuel, shelter etc.

Analysis of references related to ecosystem-based adaptation in the UNFCCC Non-paper 31 on Adaptation, and Non-paper 33 on shared vision

The role of ecosystems in adaptation has been referred to in various ways in the current draft negotiating text (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.2) and supporting documentation, including the Non-papers on adaptation (31) and on the shared vision (33). Below, IUCN provides some guidance on how references on ecosystems and adaptation are used in the current documentation to refer to Ecosystem-based Adaptation, and to the separate issue of vulnerability of ecosystems to climate change.

1. Ecosystem-based Adaptation, as defined by the CBD's AHTEG³:

*“Ecosystem-based adaptation is the use of **biodiversity and ecosystem services** as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change.”*

References to ecosystem-based adaptation included in the non-papers are shown in Annex 1. IUCN suggests using clear terminology in the negotiating text in these instances that is in-line with the CBD's definition of ecosystem-based adaptation.

2. The negotiating text also refers to the **adaptation of ecosystems, including particularly vulnerable ecosystems. This means enhancing the ability of biodiversity and ecosystems themselves to adapt to the impacts of climate change. As referred to in Article 2 of the UNFCCC, the ability of ecosystems to adapt is dependent on stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations. Article 8 (h) also makes reference to the vulnerability of “Countries with fragile ecosystems, including mountainous ecosystems...”.**

UNFCCC Article 2:

“...stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change...”

³ **CONNECTING BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION-** Report of the Second Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Annex 1

References in the Non-papers to the role of ecosystems in adaptation, which are *consistent with the CBD definition of ecosystem-based adaptation*.

Text in Adaptation Non-paper 31

Paragraph	Reference	Observation
1.	Adaptation [shall] [should] encompass action to reduce the vulnerability and increase the resilience of ecological and social systems and economic sectors to present and future climatic changes, in order to minimize the threats to life and livelihoods, assets, amenities, ecosystems and sustainable development.	The text in bold encompasses ecosystem-based adaptation actions.
7 (a.)	All Parties [shall] [should] undertake actions at all levels, including strengthening enabling environments, sharing of data, information and knowledge, and protecting and sustainable managing natural resources and ecosystems, and the goods and services they provide, to facilitate adaptation	The text in bold refers to ecosystem-based adaptation consistent with the CBD definition.
10.	To enhance adaptation action at national level, all Parties, in line with a country-driven approach and taking into account local and national adaptation plans, as well as gender and ecosystem considerations , [shall] [should] [may] implement specific programmes, projects, activities, strategies and measures, including...	The text in bold implies taking into account ecosystem-based adaptation opportunities, although could be further clarified to state "...gender and ecosystem-based adaptation considerations...".
Annex 1 (u)	Strengthening environmental and natural resources management and enforcement	This text recognizes the importance of ecosystem-based adaptation, consistent with the CBD definition.

Text in Shared vision Non-paper 33

Annex (issues under consideration in other contact groups)	2. Adaptation actions include those necessary to restore the resilience of ecosystems and their productivity to enable sustainable economic development.	The text refers to ecosystem-based adaptation, consistent with the CBD definition.
Annex (issues under consideration in other contact groups)	4. Necessitating a shared vision for actively promoting sustainable community-based ecosystem management, conservation and restoration activities, where appropriate to support adaptation.	The text refers to ecosystem-based adaptation, consistent with the CBD definition.