

Mountain EbA Program



Using Nature-based Solutions to Adapt to Climate Change

Healthy mountain ecosystems help buffer the impacts of climate change for local communities, wildlife and downstream populations worldwide. Locally, mountain people rely on their surrounding environment for water, food, pasture and the raw materials upon which they build their livelihoods. Further downstream, towns and cities depend on mountain water for drinking, agriculture and industry.

Efforts to manage, conserve or restore natural environments can help people adapt to climate change by taking advantage of a healthy ecosystem's natural resilience. For example, programs that enable mountain farmers to sustainably cultivate, harvest and market valuable native crops provide a dependable source of income, promote biodiversity conservation and help maintain healthy soil. Similarly, by carefully managing a mountain watershed, erosion and pollution are reduced and native plant species and wildlife can rebound. This also helps ensure sufficient water supply for local communities and for populations further downstream. **These nature-based solutions are examples of Ecosystem-based Adaptation, or EbA.**

The Ecosystem-based Adaptation approach is widely recognized as an important strategy for adapting to the impacts of climate change. It is cost-effective, yields multiple benefits, and can be implemented by communities themselves. But in mountain areas, on-the-ground EbA measures have not been widely implemented.

To help build support for EbA approaches in mountains, both on the ground and in national and international policy, **The Mountain Institute (TMI) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) have joined forces to launch a three-year program working on EbA in key mountain regions.** The formal title is "Scaling Up Mountain Ecosystem-based Adaptation: Building Evidence, Replicating Success, and Informing Policy." Our goal is to expand EbA work started during the "Mountain EbA Flagship Programme" in the **Himalayas (Nepal), Mount Elgon (Uganda) and the Andes (Peru)** and to support the EbA approach being adopted in neighboring **Bhutan, Kenya and Colombia**. Our Mountain EbA Program seeks to benefit local people directly, as well as the millions downstream who depend on the water and other benefits that come from mountains. We will also identify and assist conservation and development projects already underway that could benefit from Mountain EbA practices. The EbA experience and data we develop through this program will be instrumental to building wider support and generating financing for EbA within national governments and at international forums.

For more about the Mountain EbA Program, please visit Mountain.org and IUCN.org.

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Putting EbA to Work in Peru

The Mountain EbA Program will continue to work in Peru with mountain communities in the Nor-Yauyos Cochab Landscape Reserve. Our goal is to help them adapt to present and future climate change impacts. Currently, up to 70 percent of the local population depends on sheep and cattle grazing for their livelihoods. This makes them strongly dependent on healthy grassland ecosystems and a steady supply of water. By restoring wetland and

grassland ecosystems in the Reserve, local communities can better manage the declining water supply, reduce erosion and the risk of natural disasters while also improving habitat for native species such as the vicuña.

A small, wild relative of the camel, vicuña live above 3,000 meters in the central Andes and are sheared every two years in a traditional roundup known as the *chaccu*. Their fleece is very soft, warm and light, producing a wool finer than cashmere. Our Mountain EbA project in Peru will help mountain communities continue to improve their methods for managing wild vicuña and its habitat. Our goal is to help ensure the survival of this unique species, as well as the sustainable source of income they provide. At the same time, we will work with communities to protect water sources and revive natural pastures. Both are key for managing livestock in a sustainable manner.

Working in partnership with with local communities, we'll develop the EbA solutions that are best-suited to their specific needs. Our project will support local efforts to restore, protect or expand key ecosystem services identified as crucial by community members. The Mountain EbA Program will also



coordinate with national, regional and local governments to build support for applying nature-based adaptation methods more widely.

The benefits of healthy ecosystems in the Peruvian Andes extend way beyond local populations. Downstream from our EbA project, there are 10 million inhabitants in the capital city of Lima who also rely on these mountains as one of their main sources of water.

Mountain EbA Program Collaborators

- Ministry of Environment of Peru
- National Service of Natural Protected Areas
- Nor Yauyos Cochab Landscape Reserve
- Campesino Communities of Canchayllo, Miraflores, Tanta and Tomas



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