

SCALING UP MOUNTAIN EbA

Using nature-based solutions to adapt to climate change



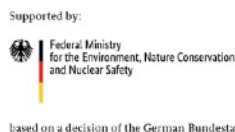
Healthy mountain ecosystems help buffer the impacts of climate change for local communities, wildlife and downstream populations worldwide. Locally, mountain people rely on their surrounding environment for water, food, pasture and the raw materials that serve as the foundation of their livelihoods. 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 work on EbA projects in key mountain regions.** The formal title of this three-year initiative is "Scaling Up Mountain Ecosystem-based Adaptation: Building Evidence, Replicating Success, and Informing Policy." It is funded by a grant from the German government.

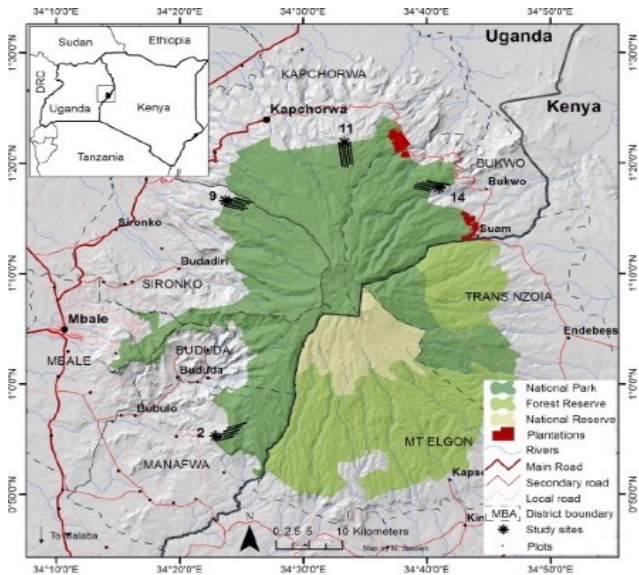
Our goal is to expand EbA work started during the "Mountain EbA Flagship Programme" in the **Himalayas (Nepal), Mount Elgon (Uganda) and the Andes (Peru)** and to support the EbA approach being adopted in neighboring **Bhutan, Kenya and Colombia**. Our Mountain EbA Program seeks to benefit local people 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 in building wider support and generating financing for EbA within national governments and at international forums.

For more about Scaling Up Mountain EbA, please visit our websites:
Mountain.org and IUCN.org.



Putting EbA to Work in Uganda

The Mt. Elgon ecosystem straddles eastern Uganda and western Kenya. Resident communities are particularly vulnerable to climate change due to rapid population growth and a strong dependence on the mountain's natural resources. To help local communities better manage the declining water supply, our project will advance work to restore catchment areas, including riverbank rehabilitation. Our EbA solutions will also help bring water from the River Sipi closer to mountain communities, drastically shortening the long distances women and children have to trek to fetch water.



Mt. Elgon National Park, Uganda/Kenya Border

The Mountain EbA project will use lessons learned from previous work in the Sipi Catchment area to better support interactions between the communities and the National Park. In partnership with the Kapchorwa District Local Government, the Uganda Wildlife Authority, local communities and local experts, we will work to understand the impact of climate change on mountain communities in this area. We will then develop baseline indicators and a framework for monitoring and evaluation. With this scientific foundation in place, we will continue to work in close partnership with communities to identify, prioritize and develop adaptive solutions to key challenges they face. **Our goal is to achieve healthier, local ecosystems and greater resilience in Mt. Elgon communities.**

Mountain EbA Project Collaborators in Uganda

- Ministry of Water and Environment of Uganda
- Uganda Wildlife Authority
- Kapchorwa District Local Government
- Local Communities in Kapchorwa District

The Mountain EbA project in Uganda will build upon the ongoing work with communities in the Mt. Elgon National Park Landscape. The Mt. Elgon ecosystem covers an area of about 772,300 hectares—the higher, forested slopes are protected as National Parks both in Kenya and Uganda. This ecosystem serves as a catchment area for the drainage systems of Lakes Victoria, Turkana and Kyoga. Water quality and quantity in this area are essential for mountain communities whose livelihoods depend on a healthy ecosystem.

From western Kenya and eastern Uganda to the wider Nile Basin, **mountains are a source of water, fuel, timber, fiber, traditional medicine and food, as well as handicraft and building materials.** Mt. Elgon communities are dealing with degraded land and depleted forests. Some wetlands and forests are now farms, and some riverbanks are being cultivated. Overharvesting of forest products and encroachment by settlements and agriculture are key threats to these forest ecosystems and have lead to landslides and floods.



Sipi Falls, Sipi Catchment, Mt. Elgon National Park

To learn more about Mountain EbA projects in Uganda, please contact:

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