

# SCALING UP MOUNTAIN EbA

*Using nature-based solutions to adapt to climate change*



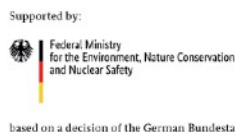
Healthy mountain ecosystems help buffer the impacts of climate change for local communities, wildlife and downstream populations worldwide. Locally, mountain people rely on their surrounding environment for water, food, pasture and the raw materials that serve as the foundation of their livelihoods. 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 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](http://Mountain.org) and [IUCN.org](http://IUCN.org).**



## Putting EbA to Work in Kenya

Mount Elgon is a trans-boundary ecosystem shared between Kenya and Uganda. This important watershed nourishes a vast array of rivers, including the Nile, and maintains water quality, quantity and evenness of flow due to its varied vegetation types and elevations. It is of high biodiversity importance and a vital resource, providing ecosystem goods and services to about four million people and a considerable live-stock population. However, the health of this mountain ecosystem is threatened on several fronts. Chal-lenges include encroachment and land fragmentation, both driven by local communities with high pop-ulation densities and a strong dependence on rain-fed agriculture. Overharvesting of wood products from the forest is another challenge along with the many uncertainties of a rapidly changing climate. Consequently, this ecosystem is less able to provide the many services required for resilient livelihoods and economic development, and it is increasingly vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change such as floods and landslides.



The Mountain EbA project in Kenya is being implemented on Chepkitala National Reserve, gazetted in 2000 as a trust land owned by the Bungoma County Government but managed by the Kenya Wildlife Service. Before its gazettelement, the local Ogiek indigenous community owned this place as their ancient homeland. Since 2000, they have been forcefully evicted from their homeland which has resulted in debates about ownership, tenure, and access rights. The Ogiek subsequently took the matter to court for arbitration. The matter is still in court and they have a strong case supported by a provision on land tenure in Kenya's 2010 constitution that allows local communities to directly own trust lands.

The Mountain EbA Kenya project in the Chepkitala site is seeking additional financial resources to support key ecosystem-based adaptation measures in the Reserve: 1) protect and stabilize springs located closer to the villages to improve access to clean water and to ensure its efficient use; 2) establish gravity-fed water systems from perennial rivers to ensure access to clean water in the villages; 3) re-forest using indigenous tree species—filling forest gaps where trees have fallen to sustain and increase the tree cover; 4) remove unpalatable manyatta grass as part of the process to enrich pastures with grass species that are better for grazing; and 5) enhance local products such as milk and honey by including associated value chain and eco-tourism opportunities.



Our project also supports the Kenya Wildlife Service in developing the Kenya Wildlife Adaptation Strategy.

### Mountain EbA Project Collaborators in Kenya

- Ogiek Community in Chepkitala National Reserve
- Chepkitala Indigenous People Development Project
- Kenya Wildlife Service

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

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