



LoCAL and Nature-based Solutions



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Nature-based solutions (NBS) and sustainable natural resource management (SNRM) play a vital role in protecting and bolstering ecosystems, whether used separately or in combination. The Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL)—a standard, internationally recognized mechanism designed and managed by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)—delivers NBS and SNRM at the local level around four workstreams:

1. Awareness and capacities
2. Mainstreaming and investments
3. Financing mechanism
4. Outreach and learning

1. Awareness and capacities

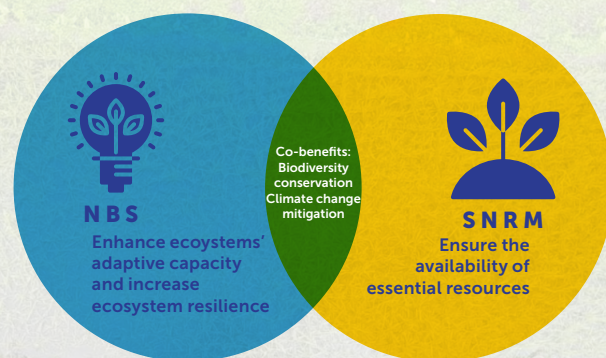
Sensitization and capacity building at the local level is an essential tool for raising the awareness and capacities of local actors to respond and adapt to the impacts of climate change in an appropriate and sustainable manner. For example:

- Together with implementing partner SOS Children Villages Ghana, UNCDF-LoCAL—as part of the Boosting Green Employment and Enterprise Opportunities in Ghana (GrEEn) Project—carried out training sessions for over 400 local farmers on the **production of organic pesticides and on organic manure** using farm waste and animal waste.
- In Mali, 35 farmers from 10 villages completed training on **composting and fertilization** techniques for soil and crops.

LoCAL also supports science-based decision-making using **climate risk vulnerability assessments (CRVAs)** to implement climate change adaptation effectively and sustainably—which is essential for effective planning by communities that are hampered by limited access to climate data. These assessments provide an entry point to integrate NBS and SNRM.

NBS and SNRM explained

NBS and SNRM are solutions that work with nature to address societal problems—in this instance, achieving the globally agreed-upon Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and bolstering action on adaptation to the impacts of climate change in least developed countries, African nations and small island developing states. The Convention on Biological Diversity has established that ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) “should be integrated into broader adaptation and development strategies to maintain and increase resilience and reduce vulnerability of ecosystems and people to adverse effects of climate change.” NBS and SNRM are in line with the convention’s criteria for EbA.



CRVA for Uganda

Uganda’s LoCAL-supported CRVA provides the necessary baseline to define adaptation and biodiversity actions and identify impactful areas of support for NBS, including ecosystem-based approaches relevant to the local context. Based on the CRVA, a preliminary set of adaptation options—including NBS—were identified to guide the LoCAL investment selection process. These include:

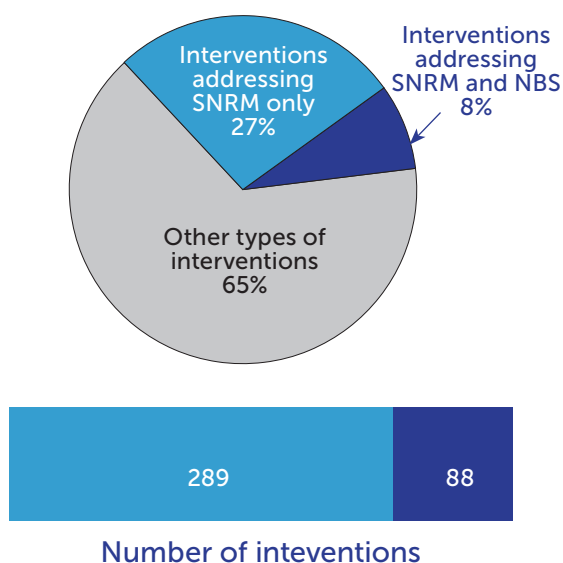
- Bioengineering (vegetation plantation) for erosion protection around infrastructure
- Restoration of degraded water catchment areas through tree planting and agroforestry
- Ecosystem-based watershed management and rainwater harvesting
- Promotion of soil conservation and management at the catchment level

Similar CRVAs supported by LoCAL have been prepared or are now being drafted for Ghana, Mali, Niger and São Tomé and Príncipe.

2. Mainstreaming and investments

An assessment of 1,062 LoCAL investments made between January 2020 and May 2023 in 11 countries—Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Cambodia, The Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Niger and Tanzania—revealed a **range of adaptation strategies** are being leveraged to address climate change impacts through the conservation and rehabilitation of ecosystems. In line with the LoCAL approach of using **community consultations** to define adaptation interventions, the decision to leverage NBS and SNRM solutions is driven by the participating communities. This bottom-up approach underscores the symbiosis of NBS and SNRM with locally led adaptation approaches. The assessment—using the LoCAL-developed Assessing Climate Change Adaptation Framework—quantified the extent to which LoCAL

results have contributed to increased resilience through NBS and SNRM.



3. Financing mechanism

LoCAL supports countries in establishing and deploying performance-based climate resilience grant (PBCRG) systems. Each country-based mechanism includes a set of **minimum conditions** local governments have to meet each year to access the grants; this incentivizes resilience-building. Countries also use a **menu of eligible investments** that are appropriate for local government intervention—taking into account their mandates, CRVA findings, nationally determined contributions and national adaptation plan. Investment menus vary by region and ecosystem, taking into account specific local circumstances.

In designing or updating the design of a LoCAL country-based mechanism, the definition of the minimum conditions, performance measures and menu of eligible investments can serve as **entry points to reflect and address NBS and SNRM**,

based on each country's individual circumstances. LoCAL uses partnerships to leverage the power of PBCRGs for greater adoption of NBS and SNRM—for example, at the global level with Denmark and Sida, at the regional level with ICIMOD and at the country level with country governments.

Burkina Faso's investment menu references the country's nationally determined contribution, which highlights the potential of climate-smart agriculture, renewable energies and traditional know-how. Areas for interventions in Burkina Faso include:

- Sustainable agriculture adapted to climate change
- Agroforestry
- Water, sanitation and health
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Bioclimatic infrastructure and construction



4. Outreach and learning

As part of its outreach and learning agenda, LoCAL makes regular submissions to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change bodies. Also, LoCAL and its member countries engaged at COP26, COP27 and COP28, hosting a Locally Led Adaptation Pavilion—and thus highlighting about 50 events each year, many of which focused on NBS and SNRM.

Lessons learned

LoCAL is exploring leveraging its PBCRG system to further promote the following approaches:

- Investing in robust evidence to inform decision-making processes
- Working with indigenous communities to tap their extensive SNRM knowledge and practices
- Promoting practices that balance resource use with conservation—as with LoCAL-supported interventions in Benin, Mali and Niger.



Way forward

LoCAL looks to advance its agenda of NBS and SNRM solutions for climate change adaptation through five areas of action:

- **Integrating NBS and SNRM in existing programmes and in new LoCAL countries.**
- **Enhancing the use of CRVAs to promote a better understanding of NBS** that takes ecological vulnerabilities as well as cost-benefit analysis into account.
- **Integrating NBS and SNRM in LoCAL investment menus** aligned to nationally determined contributions and national action plans; this could include initiatives aimed at ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem-based adaptation and area-based conservation.
- **Integrating NBS and SNRM into LoCAL monitoring and evaluation** and in the use of the ACCAF, as well as facilitate learning across and between countries. Case studies will be developed to qualitatively complement these efforts.
- **Fostering collaboration and partnerships to accelerate efforts on this agenda**, share knowledge and expertise, and promote collective action. Partnerships will be further operationalized and developed. Communications and outreach, in the form of articles and events at selected climate conferences, will be implemented.

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