Global Soil Week (GSW) 2019 meets IKI-Climate-SDGs Integration Project

Side-Event Report

“Projects never fail, yet projects never scale…”

Lessons from the GSW: How to improve donor-funded projects to create a more enabling environment for upscaling Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)?

ICRAF Campus - Nairobi, Kenya; 31 May 2019 9:00-13:00

Blog Article about the Side-Event can be found [here](#).

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Participants at the GSW Side-Event on ‘How to improve donor-funded projects to create a more enabling environment for upscaling Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)?’ (Photo: Bruno St-Jacques / TMG Research)

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1
Background & Objectives

The Side-Event on “How to improve donor-funded projects to create a more enabling environment for upscaling Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)?” was organized by TMG Research gGmbH as part of the “Climate-SDG Integration Project: Supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda through Ecosystem-based Adaptation” implemented in India and Guatemala and funded through the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) of Germany.

It offered a platform to discuss and exchange experiences on the current thinking on mainstreaming and upscaling EbA. The side-event built on the four days of discussions at the Global Soil Week on ‘Creating an enabling environment for climate resilient agriculture in Africa’. The Global Soil Week was organised by TMG Research and partners in Nairobi. At the side-event, the lessons learned during the Global Soil Week were discussed with a small group of colleagues representing globally leading organizations in EbA implementation, such as IUCN, UNDP, WWF, and GIZ. In addition, the side-event counted on the participation of representatives from project partners, WOTR (India) and ADIMI (Guatemala). The discussions focused on how the lessons during the Global Soil Week could be integrated into project planning and implementation to allow project investments to be sustained over time and scaled up beyond their initial implementation and funding period.

As the saying goes, “Projects never fail, yet projects never scale”. It became apparent during the meeting that upscaling EbA is more than mainstreaming the concept into policies at different levels. It also needs to go beyond replicating specific adaptation practices across regions. At the same time the scaling of projects beyond their initial scope and funding period remains a challenge. The factors that hinder the sustainability and possible scaling of successful projects after their external funding period ends were analysed. The main question addressed during the side event was: How can successful interventions be continued in the long-term, sustaining their results and activities and the scaling of the same beyond the initial geographical scope?
To kickstart a fruitful discussion, the IUCN Regional Programme Coordinator, Charles Oluchina, gave a keynote speech on the current EbA mainstreaming debate from the perspective of the FEBA community, followed by a quick overview of the main findings of the GSW 2019 given by Head of Programmes of TMG Research, Jes Weigelt. Three major challenges in upscaling EbA were identified focusing on local governance, finance mechanisms and the need to generate evidence on EbA effectiveness. The participants shared their experiences on how these challenges could be addressed.

Objectives

Based on the outcomes and main findings of the GSW, the overall objective of the side-event was to stimulate a new discussion on how to improve donor-funded projects to create a more enabling environment for upscaling EbA and to ensure long-term sustainability in EbA investments.

Presentations

Lessons learned from the GSW 2019 (Jes Weigelt, Head of Programmes TMG Research)

Jes Weigelt first introduced the Global Soil Week’s 2019 thematic focus on ‘creating an enabling environment for climate resilient agriculture in Africa’.

How to address the missing middle? Jes Weigelt then made the link from the Global Soil Week to the Side-Event, which built on the observation that upscaling of EbA continues to be a challenge and that only few EbA projects are sustained once project funding ceases. He further emphasized that “there is a significant missing middle between often highly progressive policies at the national level and successful projects on the ground.” It remains a challenge to connect both levels, to create an enabling environment that would allow project investments to sustain and scale. As Jes Weigelt stated: “We need to address the missing middle to connect policies with successful projects”.

Mainstreaming debate on EbA: Input by the FEBA community (Charles Oluchina, Regional Coordinator of IUCN)

Charles Oluchina first briefly introduced the concept of EbA, defined as using biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people and communities adapt to the negative effects of climate change. He further stated that the benefits of this approach not only help in building the adaptive capacity of the communities but also contribute towards biodiversity conservation and enhancing local rural economies. By understanding the co-benefits of different ecosystems and their services in providing livelihoods and resilience to disasters, ecosystems are often less expensive to maintain as compared to the hard engineering structures. This is a means of adaptation that is readily available and can be managed by the rural communities.

“The communities should be in the driver seat in all initiatives. We should understand us more as facilitators in this process”, claimed Charles Oluchina when giving his input on current actions and challenges on EbA mainstreaming. The local communities are the major stakeholders of natural
resource management projects. It is important to recognise existing local knowledge in managing natural resources and integrate it into project design.

Further, Charles Oluchina stated that “one of the major challenges in mainstreaming EbA is the lack of evidence on the effectiveness of EbA”. To promote and improve evidence of when and why EbA is effective, IUCN is working on identifying the conditions under which it works, and the benefits, costs and limitations of natural systems compared to options such as hard, infrastructural approaches.

With the examples provided by Charles Oluchina, further challenges in mainstreaming EbA were identified and then thematically discussed in breakout sessions (see below).

**Main concepts discussed during the Side-Event**

**Upscaling**
Upscaling is defined as “increasing the geographic scale, policy scope or institutional scale by applying successful activities and approaches at different levels”. This includes both vertical (top-down or bottom-up, influencing policy reforms) and horizontal (replication across people and geographies) scaling<sup>1</sup>. A key instrument for especially vertical, government-driven upscaling is mainstreaming.

**Mainstreaming**
Mainstreaming is defined as integrating considerations of concepts e.g. climate change adaptation into all aspects of policy making, including budgeting, implementation and monitoring processes at national, sectoral and local level<sup>2</sup>.

**Beyond mainstreaming**
Beyond mainstreaming refers to a phase where policy outputs are created as a result of mainstreaming the concept into policy making. One of the challenges with mainstreaming the concept is the lack of policy outputs being effectively translated into concrete projects and activities on the ground.<sup>3</sup>

**Main discussion Points from the breakout groups**

Three breakout sessions were conducted with the participants based on the main challenges that have been identified in upscaling and mainstreaming EbA:

1. **To generate evidence on the ecological, social and economic effectiveness of EbA**

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<sup>1</sup> SOPAC/UNDP/UNEP/GEF (2011)
<sup>2</sup> Wamsler (2017)
<sup>3</sup> Runhaar (2018)
The discussants argued that projects need to integrate evidence building – even before project implementation – on the ecological, social, and economic conditions. This is how the effectiveness of EbA after a certain timeframe can be traced. The current discourse on EbA recognises that more evidence building of EbA effectiveness in different ecosystems, regions, and contexts is needed. However, building solid baselines and post-project evaluations is often not included in project design. It requires solid evidence on EbA effectiveness to enable actors to recognize the benefits of EbA.

Participants highlighted the importance of data analysis, collection and generation before, during and after the project implementation phase to be able to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of EbA measures. Before the project starts, a vulnerability assessment is necessary, to generate a baseline with quantitative and qualitative indicators on the ecological, social and economic dimensions. Without a baseline, no comparison between the climate vulnerability of the local communities before and after the EbA measure was implemented is possible. Time and budget need to be allocated to the generation of a baseline before the project starts.

The point was made that budget needs to be allocated to independent impact evaluations (at best several years) after the project has ended. Impacts entail positive as well as negative externalities, direct or indirect changes, intended and unintended impacts by a development intervention. Overall, an emphasis was placed on the need for “hard data” and numbers that can communicate the results of EbA implementation to a broader audience.

2. To facilitate financial mechanisms to sustain and upscale EbA

Participants discussed the existing funds and instruments available for climate change adaptation funding via multi-lateral institutions, such as the UN’s Global Environment Facility (GEF), the priorities they serve and the existing pre-requisites for accessing them. While knowledge on accessible sources of funding is undoubtedly important for sustained EbA implementation, participants also highlighted the importance of creating an adequate planning infrastructure to properly make use of adaptation funding in a way that facilitates long-term sustainability of EbA projects.

Capacity building for local administrative units was identified as an important tactic to improve the prioritization and execution of climate change adaptation projects, thereby improving the preparedness of local planning bodies to receive and utilize adaptation funding.

Complementing the need to strengthen local level processes, mainstreaming of adaptation policies into state and national level policies was also discussed as way to better access financial mechanisms. Rather than creating a separate budget dedicated to adaptation planning, mainstreaming can aid adaptation financing by requiring that adaptation aspects be considered in existing policies of established sectors. This is how already well-established budgetary resources can be channelled towards adaptation purposes alongside other policy objectives.

Additionally, participants emphasized the need to make a “business case” for EbA through the valuation of benefits that EbA measures can provide. This could improve the incentives for further investment in EbA measures not only by the government but also by the private sector and communities.
3. To use the political, institutional and organizational structures in place to sustain and upscale EbA

The need for participatory and inclusive processes was brought forth as a key message for sustaining and upscaling of EbA. It was highlighted that the internal project logic needs to recognise existing governance structures to facilitate community empowerment and create ownership among the local stakeholders. It is key to identify and analyse the governance structures in place to understand the interests, roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the project area. To that end, participants argued that projects need to provide for adequate time and budget right from the beginning. This would facilitate the identification of the governance structures that could uptake and internalize the EbA practices, and thus sustain them after the project ends.

The role of community champions was emphasised to be key when it comes to the successful promotion and uptake of EbA practices by local formal and informal institutions. Champions can channel project activities and generate enthusiasm and awareness within the community. Community champions are crucial at local, regional and even national levels as entry points to the political and policy arena as they act as advocates for the integration of EbA into planning processes. To that end, participants argued the need to identify community champions during the project planning and implementation phase to steer the project at the local level.

Other suggestions from the participants included strategically aligning environmental initiatives at the national level to create a more coordinated and coherent approach to upscaling EbA, not as a separate agenda, but as part of an overall adaptation strategy or integrated into sectoral policies. In relation to this, the need for better coordination among donors was highlighted to avoid the promotion of separate agendas.

Summary

“Focus on lessons rather than replicating action” It was pointed out that an enabling environment can be created from the bottom up. It requires working with local change agents and offering time and space to develop responses locally, as well as giving time for social innovations to emerge. These emerging processes need to find a policy environment that supports them. The case was made to build on these locally driven processes to bridge the large implementation gap that characterizes many rural development policies. Investments in ecosystem restoration should be reoriented to address the enabling environment itself, instead of replicating actions only, if these investments are to make a lasting impact.

A forthcoming policy brief will further elaborate on the insights and recommendations from the participants.

We would like to sincerely thank you for your support, participation and valuable contributions during our event in Nairobi. We look forward to future meetings and discussions, and we hope that the lessons learned from the event can benefit your organizations’ efforts in EbA projects.
Sincerely,

The IKI-Climate SDGs Project team at TMG Research gGmbH:


This project is part of the International Climate Initiative (IKI), supported by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), Germany.

Supported by:

Based on a decision of the German Bundestag

Implementing partners

ADIMI

WOTR
Annexes

Annex I: Agenda- Side-Event

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 - 9:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:15 - 9:25 a.m.</td>
<td>Welcoming words: “Projects never fail, and projects never scale”</td>
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| 9:25 - 9:40 a.m.| Lessons from the GSW for creating an enabling environment for upscaling EbA
                  Jes Weigelt - Head of Programmes, TMG Think Tank for Sustainability                                                               |
| 9:40 - 10:00 a.m.| Key note speech: where do we stand with the EbA mainstreaming debate - Input from the FEBA community
                   Charles Oluchina - Regional Programme Coordinator, IUCN, Eastern and Southern Regional Office                                      |
| 10:00 - 10:30 a.m.| Coffee break                                                                                                                          |
| 10:30 - 12:30 p.m.| Discussion: How to improve donor-funded projects to create a more enabling environment for upscaling Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)? |
| 12:30 - 12:45 p.m.| Closing words                                                                                                                          |
| 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.| Lunch                                                                                                                                  |

Annex II. Speakers and Moderators

Speakers:

- Charles Oluchina – **Regional Coordinator, IUCN, Eastern and Southern Regional Office**
- Jes Weigelt – **Head of Programmes, TMG Research gGmbH**

Moderators:

- Serah Kiragu-Wissler – **Research Associate, TMG Research gGmbH**
- Marai El Fassi – **Research Associate, TMG Research gGmbH**
- Louisa Nelle – **Consultant, TMG Research gGmbH**
- Jes Weigelt – **Head of Programmes, TMG Research gGmbH**

Annex III: Participants

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alexander Erlewein</td>
<td>GIZ, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Organization/Position</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Arjuna Srinidhi</td>
<td>Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR), India</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Bethsheba Muchiri</td>
<td>African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Caroline Ouko</td>
<td>CETRAD, Kenya</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Charles Oluchina</td>
<td>IUCN, Eastern and Southern Regional Office</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Hausner Wendo</td>
<td>Adaptation Consortium, Kenya</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Helena Davila Esquivel</td>
<td>ADIMI, Guatemala</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Janardhan Pawar</td>
<td>WOTR, India</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Magner Adolfo Estrada Barrera</td>
<td>Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (MARN), Guatemala</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Martina Fleckenstein</td>
<td>WWF International, Germany</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Nancy Chege</td>
<td>UNDP Small Grants Programme, Kenya</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Alexander Müller</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Bruno St-Jacques</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Chelsea Jones</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Jes Weigelt</td>
<td>TMG Research, Germany</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Larissa Stiem-Bhatia</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Marai El Fassi</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Serah Kiragu-Wissler</td>
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Annex IV: Photo gallery
Charles Oluchina, Regional Programme Coordinator of IUCN delivers a keynote speech (from left to right: Jes Weigelt (TMG Research), Charles Oluchina (IUCN), Lousia Nelle (TMG Research), Carolyne Ouko (CETRAD); Photo: Bruno St-Jacques / TMG Research).

Jes Weigelt, Head of Programmes at TMG Research summarising the lessons learned from GSW 2019; Photo: Bruno St-Jacques / TMG Research.
Participants in the main plenary discussion (from left to right: Magner Adolfo Estrada Barrera (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Guatemala), Helena Davila Esquivel (ADIMI), Arjuna Srinidhi (WOTR); J.R. Pawar (WOTR); Photo: Bruno St-Jacques / TMG Research.
Participants and moderators continue discussions during the coffee break (left to right: Helena Davila Esquivel (ADIMI); Louisa Nelle (TMG Research); Marai El Fassi (TMG Research); Alexander Müller (Managing Director of TMG Research); Photo: Bruno St-Jacques / TMG Research.

Breakout group discussion (left to right: Charles Oluchina (IUCN Eastern and Southern Regional Office) and J.R. Pawar (WOTR); Photo: Bruno St-Jacques / TMG Research gGmbH)
Breakout discussion addressing the use of political, institutional and organizational structures in place in ensuring post-project sustainability (left to right: Carolyne Ouko (CETRAD) and Louisa Nelle (TMG Research); Photo: Chelsea Jones / TMG Research gGmbH.

Breakout discussion: Nancy Chege (UNDP); Photo: Chelsea Jones / TMG Research gGmbH.

Participants from project partner country Guatemala (Manoel Adolfo Estrada Barrera (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Guatemala); Photo: Chelsea Jones / TMG Research gGmbH.
Alexander Erlewein (GIZ); Photo: Chelsea Jones / TMG Research gGmbH.

Plenary (left to right: Hausner Wendo (Adaptation Consortium Kenya) and Martina Fleckenstein (WWF International); Photo: Chelsea Jones / TMG Research gGmbH)
Annex V: References

