

Knowledge brief

Module on Monitoring and Evaluation of EbA Initiatives

The Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) Community of Practice (CoP) <http://ebacommunity.com/en/> is a group of experts and organizations that share experiences and knowledge on EbA. Around the globe, the EbA CoP faces similar challenges and seeks to learn how to overcome them by sharing experiences, best practices and lessons learned from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The **Module on Monitoring and Evaluation of EbA Initiatives** (11 November 2015 – 15 January 2016) is part of the new season of the EbA CoP, in partnership with EbA South, reaching out to potential members in Asia and Africa. With this enlargement to Asia and Africa, the EbA CoP embraces the global South as a whole, where South-South Cooperation is essential to strengthen adaptation efforts. This summary reflects on the knowledge shared over a 6-week discussion period and the webinar associated with this module.

UNEP REGATTA Programme, the Mountain EbA project in Peru, EbA South, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and Practical Action Latin America gratefully acknowledge the contributions of EbA CoP members.

CAN EBA INITIATIVES BE MEASURED AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

There is an increased global demand for evidence-based policy decisions and a growing public demand for monitoring systems and evaluation practices to show the impact of development initiatives. Effective knowledge generation is based on systematically collected observations and evidence. Therefore, monitoring project outcomes and adaptive processes is central to improving the design and implementation of future projects.

I believe that monitoring and evaluation should be considered at the macro and micro-levels, and in short, medium and long-term timelines, which then leads us to design indicators for processes and impacts.

*José Salomón Martínez Alas
(EbA CoP member, El Salvador)*

The module discussion led to a consensus on the feasibility of implementing a system of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for an EbA initiative. To assure that an M&E system is effective in measuring the outcomes of best practices, it is essential to record the conditions under which a particular EbA initiative is implemented. Assessing the effectiveness of an EbA intervention should also be undertaken in the context of project objectives and site-specific factors.

Members of the EbA CoP highlighted that even though EbA measures do not demonstrate immediate results, it is valuable to develop and use direct and indirect indicators for short-term M&E, the results of which can be used to implement corrective measures to iteratively improve a particular adaptation intervention. Nicolas Ibañez from Peru emphasized the importance of developing a clear conceptual framework, which would guide the M&E process and incorporate EbA-specific features. A

key prerequisite for effective M&E is the proper development and use of indicators and, as Jose Salomon from El Salvador added, both micro-level indicators (conservation, restoration measures) and macro-level indicators (e.g. GEI emissions, glacial retreat) should be used.

FACING CHALLENGES IN MONITORING EbA INITIATIVES

In monitoring and evaluation of EbA practices, physical and biological measures are more feasible to control, because the results can be observed in a relatively short-term. Yet, interventions in the socio-cultural and economic aspect frequently show results in the medium and long term, therefore they are more challenging to monitor and evaluate.

*Him Lal Shrestha
(EbA CoP member, Nepal)*

Effective M&E of activities within EbA projects are essential for assessing the progress made towards defined objectives.

Monitoring is more than just collecting information on the project – it is the systematic and continuous assessment of progress over time by collecting and analyzing information and using that information to improve the work within the project and the project's overall impact.

Evaluation entails estimating the performance and impact of the project at one point in time. M&E can also be considered as tools to identify strengths and weaknesses in strategies and activities and to support sound and timely decision-making.

When speaking about M&E of EbA processes, Tourad, an EbA CoP member from Mauritania, highlighted that although it is important to think about some important factors such as well-established baselines, defined indicators and developed methodology, there are indicators and targets that are different from one country to another one and in some cases, specific to sites within one country.

José Salomón Martínez Alas, EbA CoP member from El Salvador, added that the EbA strategies that are the easiest to monitor are the actions that focus on more specific geographic areas and that have short-term or medium-term timelines, while actions that are aimed at more outcomes or that have long-term timelines are more difficult to monitor.

EbA CoP Webinar (10 December 2015)

During the Module, a webinar on M&E for EbA took place, facilitated by Juan Torres, Practical Action Expert and EbA CoP moderator. The experts Timo Leiter and Mathias Bertram from GIZ, and Aneli Gomez from the Mountain Institute in Peru, shared their experiences on the topic.

Timo Leiter (a member of the GIZ climate policy team) presented the manual on measuring adaptation initiatives and highlighted that there is no universal approach for M&E and there are key considerations to bear in mind: (i) what is the principal objective to undertake M&E?; (ii) who would use the information?; and (iii) what are the resources needed? Timo highlighted the need for baselines, indicators that are feasible to use and fit the specific context of M&E and the need for consensus in the construction of the approach.

Mathias Bertram (EbA adviser at GIZ), presented practical examples from the "Integrated Coastal and Mangrove Protection Climate Change and Coastal Ecosystem Program" with the case of Vietnam's coast. Mathias showed us the importance of the timing of these processes (the work is projected to 2033). He used the concept of "Saved Wealth" in these ecosystems, and included cultures and concepts, such as resilience and vulnerability, as part of the example presented. He highlighted that:

- Vietnam showed evidence of how EbA measures (mangrove rehabilitation) have the potential to reduce climate risks in a cost-effective way and generate social, ecological and economical co-benefits;
- The challenge is how to measure these evidences at broader scale in a feasible way with limited capacities (financial, technical, human) and data availability.

Aneli Gomez (member of the Mountain Institute of Peru) presented a M&E experience from a project implementing EbA in mountain ecosystems, particularly with a community located in the Landscape Reserve, Nor Yauyos Cochabambas in the central Andean mountains of Peru. Aneli highlighted the role of community participation especially in the construction of indicators, as well as the need for consensus.

Experiences shared by participants in the EbA CoP

The importance of Monitoring and Evaluation of EbA for flood defense in the Beni region, Bolivia

Luis Aliaga, Bolivia



The M&E should be applied to all EbA measures that could be included in current programs and/or projects, at both the state level (national programs) and within independent initiatives (NGOs) to assess the progress and ecosystem benefits achieved through these efforts and their contribution to global adaptation efforts. A good example is our experience with flood prevention in the Beni plains, Bolivia. One of the pillars that allowed for the incorporation of EbA measures for flood protection was monitoring the effectiveness of current preventive measures, such as flood-defense walls. After evaluating these results, the need for alternative approaches was identified. At this point, EbA measures were considered as one potential approach. Although this experience is not directly reflecting M&E experience with EbA, it is an example of its use in corrective measures, after evaluating the effectiveness of adaptation measures and available opportunities.

Challenges in measuring social indicators for EbA

Him Lal Shrestha, Nepal



As EbA practices emphasize the principle of using ecosystem services and management methods to enhance the resilience of community and local ecosystems, M&E needs to be undertaken at both levels, i.e. biophysical and social. While biophysical parameters are easier to quantify, indicators of social characteristics at community level are challenging to monitor as they depend strictly on the local and micro-level impacts and contexts. The experience from Nepal reveals that biophysical indices of forest growth can be easily monitored at a range of spatial and time scales by using remote-sensing data. However, it is challenging to define relevant indicators for the social component of the EbA measures.

UNEP REGATTA Programme, EbA South, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and Practical Action Latin America thank all EbA CoP participants who contributed to this learning process. We invite you to participate in future EbA CoP modules by enrolling through the following link: ebacommunity.com/en/



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