The negative effects of climate change are being experienced by local communities within a range of economic sectors in developing countries across Africa and Asia-Pacific. Multiple factors make them particularly vulnerable to observed and expected climate change impacts, including poverty and limited capacity to plan and implement adequate adaptation technologies and practices. There is an urgent need for immediate actions to address climate change before its impacts become unmanageable.

Ecosystem-based Adaptation through South-South Cooperation (EBA South, 2013-2019) is a tailored GEF project funded through the Special Climate Change Fund, officially known under the title “Enhancing Capacity, Knowledge and Technology Support to Build Climate Resilience in Vulnerable Developing Countries.” The project is implemented by UN Environment and executed by the National Development and Reform Commission of China (NDRC) through the Institute of Geographical Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences (IGSIR, CAS). The UN Environment–International Ecosystem Management Partnership (IEMP) provides overall project management services, technical support and fosters South-South linkage for the project.

EBA South seeks to build climate resilience in developing countries by increasing institutional capacity, mobilizing knowledge and transferring appropriate adaptation technologies. It is considered a “first mover” in catalyzing global and regional collaboration on EBA under GEF guidelines, in particular within the framework of South-South cooperation.

In addition to international activities, the project led concrete, on-the-ground adaptation interventions in three pilot countries: Mauritania, Nepal, and Seychelles, representing three vulnerable ecosystems (dryland, mountain and coastal respectively) within institutionalized, long-term research frameworks.

**Highlights**

**International capacity building and knowledge sharing**

Capacity building activities, tools and knowledge products developed to support effective planning and implementation of EBA technologies as well as fostering South-South cooperation worldwide:

- An interactive, dynamic web-based platform (http://www.ebasouth.org/) that hosts a variety of e-discussions, webinars and, importantly, EBA good practice case studies mainly from China that are applicable elsewhere;

**Transfer of EBA technologies to pilot countries**

Concrete, on-the-ground EBA interventions implemented within a rigorous scientific framework of long-term research framework, gaining remunerative government support and community buy-in:

- Climate-resilient mangrove restoration and measures to improve hydrological flow in the Seychelles;
- Community-based watershed restoration with focus on livelihood improvement in Nepal;
- Desertification control using multi-use greenbelts in Mauritania.

EBA research agendas institutionalized through the development of long-term research programmes in partnership with local universities and research institutes. The long-term research programmes were employed for measuring the short- and long-term effects (ecological, hydrological and socio-economic) of EBA interventions being applied within the project. Findings in the form of research reports, theses and peer-reviewed papers were developed by the leading universities with support from international experts.

**Lessons learned**

- The project was pioneering in its approach to science and therefore to support the credibility of EBA it is crucial to collect actual data (e.g. surmounting growth rates, economics, etc.);
- Opportunities for sustainability are extremely variable according to each EBA site;
- Adaptive management is a key component in ensuring sustainability of interventions, and an adaptive management plan should be envisaged into the design, documenting the facts and lessons, and monitoring not only the environment aspects, but also the social and economic factors;
- South-South Cooperation dimension of the project strengthened the continuation of cooperation beyond the project period.