



## **BACKGROUND NOTE**

### **ADAPT - Training Modules**

*Building capacities of policymakers, practitioners, researchers and planners to deploy Nature-based Solutions for resilient societies in the Western Balkans*

#### **Background**

The Western Balkan countries are among the most vulnerable with respect to climate change impacts affecting numerous sectors and domains. Yet, the value derived from deploying [Nature-based Solutions \(NbS\)](#) in response to societal challenges remains underexplored and the benefits compared to conventional engineered solutions are often not recognised. Knowledge and capacities on the NbS concept and its benefits for climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as disaster risk reduction are still low in the region. There has been little or no consideration as to the implications of vulnerable groups or the differentiated roles, knowledge, or priorities of women and men in adapting to, preparing for and preventing disasters and risks. Reactive responses to disasters have been prevalent in comparison to proactive and longer-term planning. Since 2015, IUCN has been promoting NbS in the Western Balkans as an approach to increase resilience and reduce disaster risks. Still a very new concept, it has sparked the interest of national and local stakeholders after a series of extreme weather events since 2014, including as having potential for elevating gender-responsive, socially inclusive resilience for all.

[ADAPT: Nature-based Solutions for resilient societies in the Western Balkans](#) addresses these challenges and presents opportunity to increase evidence and knowledge on how to implement gender-responsive and socially inclusive NbS. The project is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and implemented by IUCN. It will run for three years (November 2019–October 2022) and aims to increase ecosystem and community resilience to climate change and environmental degradation in the Western Balkans. ADAPT aims to close current knowledge and capacity gaps, demonstrate the benefits and added value of applying NbS, provide access to and promote relevant tools on NbS approaches and their application and carry out capacity building activities, including sharing of good practices and training events. This regional umbrella initiative works with regional and local partners from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

#### **Scope**

ADAPT will equip policy / decision makers, planners, researchers and practitioners with knowledge and tools to support the deployment of NbS for climate change adaptation and increased community resilience in an effort to reduce disaster risks. Trainings for key actors will be conducted based on three newly developed tailor-made training modules. Emphasis will be put on the social benefits of NbS, including community resilience, gender equality, income and job creation and inclusive governance, especially more meaningful participation of vulnerable groups in decision-making processes and the implementation of NbS initiatives.



Efforts will be made to establish partnerships with knowledge and training centres to integrate modules into existing capacity building programmes.

## Purpose

Capacity building and training of policy / decision makers, planners, researchers and practitioners is critical to develop innovative NbS that are technically and financially feasible and sustainable. Based on good practices and lessons learned from NbS experiences, the training modules will draw on technical, governance and socio-economic aspects, opportunities and challenges to inform NbS policymaking and planning for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction as well as provide tools and approaches for the implementation of NbS interventions.

The three training modules will feed into the ADAPT project's three objectives – knowledge and awareness, policy and planning, implementation and scale-up. Embedding training modules into existing training centres and/or curriculum, as well as IUCN's global training programme on NbS, will increase uptake and sustainability of project intended outcomes.

Trainings will be targeted at government agencies, research institutions and civil society, which offers additional opportunities for knowledge exchange, wider capacity building and institutional strengthening as well as the potential for scaling up. Efforts will be made to build on existing training programmes, including IUCN NbS programmes and the [PEDRR Training Course on Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction for Sustainable Development](#). Particular attention will be paid to ensuring equal representation of women and men and other vulnerable groups during training sessions and to ensuring that gender and other sociocultural considerations are integrated throughout.

The goal of developing and delivering ADAPT training modules is to promote a shared understanding of opportunities for and the value of NbS among key practitioners, planners, managers policymakers from different sectors, foster high-level political support for NbS application at scale and help create an enabling environment for NbS uptake into policy for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in the Western Balkan region. Capacity building and training will influence decision-making at various levels (national, sub-national, municipality, local) and stages (strategy and policy development, planning and implementation, monitoring).

Specifically, the training modules aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Sensitise decision makers, planners and practitioners on the role of NbS for climate change adaptation and increased community resilience for disaster risk reduction;
- Build awareness of and capacities to address gender and other social considerations through inclusive governance across each training module;
- Provide knowledge, tools and methodologies that enable key actors to plan and implement NbS interventions and to mainstream NbS into national policies, strategies and planning processes;
- Provide practical examples of gender-responsive NbS relevant for the context of the Western Balkans, preparing local authorities, planners and practitioners to implement gender-responsive NbS initiatives;
- Introduce the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions, including the application of the assessment tool and promote its uptake;
- Support sustainability of ADAPT project intended outcomes through uptake and scale-up NbS projects.

The development and delivery of ADAPT training modules include the following three steps:

- Develop three new tailor-made modules on gender-responsive NbS for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in the context of the Western Balkans;
- Conduct trainings jointly with international and national experts for actors at various levels, including policymakers, practitioners and planners;
- Integrate developed modules into existing training centres and/or curriculum and align with IUCN's global NbS training programme.

Each of the three training modules will be conducted twice for three days each. Module 1 is intended for national and subnational policymakers and local authorities, Module 2 for managers/practitioners and planners and Module 3 for all three stakeholder groups. The expected outputs include roadmaps and action plans developed by the participants to foster uptake and translate learning into practical steps tailored to their respective national context. In order to meet Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) requirements of impact assessment of training modules, the training sessions include pre-session surveys and exit surveys with participants upon the completion of each module. Further follow-up impact assessment questionnaires will be developed and disseminated within six months of completion of the training to collect data on how learning has been applied and utilised in their respective national context.

The newly developed and tailor-made NbS training modules will enhance coherence and promote common approaches across the region with particular emphasis on policy, planning and implementation, gender-responsiveness and stakeholder engagement. Training modules, materials and exercise booklets will be distributed during the training. Similarly, the technical reports prepared for each module will be made available for the participants before, during and after the completion of the training.

### **Module 1: POLICY AND DECISION-MAKING**

***Title: Foundations of Nature-based Solutions for policymaking and planning: focus on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction***

***Audience:*** national and subnational policymakers and local authorities

***Duration:*** 3 days

***Trainers:*** one international, one local

***Objectives:***

- Provide an overview of NbS concept, approaches, principles and standards, including the Global IUCN Standard for Nature-based Solutions;
- Explain NbS in policy and decision-making, including policy barriers, enabling environment, governance perspectives, gender and social considerations and policy mandates, reporting requirements under UNFCCC's Paris Agreement, the Sendai framework, SDGs and alignment with EU acquis under Chapter 27;
- Assess socio-economic benefits in NbS for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction;
- Examine the role of gender and inclusive governance in NbS policymaking and planning and understand constraints, opportunities, the influence of cultural norms and

social context that affect decision-making on adaptation options and disaster risk reduction;

- Explore pathways for mainstreaming NbS into national policy, strategy development and planning.

*Content:* Module 1 focuses on the value of NbS and introduces pathways for mainstreaming NbS into local, national/regional policies and planning processes for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The module is tailored to the regional context, builds on the findings of national scoping studies and the comparative policy analysis and provides participants with the knowledge and tools to link the benefits of ecosystem services with climate change and biodiversity benefits and differentiated needs across relevant sectors and actors in society. It will introduce the NbS concept and provide an overview of key NbS approaches, principles and standards, drawing on the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions and lessons learned from selected case studies on mainstreaming NbS. Module 1 specifically puts policymaking, uptake and strategic planning in the context of international frameworks and agreements, including UNFCCC's Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals, the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework<sup>1</sup> and others and provides tools for policy alignment with EU acquis, particularly the EU Green Deal.

Additionally, Module 1 provides an overview of the gender-responsive and socially inclusive governance processes (e.g. gender gaps and opportunities) of NbS that value meaningful engagement and leadership of diverse (and commonly marginalised) actors in tandem with the socio-economic benefits of NbS. Here, the emphasis is on the importance of human rights, women's empowerment and social inclusion (e.g. of commonly vulnerable or disenfranchised groups as well as youth), in support of meeting inclusive, equitable and effective climate resilience and disaster risk reduction goals at all levels – from community level to policy planning, development and implementation. These interlinkages are reflected in policy frameworks, including in particular the SDGs. It explores the links between climate change, disaster risks and human well-being across sectors (e.g. water, forestry, agriculture etc.). Practical examples of NbS interventions illustrate the broad spectrum of how NbS enhance human well-being focussing on different societal groups while addressing environmental challenges. It provides participants with a better understanding of how NbS for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction can be integrated into gender-responsive and socially inclusive policy and planning processes identifying entry points in their particular national context. Various governance approaches, including in particular IUCN's Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF), will be explored as well as methods to ensure that NbS interventions address the needs of and benefit different societal groups.

As a practical output of Module 1, participants will identify entry points in policy and decision-making and develop a roadmap for gender-responsive and socially inclusive NbS application for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

*Outcomes:* participants will be able to:

- Understand and apply NbS, NbS concept, principles and standards;
- Recognise socio-economic, environmental and biodiversity benefits of NbS for policymaking and planning across sectors;

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<sup>1</sup>expected to be adopted in May 2021 at CBD COP15

- Identify opportunities and understand which policy conditions are necessary for integration and mainstreaming of gender-responsive NbS into national policy and planning related to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction;
- Develop a roadmap to inform national policymaking, align with international reporting requirements and catalyse uptake of learning across sectors and institutions.

#### *Modalities*

- A set of introductory presentations and facilitated interactive lectures on various sub-topics, including NbS concept, NbS practical examples, policy context etc.
- Facilitated discussions and exercises; these may include small group discussions, exercises related to understanding the NbS concept, identifying opportunities for integration of NbS into policy and planning, assessment of societal and environmental benefits, mapping opportunities for mainstreaming gender considerations etc.
- Development of a roadmap to introduce gender-responsive NbS into national policies and planning processes.

### **Module 2: PRACTICE AND IMPLEMENTATION**

***Title:* Designing and implementing Nature-based Solutions for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction**

*Audience:* managers, practitioners

*Duration:* 3 days

*Trainers:* one international, one local

*Objectives:*

- Provide an overview of NbS approaches, with a particular focus on ecosystem restoration, forest landscape restoration (FLR), ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) and ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR);
- Build awareness of relevant gender and sociocultural considerations across sectors and contexts, reviewing tools to enable practitioners to develop and implement gender-responsive and socially inclusive strategies for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction;
- Discuss examples of successful NbS implementation and benefits as compared to traditional approaches, including hybrid solutions;
- Provide tools and methodologies for the design and implementation of NbS interventions, based on the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions;
- Identify opportunities for NbS implementation in the Western Balkans.

*Content:* Module 2 provides practical insights into NbS applications, benefits for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and value for society, ecosystems and biodiversity in comparison to traditional approaches. Case studies and good practices further enhance understanding and illustrate the value of applying gender-responsive NbS to adapt to and mitigate climate change and prevent disasters, as well as to meet other interlinked goals such as advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. Drawing on the IUCN Global Standard for NbS, this module covers methodologies and tools to support decision-making on the relevance and feasibility of potential NbS interventions, including ecosystem

restoration, forest landscape restoration, ecosystem-based adaptation and ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction. Participants will learn how to identify priority areas for interventions, taking into account interests of different actors, assess socio-economic and environmental benefits, analyse finance and investment options, develop monitoring and operational frameworks and receive guidance on assessing major policy and institutional bottlenecks/opportunities. Participants will be equipped with tools, technical capacity and enhanced knowledge to plan for and implement NbS at various scales and in different contexts to address challenges, such as floods, droughts, wild fires, erosion, etc. Module 2 draws on existing tools, such as ROAM, CRiSTAL, CREATE etc. While the focus of this Module lies with the implementation of NbS projects, it will also touch upon questions of sustainability, scale-up and future financing of interventions.

*Outcomes:* participants will be able to:

- Design and implement gender-responsive NbS
- Differentiate between NbS and traditional approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction;
- Identify opportunities for gender-responsive NbS initiatives and potential scale-up, drawing on the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions;
- Select the most appropriate NbS approach, tool and methodology for implementation in a given context to respond to local needs and challenges;
- Assess socio-economic and environmental benefits and pathways to plan for and implement a gender-responsive NbS;
- Understand the various sources of finance and investment options for NbS and contribute to generating evidence, knowledge and data to inform project proposals;
- Develop an action plan for the design, implementation, monitoring and possible scale-up of NbS interventions.

#### *Modalities*

- A set of introductory presentations and facilitated lectures on various sub-topics, including gender-responsive NbS approaches, the Global IUCN Standard for Nature-based Solutions, NbS design, tools, methodologies, mapping finance and investment options etc.
- Facilitated discussions and exercises; these may include small group discussions, exercises related to designing NbS interventions, identifying opportunities for NbS interventions in their countries, using NbS indicators, identifying and applying gender-responsive tools, etc.
- Field visit

### **Module 3: PRACTICAL INNOVATION**

*Title:* **Field course: NbS for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in practice** (one training in Serbia, one training in Albania)

*Audience:* policymakers, local authorities and managers, practitioners

*Duration:* 3 days

*Trainers:* one international, one local

### *Objectives:*

- Building on Modules 1 and 2, guide participants through the design and implementation of the ADAPT NbS pilot projects in Albania and Serbia;
- Provide a practical example of NbS application in the Western Balkans and wider uptake of lessons learnt by stakeholders in the respective pilot site;
- Introduce participants to different participatory and gender inclusive approaches and how to adopt them in planning and implementation of NbS interventions;
- Enable learning and exchange between the two pilot sites, between Western Balkan countries and explore replication and scale-up potential in other parts of the region.

*Content:* Module 3 provides participants with a practical example of NbS pilot project design and implementation. It will build on the knowledge gained as part of Modules 1 and 2 and provide an overview of the process from pilot site identification, project design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Participants will have the chance to meet and hear from selected stakeholders of the local community, including the involved local authority, women's groups and youth groups. It will make the case for inclusive, participatory approaches and enable cross-country learning and knowledge exchange. This module allows participants to visit the respective pilot sites in Albania and Serbia and to gain a better understanding of policy, planning and implementation interactions.

*Outcomes:* participants will be able to:

- Describe the process from the design to implementation and monitoring of NbS interventions and apply the learning in their national contexts;
- Recognise and reflect on the importance of inclusive, participatory approaches;
- Assess interlinkages between policy, planning and implementation processes;
- Identify opportunities for replication and/or scale up in their respective country.

### *Modalities*

- Field visits
- Interactive discussions with local community representatives and authorities