Enhancing Nature-based Solutions for an Accelerated Climate Transformation (ENACT)

The global scientific evidence of recent IPCC and IPBES reports is clear: this decade represents a critical window for tackling interdependent biodiversity, land degradation and climate crises.

Climate change is one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss, increasing the severity and frequency of hazards such as droughts and wildfires, changing the ranges in which species can thrive, and altering food webs. Ecosystem loss and degradation releases enormous volumes of greenhouse gases, reduces the ability of ecosystems to absorb carbon from the atmosphere, and exacerbates the impact of climate hazards.

However, nature is also one of our strongest allies, contributing climate solutions for both capturing and storing greenhouse gases and helping societies adapt to a changing climate.

When implemented properly, Nature-based Solutions (NbS) can enhance the resilience of ecosystems and the societies that depend on them. NbS can support adaptation to climate hazards such as sea level rise and more frequent and intense flooding, droughts, heatwaves and wildfires - while delivering significant biodiversity benefits in a manner that safeguards and promotes the rights and interests of vulnerable and historically marginalized communities.

VISION

Enhanced protection and **resilience of at least 1 billion vulnerable people** (including at least 500 million women and girls).

Up to 2.4 billion hectares of healthy natural ecosystems secured through protection of 45 million ha, sustainable management of 2 billion ha, and restoration of 350 million ha.

Significantly increased global mitigation efforts through protecting, conserving and restoring carbon-rich terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems.

RATIONALE

Nature-based Solutions have the potential to save up to 10GT of CO_2 per year - more than the emissions from the entire global transportation sector[1] - as well as the potential to reduce the intensity of climate hazards by 26 percent, with potential cost savings from climate change impacts of USD 104 billion by 2030 and USD 393 billion by 2050.[2]

The UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow recognized the interlinked quality of climate, land degradation and biodiversity crises, and the critical role of nature in mitigating and adapting to climate change.[3] Parties emphasized the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring nature and ecosystems to achieve the Paris Agreement 1.5°C goal, including through forests and other terrestrial and marine ecosystems acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases and by protecting biodiversity while ensuring social and environmental safeguards.

In 2022, the United Nations Environment Assembly adopted the first multilaterally agreed definition of Nature-based Solutions, building on earlier definitions adopted by IUCN and the European Union - defined as *"actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services and resilience and biodiversity benefits"*.

The importance of nature and the uptake of Nature-based Solutions has spread across political frameworks - including UNCCD Decision 8/COP.15, the ministerial Declaration of the HLPF, and G7 and G20 Ministerial Communiques. In addition, a growing number of countries are incorporating NbS into national commitments and strategies. Of the 122 new NDCs submitted in 2021, over 80% included the protection and restoration of ecosystems and 41% referenced the concept of NbS.

With this wide signaling of political interest in the potential of NbS, together with the upcoming adoption of the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework, it is critical that Parties and non-state actors come together to build coherence across approaches, amplify global efforts, and accelerate collective action on NbS – to build a just, nature-positive and resilient future.

While the potential of NbS is clear, to date, global efforts - across themes and across sectors - have been largely uncoordinated and disconnected. At the global level, financial investments that degrade nature exceed conservation efforts by USD 600-852 billion annually.[4] And even as worldwide interest in NbS grows, there is still an inconsistent understanding across sectors about what qualifies as NbS, how to build policy incentives to drive action, and how nature can be used to effectively deliver integrated climate-biodiversity results.

[1] *Nature-based solutions can help cool the planet – if we act now.* Girardin et al, 2021. Please note that NbS are not a substitute for cutting global emissions across sectors, but must be *complementary* to ambitious and sustained decarbonization and the phasing out of fossil fuels.
[2] *Working with Nature to Protect People.* IFRC and WWF, 2022.
[3] Building on previous work across the Rio Conventions such as CBD/COP/14/INF/47, the Egyptian Initiative for a Coherent Aproach for Addressing Biodiversity Loss, Climate Chnage and Land and Ecosystem Degradation.
[4] *State of Finance for Nature.* UNEP, 2021

ENHANCING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR AN ACCELERATED CLIMATE TRANSFORMATION (ENACT)

To foster a broad enabling environment across the Rio Conventions and to drive collective action for addressing the integrated challenges of climate change, land and ecosystem degradation, and biodiversity loss through Nature-based Solutions, the COP27 Presidency, in collaboration with the IUCN, is developing the ENACT partnership.

ENACT will serve as a hub for Party and non-state actors working on NbS to foster collaboration and bring global coherence to activities. This will be done by sharing experiences and knowledge; supporting the implementation of NbS activities on the ground, and bringing a collective voice to the global community on NbS to inform evidence-based policies, while driving alignment across climate, land degradation, and biodiversity negotiations.

THE PARTNERSHIP WILL:

- **Bring coherence to and strengthen collaboration between existing partnerships and initiatives working on different areas of NbS.[5]**
- **Amplify and support accelerated implementation of current and new partners' NbS commitments through documenting, profiling, and promoting promising practices and success stories as well as challenges to be overcome.**
- **Facilitate NbS policy dialogue to inform negotiations across the Rio Conventions.**
- **Build a united, collective narrative of the global value and impact of NbS, including through the publication of an annual State of Nature-based Solutions report for the COP Presidencies.**

The ENACT partnership will function as **an enabler and accelerator of progress towards multilaterally-established global targets** such as the UN Decade on Restoration, the proposed 30x30 target under the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework, and the G20 Global Initiative on Land Degradation under the UNCCD.

ENACT will work in close alignment with the implementation of UNEP/EA.5/Res.5 and the upcoming intergovernmental consultations on (1) compilation of examples of best practices in NbS; (2) assessment of proposals, criteria standards and guidelines to build a common understanding of NbS; and (3) identification of financing options for NbS, particularly for developing countries.

[5] For example, the Friends of EbA, Nature4Climate, Green-Gray Infrastructure Community of Practice, the Blue Carbon Initiative, and the NbS Initiative at Oxford University. ENACT will not duplicate existing efforts but rather serve as a trusted repository of collective global knowledge on NbS that can drive resources and support to different workstreams.

MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

In order to drive integrated biodiversity-climate action, ENACT will amplify and support the accelerated implementation of partners' NbS actions and global efforts - by national, subnational, and non-state actors. The Initiative will seek to respond to Parties' requests for practical support to upscale NbS, such as technical assistance and capacity building.

N.B. This diagram represents a high-level construct of how the Initiative will drive action, to be further refined into an operational framework with partners following the launch of the Initiative.

IMPLEMENTATION

ENACT will accelerate tangible integrated climate change, land degradation, and biodiversity results through (1) enhancing the resilience of 1 billion vulnerable people; (2) protecting, restoring, and sustainably managing up to 2.4 billion hectares of ecosystems by 2030; and (3) significantly increasing global mitigation through protecting, conserving and restoring high-carbon ecosystems.

SCIENCE, DATA AND CAPACITY

Partnership actions will facilitate data availability, address identified research gaps, and support technology transfer and capacity building on NbS.

RESOURCING

The Partnership will drive a range of actions to help close the finance gap for NbS through both public and private finance, including blended finance.

BEST PRACTICES

The Partnership will ensure that NbS actions follow globally accepted climate and biodiversity NbS safeguards by ensuring adherence to the NbS Global Standard.

POLICY

By strengthening collaboration between partnership and initiatives working on different areas of NbS, amplifying partners' commitments, and building a collective narrative on the global value and impact of NbS, ENACT will work to build a strong enabling environment to scale up NbS actions across multiple relevant multilateral policy framework and policy contexts (climate change, biodiversity, land degradation and other).

ENACT will work, for example, to support the development of enabling policies on NbS, build policy coherence between national-subnational-local levels; empower local government actors to implement national policy commitments on NbS; and support investment policies enabling NbS through national, bilateral, multilateral, and blended financing.

OPERATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

SECRETARIAT

Hosted by IUCN and Egypt, the Secretariat will lead the Implementation of the Initiative and coordinate the work across the different workstreams.

ADVISORY GROUP

An advisory group of 10-12 state and non-state actor partners will be established to offer strategic advice to the Secretariat and members, and inform crosscutting issues (e.g. alignment of global efforts, means of verification and reporting). The advisory group will meet (mostly virtually) on a recurring biannual or quarterly basis.

WORKSTREAMS

Hosted by partner organizations, these workstreams will be led, when possible, **by exisiting communities of practice already working on these diverse themes**. ENACT is intended to amplify the work of networks, alliances and initiatives already focusing on different areas of NbS, through
(1) indiviudually bringing together experts with area-specific expertise in NbS;
(2) collectively building relationships across area-specific networks in order to build coherence across NbS workstreams.

Workstream leads will comprise the Steering Committee, working closely with the Secretariat.

Food security and land productivity: NbS in agricultural landscapes for food security, water security, soil health, and enhancing agricultural production;

Adaptation & disaster risk reduction: NbS to increase the resilience and reduce the vulnerability of people and the environment to climate change hazards and disaster risks, such as mangrove restoration to support adaptation to rising sea levels, buffer impacts of storm surge, and stabilize shorelines from erosion;

Oceans and sustainable blue economy: NbS in ocean and coastal systems, including through blue carbon, building coastal resilience, and averting and minimizing loss and damage in coastal systems;

Urban resilience: NbS in urban contexts to foster sustainable urban development and improve the liveability of cities – for example by regulating temperatures, filtering water, adapting to sea level rise, and cleaning air;

Green-Gray Infrastructure: NbS integration into sustainable built infrastructure by blending NbS with gray engineering to engage engineering and construction sectors and unlock public and private investment through planned infrastructure investments, including in renewable energy;

NbS in national and subnational mitigation strategies: NbS for mitigation through both preventing degradation and loss of natural ecosystems, and conserving, restoring and managing ecosystems as natural carbon sinks. This includes best practices in carbon capture, social and ecological safeguarding, full integration of IPLCs, and consideration of areas for carbon offsets.

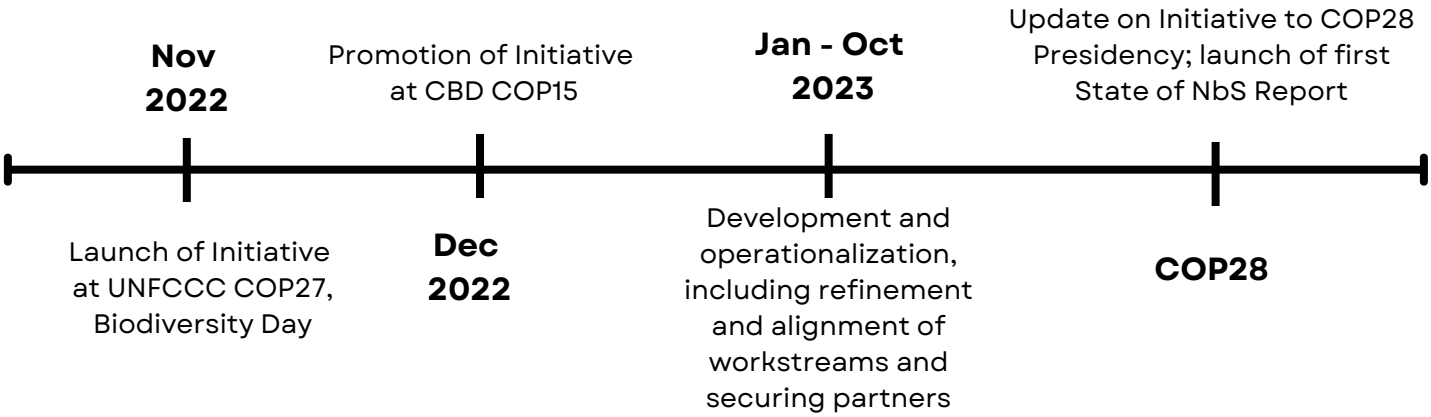
Mobilizing Private Investment in NbS: NbS as an investment vehicle for private impact investors, corporate social responsibility, philanthropists and blended finance providers will consider NbS-generated revenue streams through ecosystem services, carbon and biodiversity credits.

NbS, Climate and Health: NbS to prevent and address health risks (both communicable and non-communicable) associated with ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

Depending on the demand and interest of partners, other groups may also emerge.

HOW TO ENGAGE

TIMELINE



NEXT STEPS

The ENACT partnership (previously under the working title "*Sharm el Sheikh Partnership for NbS*") was developed in a collaborative process, building on a stakeholder consultation workshop in Cairo in September 2022 that brought together over 60 participants. The draft concept note underwent open peer review.

To further operationalize the partnership, including refinement of the means of implementation, leadership, alignment of thematic workstreams, and securing partners, following the launch of the Initiative at COP27, the Advisory Group will be built to develop a roadmap of action.

This will be developed collaboratively with all partners.

For further inquiries and interested potential partners, please contact the COP27 Presidency and IUCN at the following email addresses: Intiatives@COP27.eg, Rana.Alaa@COP27.eg, and ENACT@iucn.org.