How do we know that nature-based solutions can contribute towards climate change adaptation?

By Petra Holden, March 2025









Nature-based solutions are actions where people work with nature, or as part of nature to provide local benefits for people and biodiversity. All nature-based solutions - be they designed or focused on nature protection, restoration, or sustainable management - have the potential to support climate change adaptation. This is true both when these solutions are used alone and when they are integrated with engineered approaches (such as grey or hard infrastructure).





NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS THROUGH THE ABOVE TWO PATHWAYS SUPPORT CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

by increasing adaptive capacity and reducing exposure and sensitivity of people to climate impacts



People seldom use these two framings together when trying to understand the impacts of nature-based solutions or how these solutions might contribute towards climate change adaptation. For instance, some studies measure ecosystem service outcomes but do not link them to a direct or indirect impact on people's well-being. Others measure socio-economic outcomes without detailing the underlying ecosystem services or processes.

Both frameworks require further integration in terms of determining the differences including overlap between some of their categories. A crucial and ongoing next step is to synthesize the existing literature to further substantiate for each category: whether and how nature-based solutions impact it, who they impact, and how they build adaptive capacity, reduce sensitivity or reduce climate hazards.

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