

Series of Technical Documents

01

## Natural Resource Governance

Emerging lessons on its catalytic role for effective NDC implementation in Latin America



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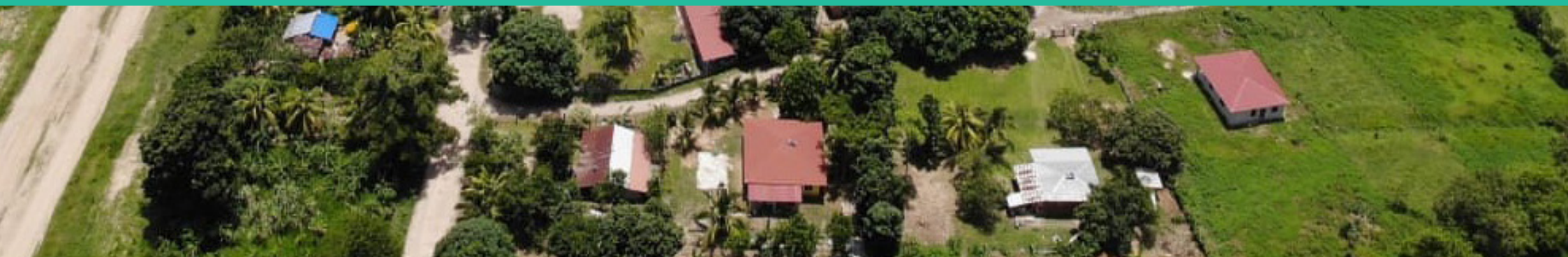
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# Natural Resource Governance

Emerging lessons on its catalytic role  
for effective NDC implementation in  
Latin America

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# Acronyms

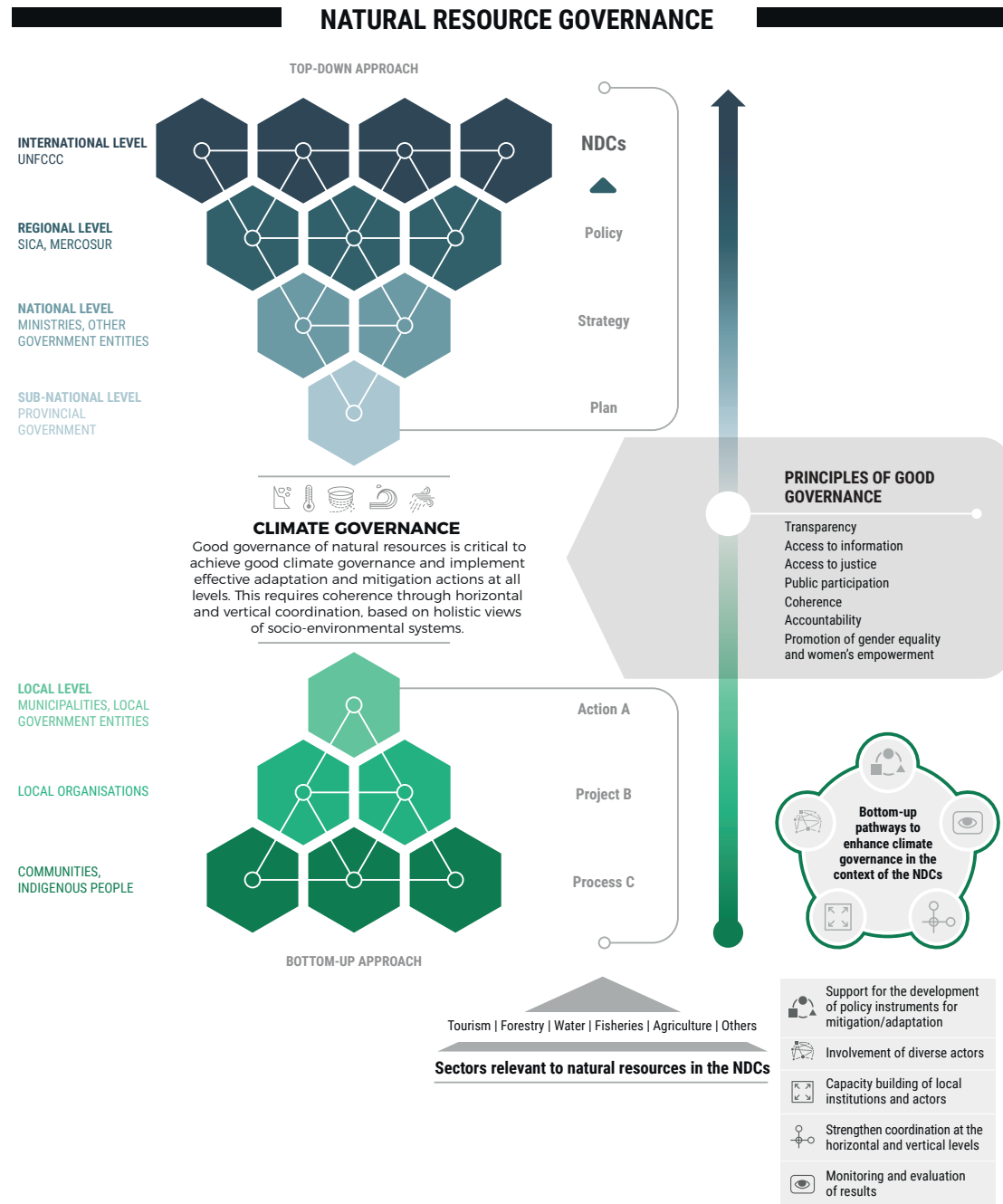
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	NbS	Nature-based Solutions
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	NCB	Non-Carbon Benefits
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations	NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation	NGOs	Non-governmental organisation
EC	European Commission	NPA	National Protected Area
EU	European Union	PES	Payments for Ecosystem Services
FBE	Forests, Biodiversity and Ecosystems	SICA	Central American Integration System
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
FLR	Forest Landscape Restoration		
FLEG	Forest Law Enforcement and Governance		
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit		
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature		
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market		
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification		

## Executive summary

The recognition of the key role of ecosystems in achieving adaptation and mitigation objectives, makes natural resource governance increasingly important and evidences its tight links to the achievement of NDC targets. Good governance of natural resources is understood as the “efficient and effective implementation of the legal and institutional framework with the participation of the various stakeholders and under a set of essential principles” (Campese et al., 2016). While the top-down governance model is often the preferred one, adopting a bottom-up approach better reflects local needs and ensures the participation of diverse actors. It is often overlooked in the national, regional or global processes, leading to ineffective and unsustainable governance models both for climate change and natural resources.



**Figure 1. Natural resource governance: the complementarity of top-down and bottom-up approaches in their contribution to climate governance and the NDC processes**



Source: Own elaboration

## Natural Resource Governance

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This study aims to generate inputs into the discussions on the role of governance of natural resources at the local level in achieving climate change goals. It will further provide inputs that contribute to the countries' NDCs. In particular, the study has the following objectives:

- Identify challenges and good practices at the local level related to the governance processes of natural resources in countries from the Latin American region.
- Explore strategic initiatives of local actions to better contribute to formal and informal multi-level governance frameworks, in order to improve the implementation of the NDCs.
- Promote inputs for the South-South exchange of experiences and knowledge among local actors who face similar challenges across the Latin American region.

In order to grasp and demonstrate the multi dimensional nature of governance, six case studies of projects implemented in Latin America under the EUROCLIMA+ component "Forests, Biodiversity, Ecosystems" (FBE) were analysed. The case studies' analysis provided evidence of key barriers for promoting the adoption of a bottom-up approach for natural resource governance.

These barriers jeopardise the sustainability and effectiveness of natural resource management and, therefore, its contributions to addressing climate change challenges, also impacting on the NDC processes. The identified barriers include limited access to information, inadequate capacity to participate in governance processes, limited stakeholder participation, and lack of coordination. The experiences of the six case studies have provided examples of good practices on how to address such barriers, contributing to the governance aspects of NDCs from a bottom-up approach. The six case study insights include:

**Case study insight 1:**

The mainstreaming of Nature-based Solutions requires robust governance, based on the coherence of policy and action with improved vertical and horizontal coordination, from local to national levels

**Case study insight 2:**

Effective and equitable governance require improving access to information, enhancing especially the participation of vulnerable groups

**Case study insight 3:**

South-South knowledge and technology transfer are important tools to enhance local ownership and pride, promote good resource governance, and stimulate the introduction of innovative financing mechanisms

**Case study insight 4:**

Equitable governance requires the revision and joint action to achieve a fair distribution of costs and benefits, and the promotion of local models for monitoring and verification of project impacts

**Case study insight 5:**

A strategic vision and the participatory development of a coherent model of territorial governance, based on the knowledge, values, needs and aspirations of all relevant actors, contribute significantly towards effective and equitable governance

**Case study insight 6:**

At a transboundary scale, the vertical and horizontal governance structures within and around protected areas benefit from enhanced participation, capacity development and commitment of local stakeholders

Based on the insights demonstrated by the case studies, five emergent lessons were drawn:

**1. Access to and exchange of information promotes transparency and encourages stakeholder participation.** Transparency in the governance of natural resources requires for information to be collected, documented and disseminated at all levels, so it can be used in the design of public policies and decision making, especially in the planning and implementation of natural resource management. It is equally important that decisions are shared throughout the governance hierarchy and communicated to all stakeholders in understandable and culturally appropriate ways.

**2. Enhancing the transformative capacity of local-level stakeholders is essential for good governance.** Increased awareness of rights and responsibilities related to natural resources, will, in turn, encourage the Governments to fulfil their obligations and respect their commitments to good governance. Empowering local communities through capacity building will enable them to participate effectively in the decision-making processes and ensure that their representation in local institutions is democratic and independent.

**3. Effective local coordination mechanisms are incentives to promote good governance and to address different gaps on communication and stakeholder engagement.** Development of coordination mechanisms at the local and subnational levels has great potential to address information asymmetries, build capacities, foster an agreement on a common goal / shared vision, establish coherent work plans and co-financing mechanisms, encourage transparent intergovernmental interaction, and thus make each party accountable for its own contribution. A coordination mechanism could consist of a formal or informal forum through which governments at different levels and local stakeholders can formulate common strategies, coordinate different approaches, and develop legal instruments.

**4. Partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental institutions strengthen the effectiveness of governance.** In particular, the private sector and civil society stakeholders play important roles, since they fulfil specific functions that the public sector cannot perform, or that private stakeholders perform more efficiently. These forms of partnerships have increasingly gained importance in governance structures.

**5. The participation of local actors in the governance of natural resources requires innovative processes.** The participation of local actors in decision making is imperative for good governance. Innovative processes that involve local actors are possible alternatives to complement the usual “participatory” methods. Flexibility in the design of these processes, which must take into account the power dynamics, capacities, characteristics and priorities of the different stakeholders, can have a considerable influence on the effective involvement of local stakeholders and, consequently, on the sustainability of ongoing public policy processes. Innovative processes play an important role in the vision of transformational change that is required in the context of climate change and sustainable development, and they represent a cornerstone for EU policies.



Participatory identification and prioritization of non-carbon benefits with members of the Emberá in Panama.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

EUROCLIMA+ is a programme financed by the European Union, and co-financed by the Federal German Government, through the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, and the governments of France and Spain, that supports 18 Latin American countries in the implementation of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), promoting mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience and investment.

One of the seven thematic areas of EUROCLIMA+ is “Forests, Biodiversity and Ecosystems” (FBE), which seeks to support Latin American countries to capitalise on project experiences and good practices to improve their capacities (e.g. at the institutional level, in public policies and their regulatory frameworks) for the management of forests, biodiversity and ecosystems; and thus contribute to the implementation of their NDCs. The technical assistance, provided by GIZ in the FBE thematic area, aims to assist project’s

initiatives in facilitating South-South exchange of knowledge and know-how on the governance of natural resources, access to climate finance, the inclusion of indigenous communities in policies and strategies, communication and visibility, and knowledge management.

This study aims to generate inputs into the discussions on the role of governance of natural resources at the local level in achieving climate change goals and to provide inputs that contribute to the countries’ commitments on post-2020 strategies and the NDCs.

In particular, the study has the following objectives:

- Identify challenges and good practices at the local level related to the governance processes of natural resources in countries from the Latin American region.
- Explore strategic proposals of local actions to better contribute to formal and informal multi-level governance frameworks, in order to improve the implementation of the NDCs.
- Promote inputs for the South-South exchange of experiences and knowledge among local actors who face similar challenges across the Latin American region.

## 1.2 Scope and methodology

The report focuses on understanding the current state of natural resources governance in Latin America, based on the experiences of six projects implemented under the EUROCLIMA+ FBE thematic sector. It also seeks to understand the barriers and opportunities to achieve good governance and effectively contribute to the NDCs by promoting a bottom-up approach. By contrasting the current state of governance with a “good governance” model, it was possible to identify the existing gap in terms of barriers and challenges between the two, whether it is at the level of capacities, information, processes, or resources.

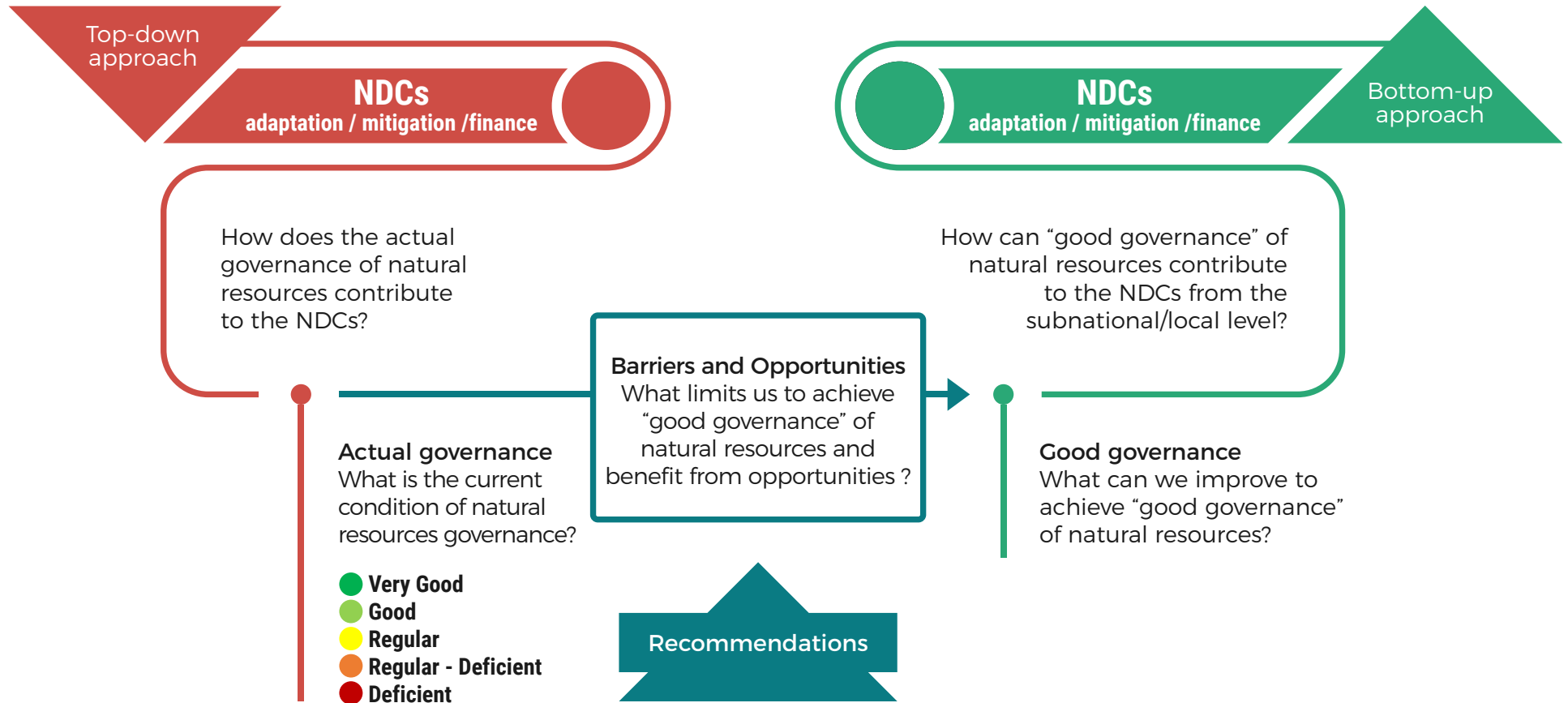
Figure 2 shows the methodological approach adopted by this study and the key questions it seeks to answer:

- What is the current condition of natural resources governance?
- How does the actual governance of natural resources contribute to the NDCs?
- How can a “good governance” of natural resources contribute to the NDCs from the local/ sub-national level?
- What limits achieving a “good governance” of natural resources and what or who benefit from its opportunities?
- What can we improve to achieve a “good governance” of natural resources?

The following two figures show the methodological approach applied for the governance analysis (Figure 2) and the steps and methods used to perform the analysis (Figure 3).



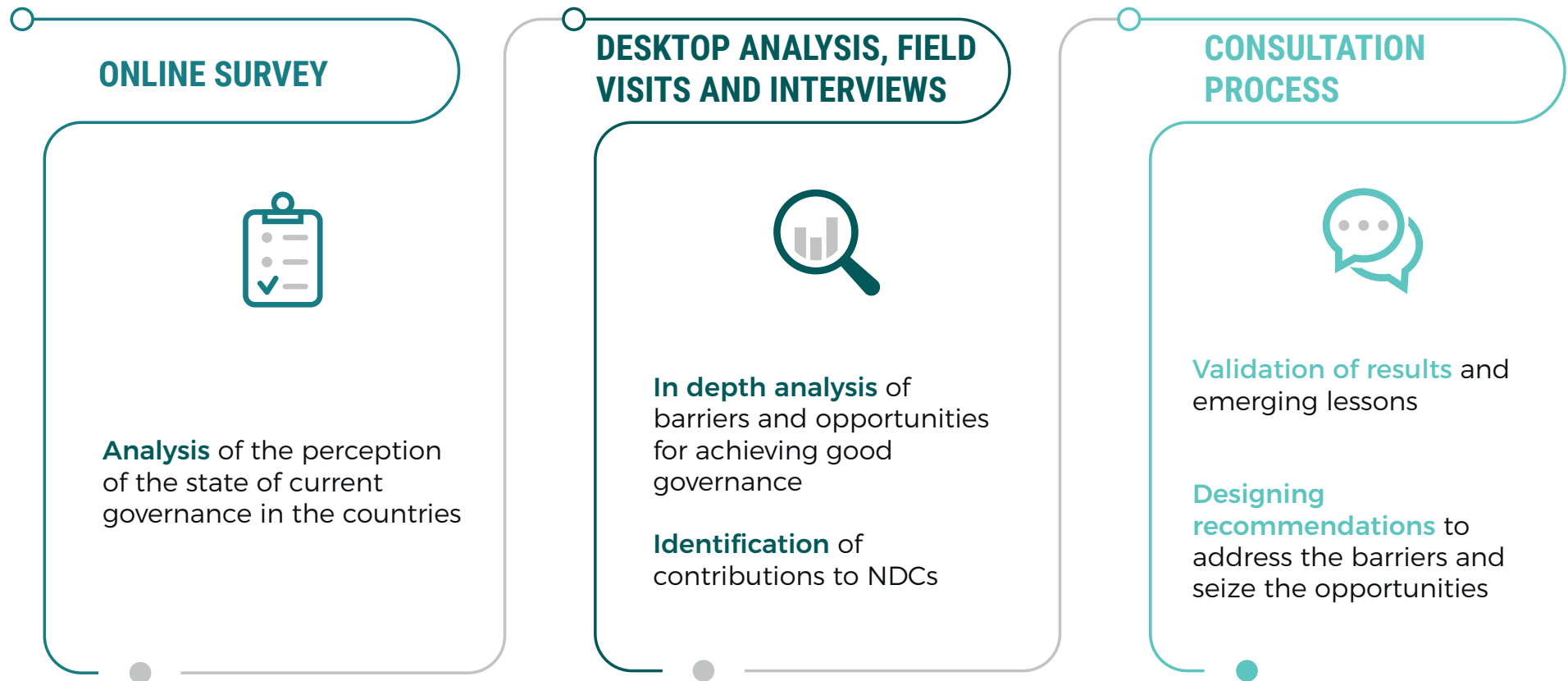
Figure 2. Methodological approach to governance analysis



Source: Own elaboration

Figure 3 shows the methodological steps and methods used to perform the governance analysis.

**Figure 3. Steps and methods used for the governance analysis**



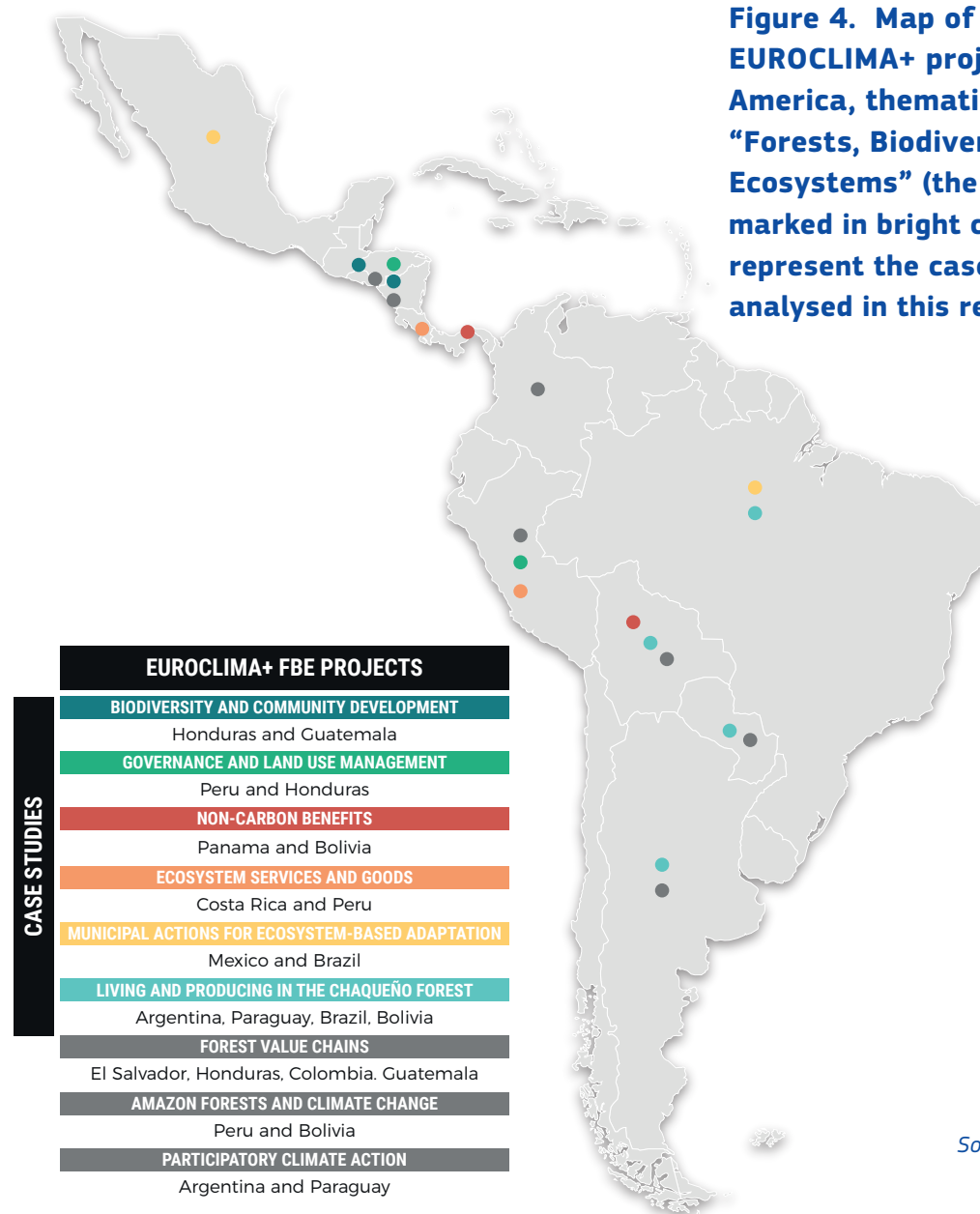
Source: Own elaboration

### 1.3 Overview of the case studies

The six case studies analysed in the report are based on the projects implemented under the thematic sector “Forests, Biodiversity and Ecosystems” (FBE) of the EUROCLIMA+ Program. The projects were designed and developed by organizations and implementing partners in two or more countries. They all had the objective to contribute to the NDCs of their countries, through conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The design of the multi-country projects allowed the promotion of South-South exchanges about experiences and knowledge. The selected cases were chosen because they demonstrate good practices and success factors for strengthening the governance of natural resources at a local level and because of their contribution to the NDCs of their countries. The case studies cover a range of topics on natural resource governance, including stakeholder participation, institutional coordination, monitoring and reporting, and capacity building.


Figure 4 presents a map of the geographical distribution of all the FBE projects and their thematic focus. The selection of the case studies was based on the following set of criteria:

- projects with significant progress towards achieving their objectives,
- projects with activities at different territorial levels,
- projects where the beneficiaries include populations in a condition of vulnerability (indigenous people, small communities, women).



**Figure 4. Map of the EUROCLIMA+ projects in Latin America, thematic sector “Forests, Biodiversity and Ecosystems” (the projects marked in bright colours represent the case studies analysed in this report)**

Source: Own elaboration

A person is seen from behind, walking along a narrow dirt path in a lush, dense tropical forest. They are carrying a large, dark, woven basket on their back, which is secured with ropes. The person is wearing a blue shirt and dark pants. The forest is filled with various green plants and trees, with sunlight filtering through the canopy, creating a dappled light effect on the ground.

Tomás Espinoza, an açai and Brazil nut collector, works in the Model Area of Integrated Forest Management of Santa Rosa del Abuná in Pando, Bolivia, which is part of the project "Amazon Rainforests and Climate Change", implemented in the Madre de Dios river basin between Bolivia and Peru. The articulation of single producers or collectors of forest products often poses logistical and organizational challenges to governance processes.

## 2. The quest for good governance of natural resources

### 2.1 The role of natural resources in achieving NDC targets

Healthy and well-managed natural resources have the potential to deliver significant results in addressing climate change and development aspirations. The role of forests and other natural systems in sequestering carbon and generating non-carbon benefits has been well documented. Similarly, protected areas, for example, provide a suite of ecosystem services that help vulnerable communities adapt during extreme weather events. These include protection from soil erosion due to heavy rainfall, attenuation of the effects of coastal storms surges and flooding. Therefore, the efficient management and good governance of natural resources is critical to the achievement of the 2015 Paris Agreement's ambitions of creating

a low-carbon global economy and a climate-resilient world. Some national governments have started to acknowledge the benefits that nature provides by integrating nature-based solutions (NbS) into their development plans, acknowledging the central role of natural resources and ecosystem services to support climate-resilient livelihoods and economies. Hence, there is an inherent relationship between NbS, the governance of natural resources, and governance of climate change (see Box 1).

### **Box 1: Nature-based solutions (NbS) to climate resilience promote synergies and innovative governance models**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines nature-based solutions as “*actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits*” (IUCN, 2015). Nature-based solutions for climate resilience include all interventions of ecosystem conservation, management and restoration that are intentionally designed to address climate change adaptation and/or mitigation needs, while delivering co-benefits for human development and biodiversity.

The approach of NbS for climate resilience has gained momentum in the climate change and disaster risk reduction discourse, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The efforts to maintain the integrity of ecosystems and to link their services to the well-being of society, necessarily require stable governance structures but with adequate adaptive capacities, allowing people to cope with climate variations and global economic development trends. Therefore, the existence of good governance structures for implementing NbS can be considered as an enabling condition for achieving climate resilience – and this is tightly connected to the governance of natural resources.

Nature-based solutions involve actions at landscape levels, which often cross jurisdictional boundaries and always require the participation of stakeholders at local, sub-national and national levels in different sectors (e.g., forestry, water, agriculture, but also non-natural resource sectors like transport or finance) to engage in decision-making processes. Therefore, at their core, NbS governance models promote multi-stakeholder engagement at multiple levels, cross-sectoral coordination, and equitable access to natural resources and their benefits.

The protection of ecosystems and the promotion of NbS are declared motivations for adaptation planning in 63% of countries (106 out of 168 NDCs) and is one of the most frequently mentioned intended outcomes of adaptation planning (Seddon, 2020). The ecosystems and activities most commonly referred to in the adaptation components of the NDCs are the protection, restoration/reforestation or afforestation of forests or woodlands and the conservation of coastal or marine habitats, followed by similar actions in river catchments and wetlands. Much less common are the references to grasslands and rangelands or montane habitats (Seddon, 2020). National governments in Latin America have recognised the role of natural resources and have integrated concrete actions to conserve and restore ecosystems as part of their climate adaptation and mitigation commitments under the NDCs (see Boxes 2 and 3).

## Box 2: The acknowledged role of natural resources for addressing climate change: The case of NDCs in Latin America

Most Latin American countries include both an adaptation and a mitigation component in their NDCs. Prioritized sectors and issues, which reflect urgent needs in the region, include the reduction in water availability, agricultural resilience, and the potential implications for food security. Other important sectors and topics include forests and the coastal zones (especially for the countries in Central America), infrastructure, and housing. In the case of mitigation, land use change and the potential for GHG reduction are of significant relevance. Some national governments have included strong commitments to NbS in their NDCs. For example:

- » **Bolivia** focuses on joint mitigation and adaptation actions as well as a holistic development in the forestry and agricultural sectors, in order to achieve increased coverage of forest areas with integrated community management approaches.
- » **Colombia** seeks to protect 36 “paramo” areas (approximately 3 million hectares of high mountain Andean ecosystems) and increase the coverage of newly protected areas in the National System of Protected Areas by more than 2.5 million hectares.
- » **Mexico** aims to increase carbon capture and strengthen coastal protection with the implementation of a scheme on conservation and recovery of coastal and marine ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, sea grass, and dunes.
- » **Uruguay** is adopting good practices for the management of 1 million ha. of natural grassland (10% of total) in livestock production, thus avoiding the loss of soil organic carbon and favouring carbon sequestration.
- » **Nicaragua** aims to increase the efficiency of the protection of biosphere reserves through a land management and reforestation programme.



### Box 3: Challenges in planning and implementation of the NDCs in Latin America

While there have been significant advances in NDCs planning in most Latin American countries, the implementation is still in its initial stages.

Key aspects to be addressed by the countries in order to face the existing challenges include (European Commission, 2019):

- » **Strengthen leadership** at the highest political level to achieve effective policy, legal, and institutional alignment and enable the transition to climate-resilient, low-carbon socio-economic systems.
- » Improve the generation and **use of data and information** to better inform decision-making processes, in addition to seeking articulation with other relevant processes such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030.
- » Enhance structural mechanisms to **ensure participation spaces** for engagement with private stakeholders, academia, civil society, and indigenous people.

In general, the NDCs implementation process in Latin America requires strengthened and equitable governance. It is crucial to understand the local motivations and needs of non-governmental stakeholders and receive their input to accelerate the implementation and ambition of the NDCs, using new common spaces to achieve social inclusion, equity and transparency.

## 2.2 Governance aspects of natural resources and climate change

Governance relates to “the processes of interaction and decision-making among stakeholders involved in a collective problem that led to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions” (Hufty, M., 2011). It refers to different aspects, such as participation and inclusion, equity and rights, as well as roles and responsibilities.

While the concept of ‘governance’ is used in different ways, it considers the questions of how and by whom decisions are made, who has the power, and which values and relationships are guiding the processes.

Natural resource governance and climate governance form part of the environmental governance (see Box 4 and 5). The effectiveness and social equity of environmental governance are widely recognised as critical determining factors of the contribution of ecosystems to human well-being and the long-term conservation of natural resources.

#### Box 4: Definitions of natural resource governance and climate governance

**Natural resource governance** refers to the **norms, institutions, and processes** that determine how **power and responsibilities** over natural resources are exercised, how **decisions are taken**, and how citizens – including women, men, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities – secure access to, participate in, and are impacted by the management of natural resources (IUCN, 2016).

**Climate governance** refers to the **diplomacy, mechanisms and response measures**, which aim at guiding social systems towards preventing, mitigating or adapting to the risks posed by climate change (Jagers, S.C.; Stripple, J., 2003).

#### Box 5: Similarities and discrepancies between climate governance and governance of natural resources

**Similarities: Natural resource governance and climate governance involve multi-level and multi-actor structures and processes.** Both governance processes relate to national, sub-national and local levels and involve diverse constellations of stakeholders. The governance of natural resources stems from interconnections within and between multi-faceted natural and social systems (Blomquist, 2009). Some natural resource systems exist across administrative boundaries and fall within the remit of multiple levels of governance. In addition, they offer multiple benefits to multiple users with different objectives, interests, degrees of power, and resources. Similarly, climate change mitigation has a predominantly global nature, while climate impacts and adaptation have local nature, which poses specific challenges for climate. Linking the adaptation and mitigation aspects for effective climate governance is constrained by the complexity of coordinating the multiple stakeholders across sectors and scales, and the differences between the policy frameworks addressing these both fields.

**Discrepancies: In natural resource governance, aspects of equity and fairness play a central role, while climate governance focuses primarily on aspects of global and national diplomacy.** Natural resource governance seeks equity and fairness in terms of participation and representation of all relevant stakeholders. In the context of natural resource governance, over the last decade, apart from considering the different types and levels of stakeholders, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has focused on qualitative aspects of governance such as the fair distribution of costs and benefits, roles and responsibilities of actors, transparent decision-making processes, the complementarity of traditional and scientific knowledge, or the science-policy interface. Special and increasingly important approaches include gender mainstreaming, the participation of local communities and indigenous populations, and applying local knowledge in global processes. While climate governance considers those approaches as well, it also focuses on aspects of global and national diplomacy, dialogue and exchange, and cooperation between different sub-national and sectoral levels.

The governance models can adopt a “top-down” or a “bottom-up” approach. In the bottom-up approach, local communities actively engage in the development process in a participatory manner by proposing solutions based on their perception of the communities’ needs (see Box 6). While this approach generally better reflects local needs, it often ignores the “bigger picture” on the regional and national level. On the other hand, the top-down approach aims to provide solutions such as policies, that have been designed at a national level and correspond to global agreements or international conventions. They might reflect the latest scientific knowledge, but often do not adequately respond to local needs and values or draw on local knowledge. Ideally, a blended approach to natural resource governance would be most effective, thriving on the combined strengths of both approaches. However, in reality, the bottom-up approach is often overlooked in the national, regional or global processes, leading to ineffective and unsustainable governance models of climate change and natural resources.

### Box 6: A bottom-up approach to governance

The present study identifies the following key characteristics of a bottom-up approach to governance:

- » a **democratic approach**, defined by local stakeholders, rather than a hierarchical one, defined by government entities.
- » the will to **solve problems with fluidity and agility**, instead of imposing more rigid structures, which are often dominated by a few central stakeholders.
- » **reducing bureaucracy to a minimum**, to facilitate implementation and enhance long-term maintenance.
- » **active collaboration** of the stakeholders in favour of the cause, and the identification and participation of all those involved in the interventions and affected by their impacts; and
- » a good degree of **autonomy of the stakeholders** in their choice of instruments and in the way they organise and exchange their experiences.

Systemic failures in effective natural resource governance between the various administrative levels increase climate exposure and risk, promote environmental degradation, and undermine the resilience of the rural population to sustainably manage their own natural assets in order to withstand a range of shocks related to climate change. Natural resources and their governance form a critical interface between climate change and development processes. Without adequate natural resource governance (where forest and water resources are particularly important), climate impacts will be even greater, while mitigation efforts will be more difficult. Successful adaptation and mitigation strategies require an effective framework that promotes the continuous improvement of governance structures around natural assets through the strengthening of land tenure and the empowerment of communities and indigenous peoples, among others.

## 2.3 Good governance of natural resources: A framework for analysis

In the context of the present study, the governance of natural resources is understood as the set of rules, institutions and processes that determine how power is exercised, responsibilities are distributed, and how and which decisions are made and implemented for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystem services, in order to contribute to the achievement of climate action goals, and to form part of an overall strategy for adaptation to the actual or projected climate scenarios.

A set of principles for understanding good governance can provide an insight into how governance conditions can drive or hinder the conservation and management of natural resources, and thus potentially influence countries' climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts (see Box 7).

### Box 7: What is good governance?

Good governance refers to the “efficient and effective implementation of the legal and institutional framework with the participation of the various stakeholders and under a set of essential principles” (IUCN, 2016).

The principles that provide a framework for good governance include (IUCN, 2019):

- » **Transparency:** openness about decision making.
- » **Access to information:** accurate, effective, and open communication.
- » **Access to justice:** equitable mechanisms of accountability and protection of rights.
- » **Public participation:** genuine involvement in decision making.
- » **Coherence:** a consistent approach, based on a long-term strategic vision.
- » **Accountability:** about economic, social and environmental outcomes.
- » **Promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment:** as an integral element of the principles of good governance (which is also a cross-cutting issue for all EUROCLIMA+ actions and for the European Union).

Based on the proposed IUCN framework the study developed an assessment matrix for natural resource governance, which considers the key dimensions and attributes of good governance (Table 1). The assessment matrix was later used in the online survey applied to the project-implementing organizations of the selected projects, in order to assess their perception of the current condition of natural resource governance in their countries.

**Table 1. Assessment matrix for natural resource governance evaluation.**

Dimensions of good governance	Description
<p><b>Effective governance</b></p>	<p>A key objective of natural resource governance is to be effective: to achieve real impacts in terms of the proposed objectives, and to be effective in the use of human and financial resources.</p> <p>This includes maintaining or improving the capacity of environmental systems to function and produce ecosystem services through the persistence of species, habitats and biodiversity.</p> <p>The attributes of effective natural resource governance include <b>direction, capacity, transparency and efficiency.</b></p>
<p><b>Equitable governance</b></p>	<p>To achieve the goal of socio-cultural and economic equity, natural resource governance must consider a diversity of actors, powers, and decision-making processes.</p> <p>The attributes of equitable natural resource governance include <b>recognition, participation and distribution.</b></p>
<p><b>Responsive governance</b></p>	<p>Responsive governance ensures that there is enough flexibility to adapt to changing environmental, political, and social conditions and contexts, seizing opportunities and overcoming challenges.</p> <p>The attributes of responsive natural resource governance include <b>accountability, adaptation and innovation.</b></p>
<p><b>Robust governance</b></p>	<p>Robust governance guarantees the existence of institutions that work, persist over time, are accepted by stakeholders, maintain their performance, and cope with shocks and crises.</p> <p>The attributes of robust natural resource governance include <b>legitimacy, connectivity and polycentrism.</b></p>





In governance processes, it is important to collect the perceptions and needs of various actors and sectors. At the local level, the priorities of young people may be very different from the values of elderly people, or the perceptions of mothers. Recognizing diverse stakeholders and integrating them into decision-making processes is crucial.

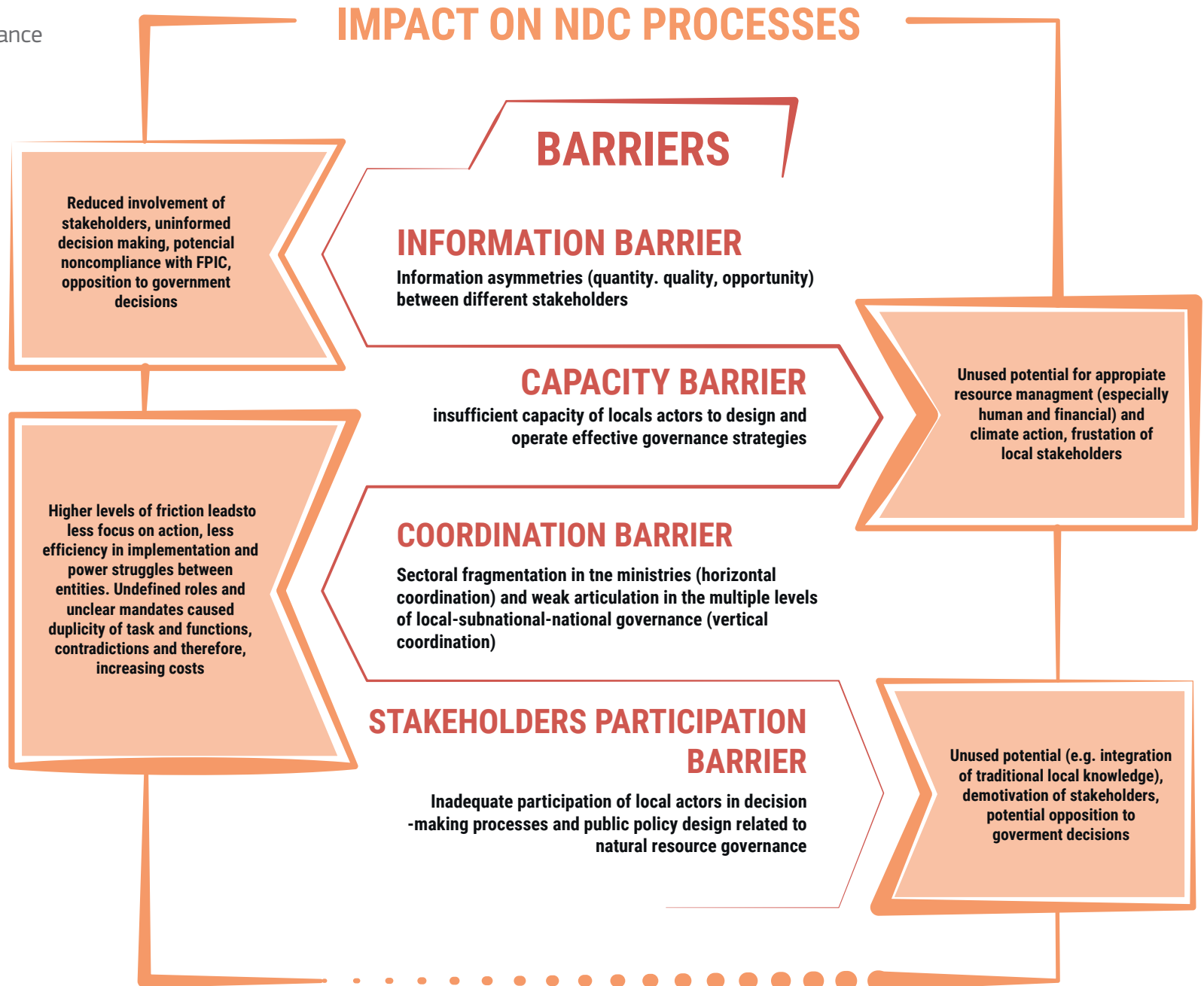
# 3. Barriers to and opportunities for contributing to the NDCs through bottom-up governance: Insights from local experiences

## 3.1 Overview of barriers and opportunities

While natural resource governance has progressed in countries across Latin America, many improvements refer only to enhanced government coordination or top-down approaches. The importance of local governance structures and the potential of bottom-up approaches for effective climate action are still mostly overlooked.

The analysis of six EUROCLIMA+ projects, implemented under the FBE thematic sector, provided evidence of key barriers for promoting the adoption of a bottom-up approach for natural resource governance (see Figure 5). These barriers jeopardise the sustainability and effectiveness of natural resource management and, therefore, its contributions to addressing climate change challenges, also impacting on the NDCs processes. Barriers include access to information, inadequate capacity to participate in governance processes, limited stakeholder participation, and lack of coordination.

**Figure 5:** Key barriers for bottom-up resource governance and their impact on NDC processes, based on the analysis of six FBE EUROCLIMA+ projects



The following six insights from the FBE projects further elaborate on the barriers and how to overcome them, highlighting that good practices at the local level contribute more effectively to the NDCs. It must be taken into consideration, however, that framework conditions vary, and that each country/government applies their NDCs implementation plan according to what is considered the most adequate in terms of their national priorities.

Nevertheless, the implementation plan or NDCs roadmap in most cases requires coordinated action in five areas: governance, mitigation, adaptation, finance and monitoring, reporting and verification; considering governance as a cross-cutting aspect to all of them (CDKN, 2016).

The set of local good practices in natural resource governance derived from the FBE projects, are based on a bottom-up approach, which directly or indirectly contribute to strengthening the NDCs and their five areas of action. These good practices were further categorised into five types of contributions to the governance of the NDCs (see Figure 6):

**1. Support for the preparation of public policy instruments for mitigation/adaptation:** Goals and activities based on local knowledge and capacities, that contribute to the development and implementation of public policy instruments and thus facilitate the implementation of the NDCs.

**2. Involvement of diverse stakeholders:** Goals and activities that contribute to the integration and participation of public stakeholders (at

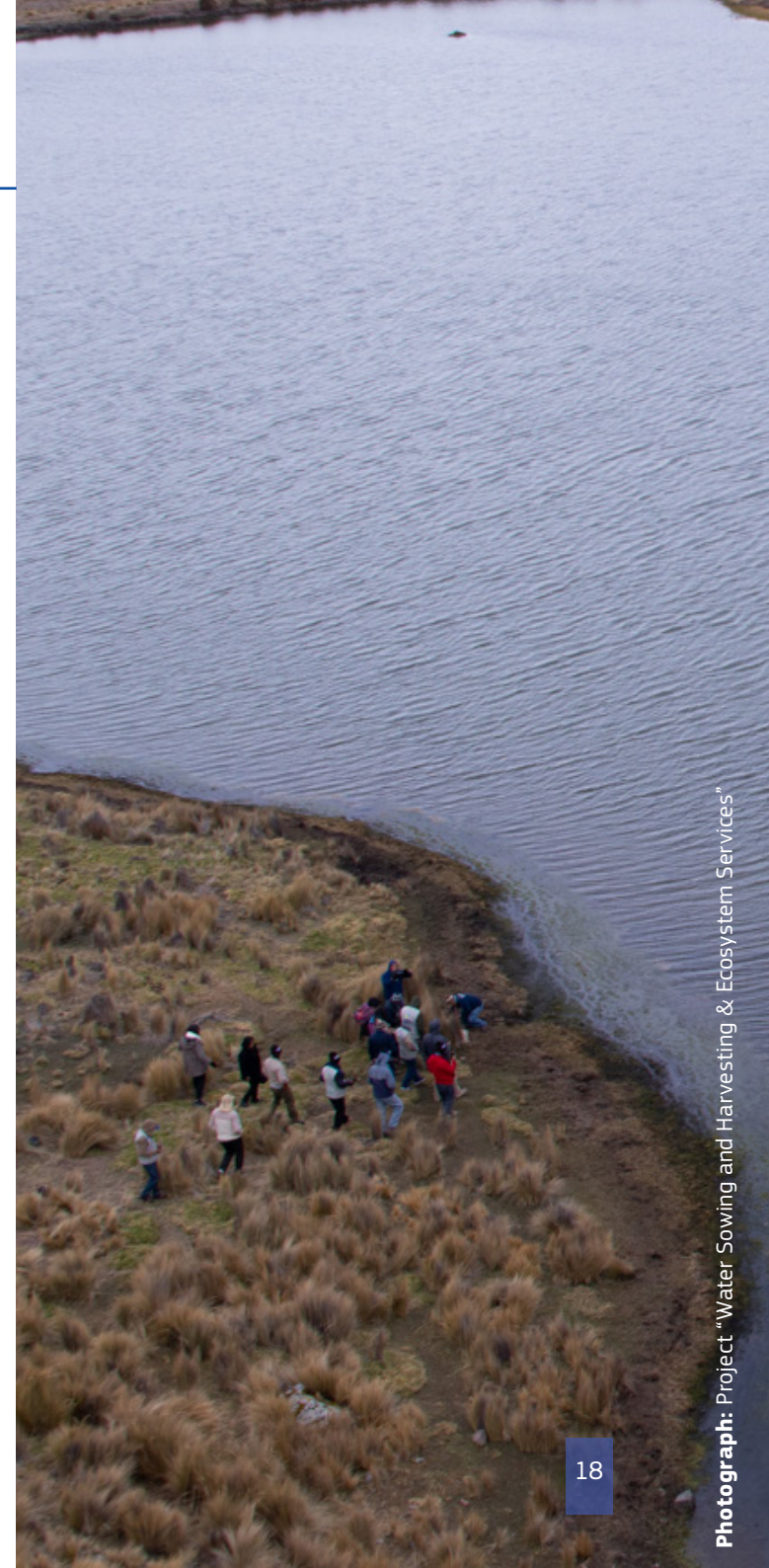
different scales: national, sub-national and local), civil society and/or the private sector, in decision-making processes for natural resource governance.

**3. Capacity building of local institutions and stakeholders:** Goals and activities that contribute to the capacity building of staff (technical and others) within institutions (national, subnational and local) as well as local stakeholders, to improve governance.

**4. Strengthen coordination at horizontal and vertical levels:** Goals and activities that contribute to multi-actor and multi-level coordination, enhancing the coherence of planning and action, especially in cross-cutting issues.

**5. Monitoring and evaluation of results:** Goals and activities that contribute with locally applied methods or information to improve transparency and comply with good governance principles.

Table 2 illustrates the contributions of the FBE projects to the governance of the NDCs of the countries where they are implemented, differentiated by relevant sectors in the areas of adaptation and mitigation (European Commission, 2019). The types of contributions are based on the categorisation presented in Figure 6



**Figure 6. Categories of bottom-up governance pathways in their contribution to the NDCs, based on the analysis of six FBE EUROCLIMA+ projects**



Source: Own elaboration

**Table 2. The contribution of EUROCLIMA+ projects to the governance of natural resources in the NDCs**

PROJECT	COUNTRY	NDCs IN LATIN AMERICA									
		ADAPTATION						MITIGATION			
		AGRICULTURE	FORESTRY	WATER	RISK MANAGEMENT	BIODIVERSITY	FISHERIES	AGRICULTURE	FORESTRY		
MUNICIPAL ACTIONS FOR ECOSYSTEM-BASED ADAPTATION	BRAZIL										
	MEXICO										
GOVERNANCE AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT	PERU										
	HONDURAS										
ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND GOODS	COSTA RICA										
	PERU										
NON-CARBON BENEFITS	PANAMA										
	BOLIVIA										
LIVING AND PRODUCING IN THE CHAQUEÑO FOREST	ARGENTINA										
	BOLIVIA										
	PARAGUAY										
	BRAZIL										
BIODIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	GUATEMALA										
	HONDURAS										

Note: The colour-code refers to the categorisation of the “Promising types of contributions to the NDC” described for each project.

Source: Own elaboration

## 3.2 Insights from local experiences

As mentioned in the previous section, the experiences of the six EUROCLIMA+ projects of the thematic sector “Forests, Biodiversity and Ecosystems” (FBE) have provided examples on the identification of barriers to achieve good governance (see Figure 5), but also on good practices on how to address such barriers, contributing to the governance aspects of NDCs from a bottom-up approach (see Figure 6). In this section, such experiences and their insights on how to address the barriers to promote good governance, are described for each one of the FBE projects.

### Case study insight 1:

The mainstreaming of Nature-based Solutions requires robust governance, based on the coherence of policy and action with improved vertical and horizontal coordination, from local to national levels

### Case study insight 2:

Effective and equitable governance require improving access to information, enhancing especially the participation of vulnerable groups

### Case study insight 3:

South-South knowledge and technology transfer are important tools to enhance local ownership and pride, promote good resource governance, and stimulate the introduction of innovative financing mechanisms

### Case study insight 4:

Equitable governance requires the revision and joint action to achieve a fair distribution of costs and benefits, and the promotion of local models for monitoring and verification of project impacts

### Case study insight 5:

A strategic vision and the participatory development of a coherent model of territorial governance, based on the knowledge, values, needs and aspirations of all relevant actors, contribute significantly towards effective and equitable governance

### Case study insight 6:

At a transboundary scale, the vertical and horizontal governance structures within and around protected areas benefit from enhanced participation, capacity development and commitment of local stakeholders

# Achieving robust governance by improving the vertical and horizontal coordination for mainstreaming Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) from local to national levels.

**Project title:** Municipal actions for Ecosystem-Based Adaptation - Articulating global agendas from the local level: Ecosystem-based adaptation as a catalyst for municipal actions to achieve global goals

**Objective of the project:** Increase local resilience by integrating the Ecosystem-based Adaptation approach (EbA) in prioritized municipalities of Mexico and Brazil, articulating global agendas on climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction.

**Countries:** Mexico and Brazil

**Implementing organisations:** Pronatura Mexico, Associação Nacional de Órgãos Municipais de Meio Ambiente (ANAMMA, Brazil)

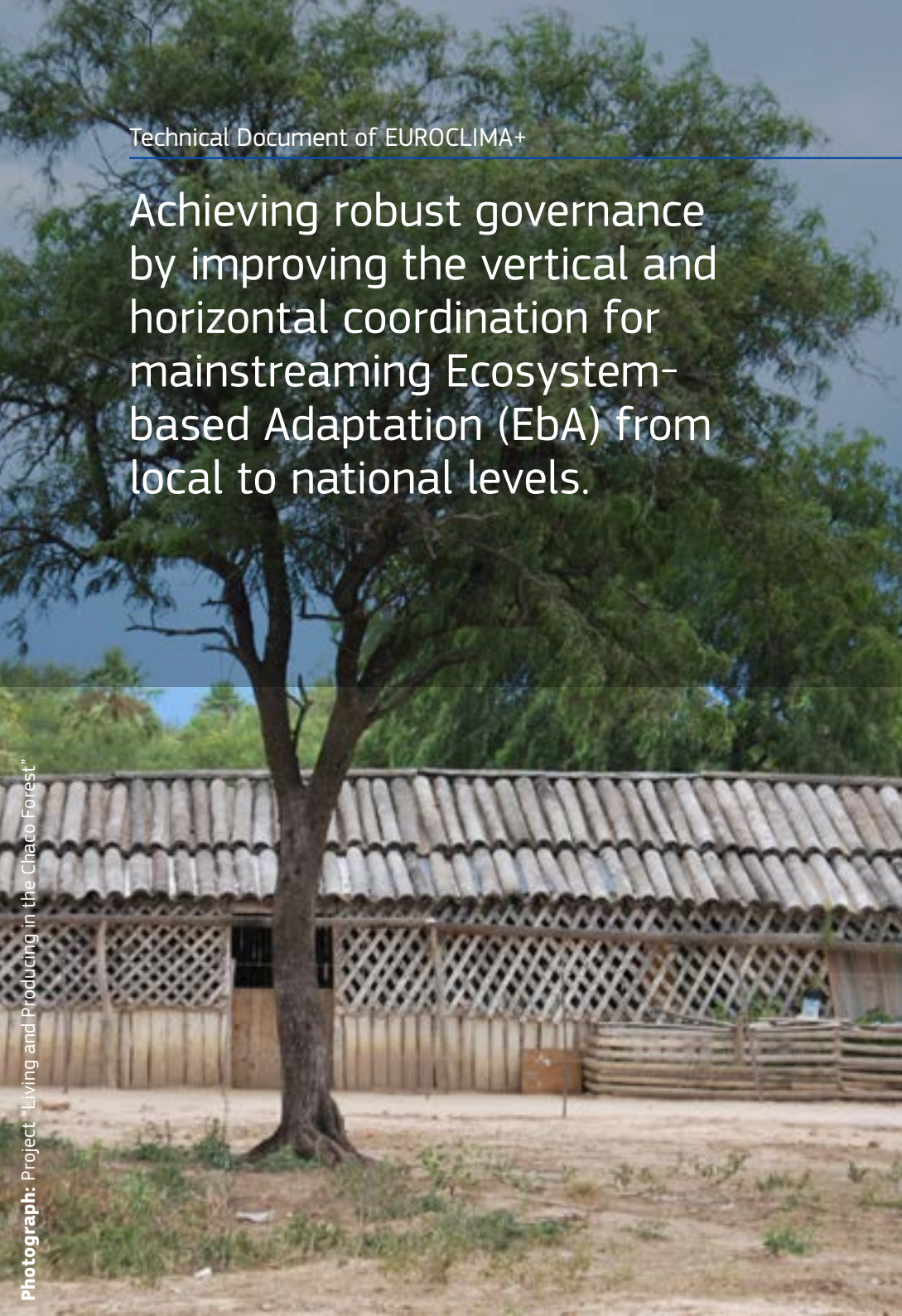
## Barriers to good governance:

Coordination	Stakeholder participation
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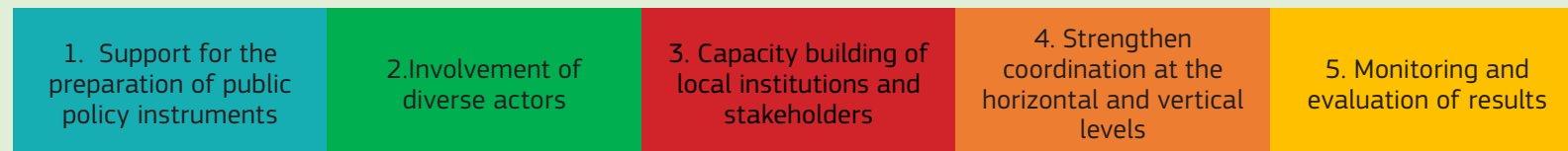
Existing participatory platforms and coordination processes between local, sub-national and national actors for territorial governance, have limited capacity to influence public policies.

**Good practices at the local level to address the barriers:** Sustainable and equitable management of natural resources requires robust governance with strong structures and coordinated actions between all policy levels. Local actions succeed in integrating EbA in municipal planning to reduce the vulnerability of local communities to climate change. A key success factor for integrating EbA in municipal planning is the promotion of a “livelihoods approach” which allows for the strategic linking of climate change adaptation with municipal development processes. The EUROCLIMA+ project is creating participatory platforms to engage the private sector, governments and civil society around efforts that promote the mainstreaming of EbA. Key policy instruments enabling these actions in Brazil are the Municipal Plans for the Atlantic Forest and the Local Biodiversity Plans (Planos Municipais da Mata Atlantica), which can contribute to achieving multiple targets of the NDCs in the forestry and biodiversity sectors. In Mexico, the project has proposed innovative processes that improve participation and technological innovations to strengthen the governance of natural resources at a local level.

Photograph: Project “Living and Producing in the Chaco Forest”



**Promising types of contributions to NDCs:**



The project contributes to improving the capacities of state and municipal teams, and to strengthening the coordination between different levels of governance. This allows for more coherence in the territorial and socio-economic planning processes and effective performance in the integrated and shared management of local resources. The coordination instruments promoted by the project at the local level are important for creating links with the NDCs processes. They have a have significant potential for replication, both in the country and in the Latin American region.

**Table 3. Governance contributions from the project to the NDCs of Mexico and Brazil**

Country	Types of project contribution from the local level to NDCs	1	2	3	4	5
Mexico	Facilitation of participatory platforms for local actors and the private sector to improve their collaboration on governance issues					
	Creation of training packages for government actors, with the objective of strengthening policies, strategies and actions for climate change adaptation at the municipal level.					
	Establishment of inter-sectoral coordination for the integration of the EbA approach in planning processes					
Brazil	Development of a monitoring platform for EbA actions in the local planning instruments (e.g. Local Forest Plans).					
	Organization of the private sector, state government and civil society to integrate EbA effectively into local-level governance					
	Strengthening governance instruments used in the Municipal Plans for Atlantic Forests that prioritize EbA actions.					

## Case study for insight 2:

# Achieving effective and equitable governance by improving access to information and enhancing participation of vulnerable groups

**Project title:** Governance and land use management - Improving land use governance and management to address the causes of forest loss and degradation, and enhance carbon stocks

**Objective of the project:** Contribute to sustainable climate change resilient development through successful experiences in implementing REDD+ initiatives (conservation), FLR (restoration) and FLEGT (trade) that generate benefits for the inhabitants of the territories of the Rio Tinto and Rio Blanco basins in Honduras, as well as in the Rio Huayabamba sub-basin in the San Martín region of Peru.

**Countries:** Peru and Honduras

**Implementing organisations:** The Pur Project, Helvetas Foundation (Honduras), Madera Verde Foundation (Honduras), Amazonia Viva Foundation (FUNDAVI, Peru)

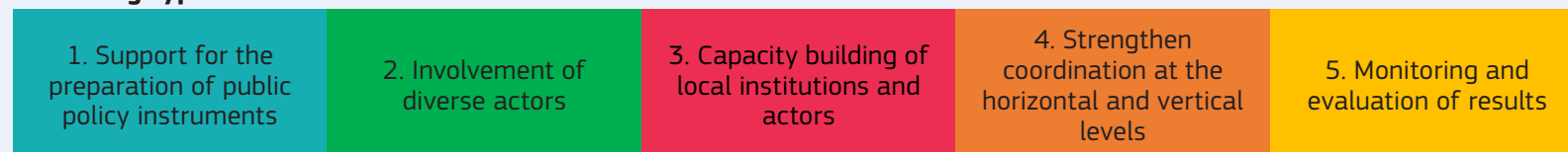
**Barrier to good governance:**

Information

The limited involvement of actors in planning and policy processes is due to the restricted access to and sharing of information on, for example, regulations and policies. This causes a lack of opportunities for creating effective and equitable conditions for governance of natural resources at the local level.

**Good practices at the local level to address the barrier:** A local action that reflects the commitment of local actors and supports their needs and values is fundamental for the sustainable management of natural resources and for contributing to address climate change through policy processes. Adequate access to and utilisation of relevant information is an enabling condition to strengthen local ownership and governance processes. The EUROCLIMA+ project builds local capacities to better understand and demand access to natural resources, decision making and funding mechanisms for nature-based projects. This includes strengthening capacities in resource rights, effective participation, demonstration and documentation of experiences and lessons learned. Such capacities are essential to expand and replicate successful governance models at the local level and to enhance their contribution to climate change measures. Key innovative models for knowledge management and exchange of experiences at the local level include the facilitation of dialogues, visits between local groups (peer-to-peer), and the creation of learning platforms to share good practices.

**Promising types of contributions to NDCs:**



The project demonstrates important lessons learned and opportunities to improve effective governance through engagement with local communities, in particular the involvement of women, youth, and indigenous groups within communities. The project serves as a model for an integrated mechanism for local and global learning and knowledge management, which fosters the exchange of information on good practices between local communities and national and international policy makers.

**Table 4. Governance contributions from the project to the NDCs of Peru and Honduras**

Country	Types of project contribution from the local level to NDCs	1	2	3	4	5
Peru	Development of guidelines for land use or agroforestry systems, with integration of women's specific requirements.	1			4	
	Development of a pilot of a Community Development Plan.	1			4	5
	Promotion of knowledge and exchange of experiences between territories on governance practices for conservation.		2	3		
Honduras	Awareness raising activities among local stakeholders about their rights and responsibilities in natural resource management.		2	3	4	
	Creation of platforms and agreements between central government and local communities for access to and dissemination of up-to-date land use information.	1			4	
	Establishment and adoption of requirements for greater participation of women in decision-making processes.		2	3		
	Promotion of monitoring mechanisms via traceability systems and field verification of forest chains.		2	3		5

### Case study for insight 3:

Enhancing South-South knowledge and technology transfer through strengthened local ownership, promoting good governance of natural resources through the introduction of innovative financial mechanisms

Photograph: Project "Water Sowing and Harvesting & Ecosystem Services"

**Project title:** Ecosystem services and goods - Ecosystem services, goods and functions: water harvesting, water service charges and recognition of payment for ecosystem services in the framework of South-South cooperation

**Objective of the project:** The improvement of the water supply in semiarid tropical dry forest areas in Costa Rica and the protection, improvement and restoration of watersheds through payments for ecosystem services system and a water canon in Peru.

**Countries:** Costa Rica and Peru

**Implementing organisations:** Asociación para la Investigación y el Desarrollo (AIDER, Peru), Fondo Nacional para el Financiamiento Forestal (FONAFIFO, Costa Rica)

**Barrier to good governance:**

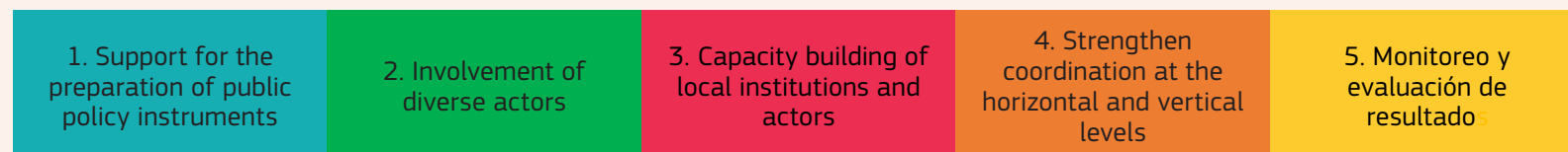
Capacity

The conceptualisation and implementation of governance mechanisms for natural resource management often take a top-down approach and are dominated by external actors. The Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) mechanism can be very complex, and it is usually framed by legal and administrative regulations, which can be hard to understand for local communities. Therefore, this approach often lacks strong local ownership and can be ineffective due to the insufficient awareness and capacities of the population to engage in such complex processes.

**Good practices at the local level to address the barrier:** Top-down governance approaches for natural resource management are often led by the central government, with limited knowledge of the needs, values and aspirations of local communities, resulting in a lack of their engagement. This context limits the recognition of ancestral practices, such as water harvesting, or the adoption of "modern" technologies or mechanisms for natural resource management. The EUROCLIMA+ project demonstrates how the South-South exchange of successful practices for natural resource governance, involving peer-to-peer exchanges on different levels, empowers local organisations to overcome the limitations of a top-down approach. It succeeds in creating innovative shared models for knowledge and technology transfer between Peru and Costa Rica on water harvesting technologies and water resource governance experiences, such as PES scheme negotiations. This collaborative work goes beyond the scope of the project, seeking to have an impact on other levels of governance, strengthening communication channels with the central government, which in turn coordinates with sub-national and local governments, as well as other sectors.

The results of this South-South knowledge exchange initiative can be seen in the climate change public policy instruments in both countries. PES and water harvesting practices are already considered as part of the actions that contribute to the implementation of NDCs, showing the potential for replication and scaling up to other localities, regions and even countries. The central governments can take advantage of the opportunity to replicate similar experiences for socially and economically adapted natural resource management arrangements, recognising the characteristics, knowledge, and cultural aspects relevant for each territory.

### Promising types of contributions to the NDCs of Costa Rica and Peru



**Table 5. Governance contributions from the project to the Costa Rican and Peruvian NDCs**

Country	Types of project contribution from the local level to NDCs	1	2	3	4	5
Costa Rica	Design of a strategy and action plan that aligns water planting and harvesting with climate change and forest governance.	1		3	4	
	Design of a regional and national awareness campaign on planting and harvesting water, forests, and climate change.		2			
Peru	Proposal for a draft law for water resources management with a river basin management approach and PES scheme based on the Costa Rica's experience.	1				
	Awareness raising activities on water scarcity among water users (drinking water, irrigation, and electricity production).		2	3		
	Capacity building for technical staff and local communities (indigenous peoples, farmers, and watershed dwellers) on the benefits of the PES.		2	3		

## Case study for insight 4:

Contributing to equitable governance by improving the fair distribution of benefits from natural resources and creating local models for monitoring and verification

Photograph: Project "Coordinating Global Agendas from a Local Approach"

**Project title:** Non-carbon benefits - Institutionalise local non-carbon benefits in national climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies

**Objective of the project:** Non-carbon benefits (NCBs) are institutionalised in climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in forests in Panama and Bolivia.

**Countries:** Panama and Bolivia

**Implementing organisations:** Forests of the Worlds (Denmark), Geoversity (Panama), Apoyo para el Campesino Indígena del Oriente Boliviano (APCOB, Bolivia), Forest Stewardship Council (FSC, Germany)

**Barrier to good governance:**

Stakeholder participation

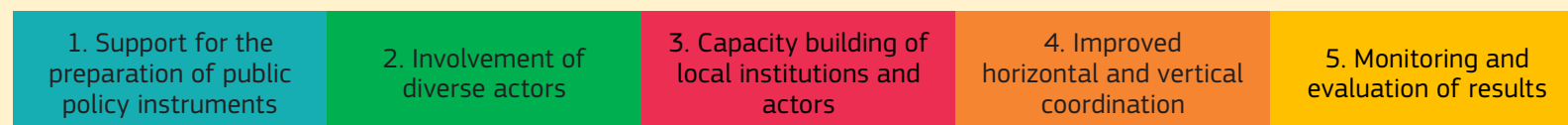
Lack of adequate mechanisms for the fair distribution of ecosystem benefits to indigenous peoples. Need for spaces and models for effective involvement of indigenous peoples in decision-making processes and governance of natural resources.

**Good practices at the local level to address the barrier:** Access to ecosystem benefits is important for local communities to enhance their quality of life and to better adapt to climate change. To ensure access to benefits, such as Non-Carbon Benefits (NCB), indigenous and local communities need funding and a favourable legal framework to enhance participation in policymaking processes. The project works with five communities in Bolivia and nine communities in Panama to explore models of participation in the identification, distribution, monitoring and fair distribution of responsibilities, and to explore the costs and benefits associated with NCB.

## Natural Resource Governance

The project offers innovative models to communicate insights to decision makers regarding: 1) which NCBs are most important for the cultural survival of the communities, the forest, and biodiversity; 2) how indigenous and local farming communities can contribute to NCBs and to national climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies; and 3) how to enhance participatory monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of the NCBs themselves. Therefore, the project proposes a way to value the protection of such benefits and communicate results to the state agencies, aspiring to their consideration in the policymaking processes. An important aspect is the strengthening of community ownership of such benefits and thus, the governance of NCBs, through community-led small pilot initiatives, which explore mechanisms that promote innovation and the search for solutions at different levels, according to the circumstances of each space or territory.

### Promising types of contributions to NDCs



The project demonstrates an innovative model of natural resource governance between local communities and the State, with a focus on the governance of NCB via enhanced ownership and use of local MRV mechanisms, which have great potential to inform the NDCs on the achievement of specific targets.

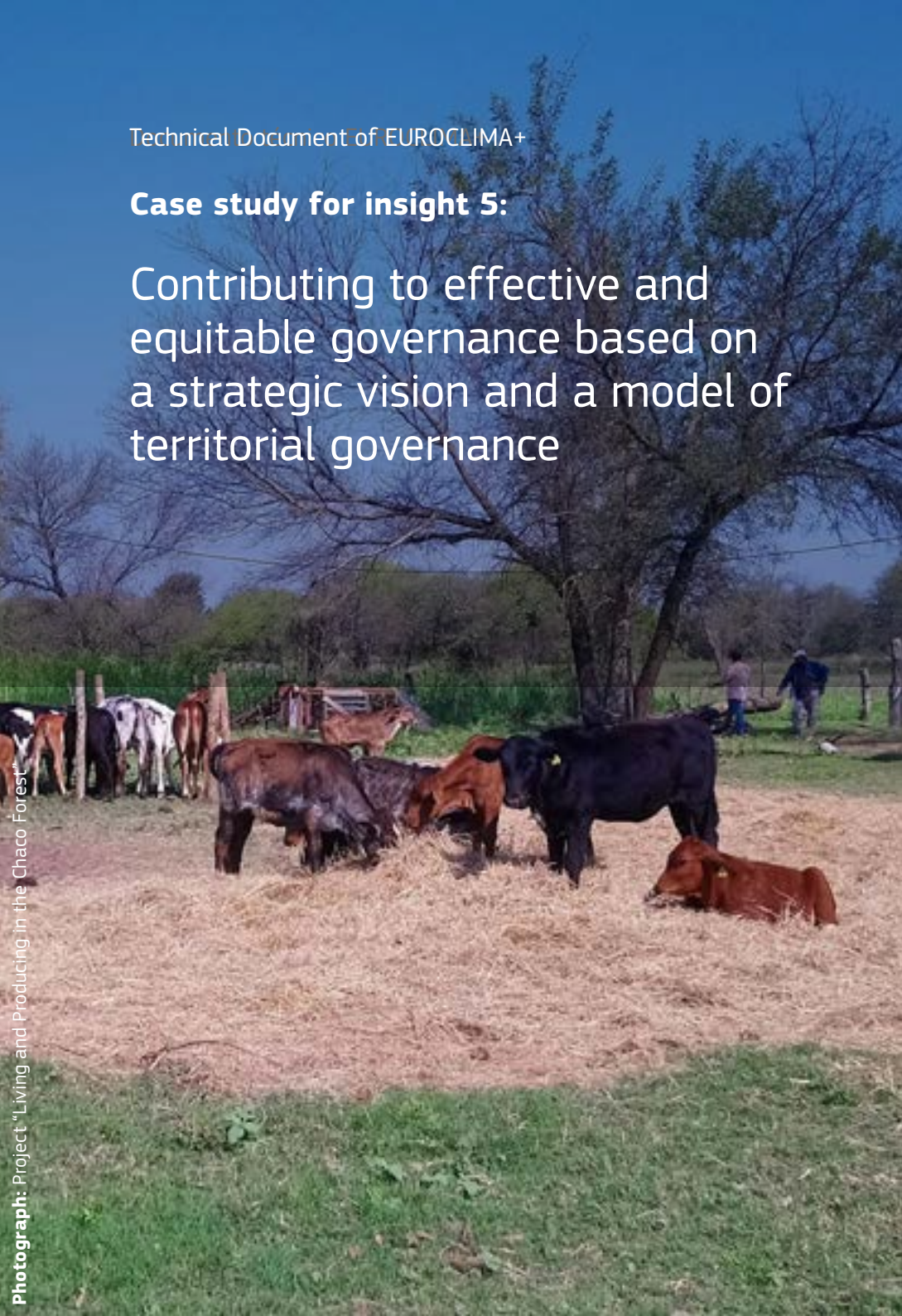
**Table 6. Governance contributions from the project to the NDCs of Panama and Bolivia**

Country	Types of project contribution from the local level to NDCs	1	2	3	4	5
Panama and Bolivia	Contribution to the strategic framework for governance, promoting the identification and protection of NCBs (innovative element)	1		3		
	Technical capacity building of indigenous youth, government officials and local communities in environmental management, with a focus on climate change impacts and NCBs in forests.		2	3		
	Developing a tool for monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of prioritized NCBs					5
	Creation of spaces to strengthen dialogue at the vertical level: indigenous populations - municipalities - sub-national governments.		2	3	4	

## Case study for insight 5:

# Contributing to effective and equitable governance based on a strategic vision and a model of territorial governance

Photograph: Project "Living and Producing in the Chaco Forest"



**Project title:** Living and producing in the Chaqueño Forest - Management and restoration of forests in productive environments

**Objective of the project:** Improve the socio-ecological resilience of local populations by strengthening forest management mechanisms and territorial governance of the Gran Chaco.

**Countries:** Argentina, Paraguay, and Bolivia

**Implementing organisations:** Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA, Argentina), Instituto Paraguayo de Tecnología Agraria (IPTA), Naturaleza, Tierra y Vida (NATIVA, Bolivia), Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuaria (EMBRAPA)

### Barriers to good governance:

Coordination	Stakeholder participation
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The governance systems for forest and land use management, and monitoring in the countries located in the Gran Chaco, are inefficient and inadequate due to the challenges associated with the diversity of stakeholders and the territorial and administrative frameworks.

**Good practices at the local level to address the barrier:** In recent years, the Gran Chaco region has seen transformations in governance processes due to specific responses to localised territorial demands (reserves, protected areas, community territories, autonomous communities, etc.), and to diverse actors and governance structures, with the emergence of new forms of territorial organisation (committees, boards, consortiums, etc.). At the territorial level, the overlapping of political and administrative competences of these forms of organisation affects the ongoing decision-making and management processes, where the appropriation and use of natural goods is the basis of the economy. The project promotes an innovative vision and model for territorial governance through the creation of capacities for collective action. To achieve this, the project has worked on i) new forms of decision making, which favour negotiation between the different levels of the political hierarchy, and ii) learning processes that improve the forms of relationships between stakeholders with diverse interests, creating spaces for negotiation and agreement. In addition, the project seeks to promote knowledge transfer among and between stakeholders to strengthen forest monitoring systems, and increase planning capacities and the preparation of reports on the condition of the forest and the environment. The project's experience with the development of territorial governance models for natural resources provides an opportunity for replication in other countries.

**Promising types of contributions to NDCs:**



Successful models of territorial governance are of great importance in addressing climate change governance more effectively. Such models can contribute to the adaptation and mitigation objectives set out in the NDCs.

**Table 7. Governance contributions from the project to the NDCs of Argentina and Paraguay**

Country	Types of project contribution from the local level to NDCs	1	2	3	4	5
Argentina and Paraguay	Capacity building of departmental, provincial, and national government staff in decision-making on policy design and implementation of laws.					
	Creation of an innovative methodology for zoning and assessing landscape sustainability and resilience					
	Strengthen forest monitoring systems through the exchange of experiences between actors and countries.					
	Recommendations and guidelines for public policy on native forests					

### Case study insight 6:

Reinforcing vertical and horizontal governance at a transboundary scale by strengthening the participation, capacity development and commitment of local stakeholders within and around Protected Areas

**Project title:** Biodiversity and Community Development: Strengthening National Protected Area Management

**Objective of the project:** Identify, implement, systematize and disseminate the results of specific strategic projects aimed at populations who require them, and that generate new benefits with the implementation of pilot projects by local communities which will be replicated on a broader scale, and in alignment to the NDCs and SDGs.

**Countries:** Guatemala and Honduras

**Implementing organisations:** Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP, Italy), Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (CONAP, Guatemala), Asociación Cuerpos de Conservación de Omoa (CCO, Honduras), Asociación Programas de Gestión Ambiental Local (ASOPROGAL, Guatemala)

#### Barrier to good governance:

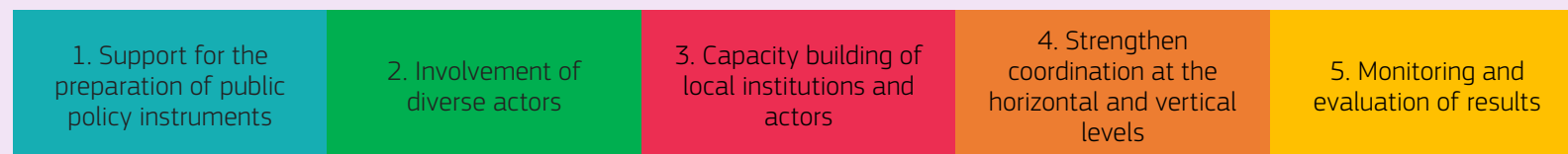
Coordination

The effective conservation of Natural Protected Areas (NPAs) under a climate change context poses not only environmental challenges, but also social and economic ones: it is mainly the most vulnerable populations who bear the burdens and restrictions of biodiversity protection. However, they also carry out important conservation actions and benefit from the services that the NPAs provide. In addition, for the design and implementation of a Binational Biological Corridor, challenges arise due to the complex transboundary management and the differences in legal, administrative and institutional contexts.

**Good practices at a local level to address the barriers:** The project demonstrates successful experiences in the transboundary conservation of NPAs and surrounding territories, influencing public policies towards more integrative approaches. These approaches transcend the local level, reaching the national, binational, regional and international levels, and allow the creation of exchange channels, so that the inputs collected from local experiences are considered in decision making regarding public policies on natural resources. The project contributed to the design of the RAMSAR Binational Biological Corridor

as a basis for the integrated management of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Omoa-Manabique region. The promotion of the corridor includes the strengthening of a multi-stakeholder management group including civil society organisations and local and national authorities of Guatemala and Honduras. In this sense, it also encourages the commitment of institutional and local stakeholders, strengthens their capacities for the management of joint initiatives based on the identification of a common necessities, and improves vertical and horizontal coordination, by connecting local stakeholders with local and national authorities, at the binational level.

**Promising types of contributions to NDC:**



The approach and activities implemented by the project show a high potential for replication in adjacent territories. The great challenge is to ensure that sufficient resources are available for advocacy to be sustained and that the implementing agencies have the confidence and credibility of the beneficiaries, while sharing a vision of mutual benefits.

**Table 8. Governance contributions from the project to to the NDCs of Guatemala and Honduras**

Country	Types of project contribution from the local level to NDCs	1	2	3	4	5
Guatemala and Honduras	Binational dialogues with tourism authorities, NPAs and communities in prioritised thematic areas to implement sustainable tourism practices that promote the socio-economic development of the communities.					
	Analysis and systematisation of five methodologies and models of co-management of NPAs with the participation of local communities and organisations.					
	Formation of an inter-sectoral and bi-national technical commission to monitor and prepare proposals for the adaptation of policies and norms related to NPAs.					
	Elaboration of a sustainability plan for the Regional Community Tourism Strategy in Guatemala, in coordination with local and national actors and authorities and exchange with Honduras.					
	Strengthening the capacity of five private reserves through the exchange of successful experiences (Honduras)					



The construction of natural infrastructure offers important opportunities for vertical and horizontal governance: civil engineers, developing agencies and finance specialists have to integrate local aspirations and regional needs into the planning.

## 4. Emerging lessons on the role of local governance for the NDCs

The recognition of the key role of ecosystems in achieving adaptation and mitigation objectives, makes natural resource governance increasingly important and evidences its tight links to the achievement of the NDC targets.. In Latin America, important conceptual and practical progresses have been attained in the past decade with regards to the governance of natural resources at the local level. Innovative perspectives with regards to actors' participation and multi-stakeholder dialogues have been introduced, which aim to transform climate governance,

enhance implementation on the ground, and strengthen the incorporation of local values, needs and inspirations into global processes. Equity and rights-based approaches considered in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have led to bottom-up initiatives in climate action, which complement traditional government-led decision processes in the NDCs. The insights from the experiences of EUROCLIMA+ projects evidence how existing barriers can be addressed through the implementation of local good practices and demonstrate promising pathways to contribute to the NDCs.

Figure 7 (which relates to the barriers highlighted in Figure 5) shows a list of emerging lessons from the case studies that directly address the barriers to good natural resource governance.



**Figure 7. Emerging lessons to overcome identified barriers for natural resource governance, based on the analysis of six EUROCLIMA+ projects**

Source: Own elaboration

### **1. Access to and exchange of information promotes transparency and encourages stakeholder participation.**

Transparency in the governance of natural resources requires for information to be collected, documented and disseminated at all levels, so it can be used in the design of public policies and decision making, especially in the planning and implementation of natural resource management. It is equally important that decisions are shared throughout the governance hierarchy and communicated to all stakeholders.

**Case study 2**, based on the project “**Governance and land use management**” in Peru and Honduras, shows how the establishment of an integrated learning and knowledge management mechanism at the local level can foster the exchange of information on good practices among local communities and national and international policy makers.

**Case study 3**, based on the project “**Ecosystem services and goods**” in Peru and Costa Rica, stands out for its innovation through the South-South exchange of successful practices around PES and water harvesting technologies, empowering the benefiting local organisations in the design and implementation of project activities, strengthening their capacities.

### **2. Enhancing transformative capacity of local level stakeholders is essential for good governance.**

Increased awareness of rights and responsibilities related to natural resources, will in turn encourage governments to fulfil their obligations and respect their commitments to good governance. Empowering local communities through capacity building will enable them to participate effectively in the decision-making processes and ensure that their representation in local institutions is democratic and independent..

All the EUROCLIMA+ FBE projects work closely with local and sub-national stakeholders in each one of their countries and provide technical capacities to resource users and municipal bodies, bringing significant changes in, for example, the recognition and enforcement of rights over land tenure and equitable benefit sharing of natural resources. In particular:

**Case study 4** based on the project “**Non-carbon benefits**” in Panama and Bolivia, demonstrates the importance of building technical capacity for indigenous youth, government officials and local communities in environmental management, focusing on the impacts of climate change and NCRB on forests.

**Case study 5** based on the project “**Living and producing in the Chaqueño Forest**” in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay, shows the results of the capacity building of the staff in the departmental, provincial, and national governments on decision making regarding the design of regulations and application of laws.

### **3. Effective local coordination mechanisms are incentives to promote good governance and to address different gaps on communication and stakeholder engagement.**

The development of coordination mechanisms at the local and subnational levels has great potential to address information asymmetries, build capacities, foster an agreement on a common goal, establish consensual work plans and co-financing mechanisms, encourage transparent intergovernmental interaction, and thus make each party accountable for its own contribution. A coordination mechanism could consist of a formal or informal forum through which governments at different levels and local stakeholders can formulate common strategies, coordinate different approaches, and develop legal instruments.

**Case study 1, based on the project “Municipal actions for Ecosystem-Based Adaptation”**

in Mexico and Brazil, promotes actions for the integration of EbA in municipal planning through the coordination of stakeholders involved in the development of Local Biodiversity Plans, including stakeholders from the private sector.

**Case study 6, based on the project “Biodiversity and community development”**

in Honduras and Guatemala, demonstrates how political incidence on the conservation of Protected Areas can be achieved through the enhancement of horizontal and vertical coordination by promoting stakeholder discussion forums. These types of mechanisms and instruments at the local level are important to create relationships and enhance links between the local/subnational level and the NDCs at the national level. Such instruments have significant potential for replication in Peru and Honduras, and in the Latin American region.

**4. Partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental institutions strengthen the effectiveness of governance.**

In particular, the private sector and civil society stakeholders play important roles, since they fulfil specific functions that public stakeholders cannot perform or that private stakeholders perform more efficiently. This form of partnerships has increasingly gained importance in governance structures.

**Case study 1, based on the project “Municipal actions for Ecosystem-Based Adaptation”**

in Mexico and Brazil, creates an interface to organise the private sector, the state government and civil society around efforts that can mainstream EbA actions through the Municipal Plans of the Atlantic Forest in Brazil. Cooperation with private stakeholders in the governance of natural resources can significantly contribute to the achievement of sustainable management of natural resources by providing financial resources, experience and knowledge, implementation capacity, and legitimacy.

**5. The participation of local actors in the governance of natural resources requires innovative processes.**

The participation of local actors in decision making is imperative for good governance. Innovative processes that involve local actors are possible alternatives to complement the usual “participatory” methods. Flexibility in the design of these processes, which must take into account the power dynamics, characteristics and priorities of the different stakeholders, can have a considerable influence on the effective involvement of local stakeholders and, consequently, on the sustainability of ongoing public policy processes. Innovative processes play an important role in the vision of transformational change that is required in the context of climate change and sustainable development, and they represent a cornerstone of the EU policies.

While the case studies demonstrate promising innovative participatory processes at local level, it is worth highlighting the Peruvian national participatory process Dialoguemos sobre Cambio Climático.

Dialoguemos sobre Cambio Climático (Dialogue about climate change) is an innovative process implemented in Peru. Among the central themes of Dialoguemos are the NDCs, which is a participatory, multi-sector, multi-level and multi-actor process that seeks to contribute to the implementation and socialization of NDCs measures within the framework of Integrated Climate Change Management through permanent interaction that facilitates alliances and agreements between diverse actors. This process has three essential characteristics for its implementation:

- Space that has in agenda measures of the NDCs
- Multi-actor and multi-level space with adequate representation
- Focused on generating viable agreements or partnerships to implement NDCs

Likewise, the dialogue spaces developed through Dialoguemos has 4 formats: Meetings, Forums, Working Meetings and Executive Breakfasts. Thus, Dialoguemos facilitates the permanent interaction to obtain alliances and agreements, as well as the identification of roles among the diverse key actors (public sector, private, indigenous peoples, academia, international cooperation and civil society) for the implementation of the NDCs and its enabling conditions.





More than 10 associations from Guatemala, Honduras and Belize met in Puerto Barrios, Izabal, Guatemala to activate the Trinational Alliance for the Conservation of the Gulf of Honduras (Alianza Trinacional para La Conservación del Golfo de Honduras, TRIGOH) to update their work plans and define prioritized activities to be implemented.

## 5. Recommendations for action

Based on the emerging lessons, and to effectively contribute to the NDCs and other national and international climate change targets, project implementers should consider the following simple actions as a foundation for future efforts:

### **Action 1. Ensure adequate communication:**

Strengthen different horizontal and vertical communication channels. Use media and language appropriate, understandable and attractive to the various stakeholders in different contexts.

### **Action 2. Strengthen cooperation with vision:**

Develop a shared vision among the various stakeholders and partners in the project; jointly define the strategic direction on the scope of the measures and contribution to the actions defined in the NDCs.

### **Action 3. Improve internal coordination:**

Develop and/or strengthen internal coordination

structures, both strategic and operational, in an open and cooperative dialogue.

### **Action 4. Monitor and report results:**

Emphasise the importance of reporting the project results and their concrete links with the NDCs. This may also require adapted reporting dynamics: projects can contact sub-national governments directly and these in turn inform national stakeholders, so that project results are incorporated as part of public policy and implementation processes of NDCs.

### **Action 5. Expand the involvement of technical stakeholders:**

Technical stakeholders (e.g. agricultural extension workers, water resource managers, planners, etc.) frequently interact with the local population and are informed about their contexts. In this sense, it is important to involve them with the co-applicant organizations in the

discussion and dissemination spaces promoted by the central government related to NDCs.

### **Action 6. Seek project-policy linkages:**

Analyse how project activities are linked to policy objectives and activities at local, sub-national and national levels through logical frameworks or specific indicators, which can be accounted for and added to the country's goals and commitments.

### **Action 7. Foster synergies and advocacy:**

Create synergies with networks and platforms that work with different organisations (NGOs, CBOs, IPAs, etc.), within a national scope. The more synergies created with representative, organised, and solid platforms, the more impact the project/initiative can have in the central government (as opposed to opting for micro-platforms or specific project groups).

## NOTES

1 Bolivia NDC. Available here: [https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Bolivia%20\(Plurinational%20State%20of\)%20First/INDC-Bolivia-english.pdf](https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Bolivia%20(Plurinational%20State%20of)%20First/INDC-Bolivia-english.pdf)

2 Colombia NDC. Available here: [https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Bolivia%20\(Plurinational%20State%20of\)%20First/INDC-Bolivia-english.pdf](https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Bolivia%20(Plurinational%20State%20of)%20First/INDC-Bolivia-english.pdf)

3 Mexico NDC. Available here: <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Mexico%20First/MEXICO%20INDC%2003.30.2015.pdf>

4 Uruguay NDC. Available here: [https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Uruguay%20First/Uruguay\\_First%20Nationally%20Determined%20Contribution.pdf](https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Uruguay%20First/Uruguay_First%20Nationally%20Determined%20Contribution.pdf)

5 Nicaragua NDC. Available here: <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Nicaragua%20First/Contribucion%20Nacionalmente%20Determinada%20Nicaragua.pdf>

**All NDCs can be found on the official webpage of UNFCCC, NDC Registry, under:** <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NDCStaging/Pages/All.aspx>

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