



Conflict-Sensitive Nature-based Solutions: Promoting resilience, nature, and peace

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for adaptation are defined as actions taken to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use, and manage the natural environment to strengthen the resilience of communities and nature to climate change.¹ They are a critical tool in the fight against the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

When carefully designed and implemented, NbS for adaptation can also support peace and cooperation.



¹Adapted from the United Nations Environment Assembly (2022) UNEP/EA.5/Res.5

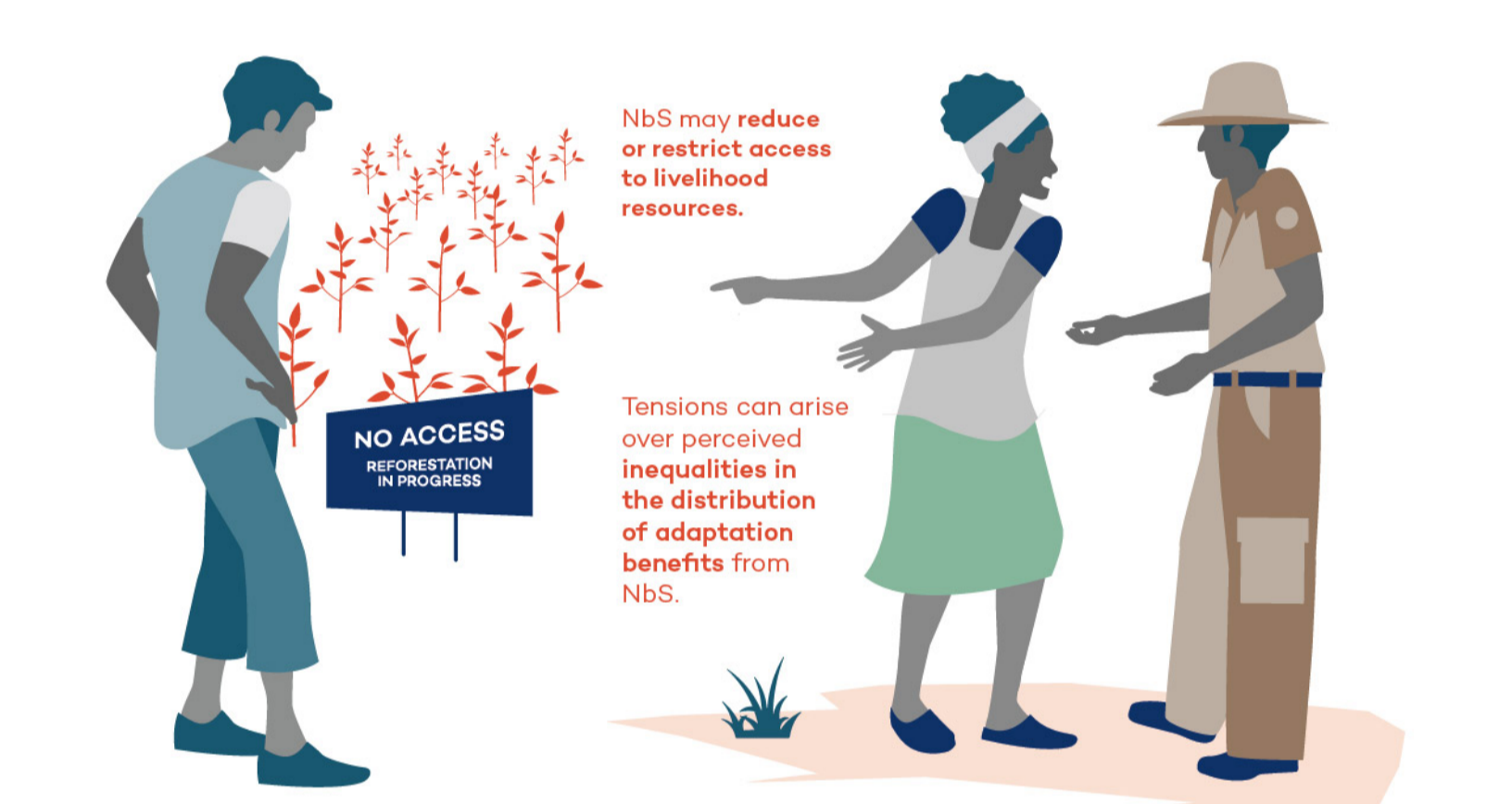
But when these solutions do not consider the broader context, they risk creating new or exacerbating existing tensions, grievances, and conflicts. For example:



NbS can introduce new economic burdens or risks. For instance, animals may leave their habitats in search of food and water, and damage communities and livelihoods.

NbS may reduce or restrict access to livelihood resources.

Tensions can arise over perceived inequalities in the distribution of adaptation benefits from NbS.



These risks are present wherever decisions are being made about adaptation activities rooted in ecosystem and natural resource access, control, management, and use, as these choices can have consequences for people's livelihoods, well-being, and health.

Conflict-sensitive NbS for adaptation are activities that are designed and implemented to increase the climate resilience of ecosystems and communities in a way that considers the causes, actors, dynamics, and impacts of conflict.

At a minimum, conflict-sensitive NbS for adaptation are consciously designed to minimize conflict risks and avoid inadvertently contributing to tensions and grievances. Ideally, they go beyond doing no harm to promote cooperation, trust-building, and peace.



Conflict-sensitive NbS can help people and ecosystems thrive together.

Integrating conflict sensitivity into the design, implementing, and monitoring of NbS for adaptation should be a participatory process that considers the diverse perspectives, interests, and needs of a variety of local actors, particularly those most impacted by conflict and climate risks.

Broad engagement—including with women and other underrepresented groups—will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of existing and potential conflicts, one that accounts for differing levels of power, influence, and agency among actors. It will allow for the co-design of interventions by those most affected by conflict and climate change and will help build a sense of ownership and shared responsibility.

Conflict-sensitive NbS for Adaptation

The starting point for the design of NbS for adaptation is a climate vulnerability and risk assessment. For conflict-sensitive NbS for adaptation, you must also undertake a conflict analysis. To ensure NbS for adaptation are conflict-sensitive, you should:



ASSESS

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Identify existing and potential conflicts affecting the landscape or community in which your NbS interventions are being implemented or are going to be implemented.

Select for deeper analysis those conflicts that pose the greatest threat to communities and ecosystems and are within your mandate to address.

Analyze the conflict to better understand the causes, actors, dynamics, and impacts, considering current and future climate risks and vulnerabilities.

Assess how your NbS for adaptation – whether existing or proposed – may directly or indirectly affect the analyzed conflicts, and entry points for action.



DESIGN

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Design NbS for adaptation that minimize conflict risks and maximize peacebuilding opportunities.

IMPLEMENT

Implement NbS for adaptation with a commitment to transparent, adaptable, and participatory processes.

Communicate the alignment of your activities with conflict-sensitive principles.



MONITOR, EVALUATE, LEARN

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Monitor and evaluate the impact of your NbS for adaptation activities on the peace and conflict context.

Learn from how your activities were designed and implemented, as well as how they impact peace and conflict dynamics, and adjust activities as needed.



By integrating conflict sensitivity into NbS for adaptation, you can ensure that your project strengthens climate resilience and protects nature while promoting cooperation, trust, and peace.

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