

a Conservation International Practical Handbook
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NATURE-BASED TRANSFORMATIVE ADAPTATION

Transformative Adaptation refers to strategies to overcome the impact of climate change that lead to fundamental shifts in states and interactions of people and nature, as well as address root causes of vulnerability in the long-term.

Transformative adaptation is more anticipatory than other climate change responses such as coping or incremental adaptation. The more transformative the adaptation strategy, the higher the human inputs and re-organization required. Implementing transformative adaptation requires significant investments of time, money, and skills.

Nature-based solutions for adaptation (NbS or EbA) use biodiversity and ecosystem services to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. Such solutions include the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of nature to address climate-related risks, such as increasing temperature and more erratic precipitations.

Nature-based solutions for adaptation are transformative when they are part of an integrated approach that fully takes into consideration best practices and future changes. They can re-shape unsustainable interactions between people and nature, while moving beyond immediate material benefits or current development pathways.

What characterizes transformative adaptation?



RE-DIRECTING UNSUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

from short-term technical fixes to long-term mixed nature-based solutions.



RE-STRUCTURING LAND MANAGEMENT

from changing individual perceptions to changing societal behaviors.



RE-CONNECTING MULTIPLE LAND USES

from “people above nature” to “people in nature”.



RE-SCALING LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS

from siloed sectoral plans to integrated landscape & seascapes approaches.



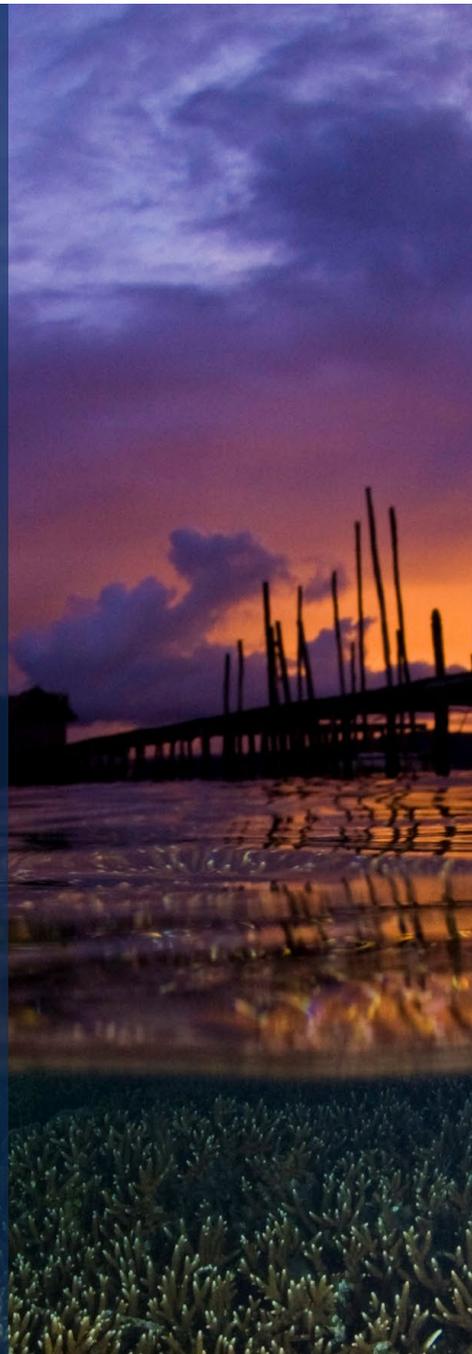
RE-THINKING NATURE'S ROLE

from isolated projects to programmatic and jurisdictional initiatives.



RE-TIMING CLIMATE ACTIONS WITH NATURE

from nature protection as a burden to an investment.



Why we need to consider transformative adaptation?

- To address root causes of climate-related vulnerabilities.
- To plan anticipatory and long-term adaptation.
- To avoid ineffective adaptation and maladaptation.
- To implement the only remaining adaptation option.

When we need to consider transformative adaptation?

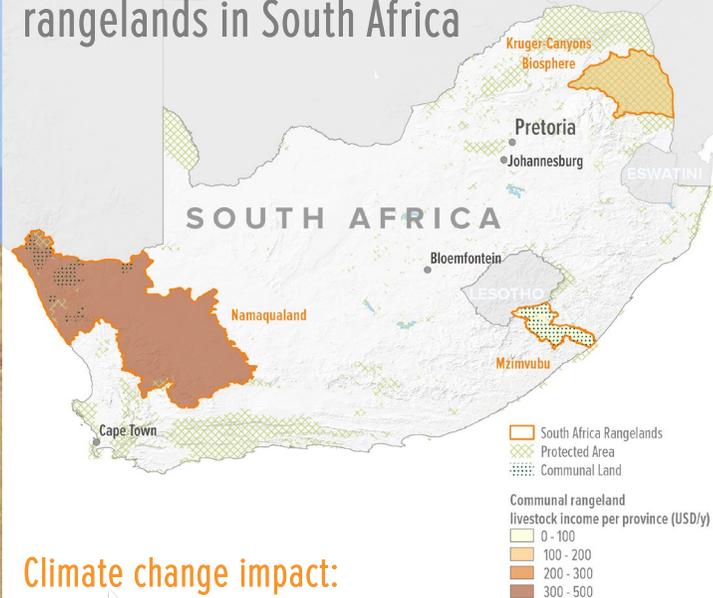
- In places where planned adaptation strategies risk to fail because they are expected to be severely impacted by climate change (e.g. coral reefs and fishing areas around small islands, grasslands in arid regions, wetlands, and forested floodplains).
- In places where current adaptation strategies are leading to maladaptation and further degradation and are reaching their limits (e.g. remote communities highly dependent on nature, farmers in marginal agricultural lands, vegetation in permafrost and forests in mountains, coastal communities).
- In places where climate change and other threats have already caused degradation and there are no other adaptation options under these altered conditions (e.g. submerged coastal areas, unproductive agricultural land, dry grasslands under desertification or alien species encroachment, dried out wetlands).

Download the full practical handbook
at conservation.org/EbA

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Livestock management in communal rangelands in South Africa



Climate change impact:



Climate change impacts in South Africa include more severe droughts, increased temperatures and erratic rainfall. This reduces cattle productivity because of poor quality grazing, less water availability, and more frequent livestock diseases.

Transformative adaptation:



path-shifting

- Re-creating livelihood opportunities in communal lands through restoration and sustainable rangeland management.
- Transforming the supply chain of the red meat sector through markets that require conservation actions.



restructuring

- Shifting from marginalized and poor communities to communities that are empowered and hold jobs in sustainable livestock production.
- Shifting government job creation investments into climate change adaptation investment.



“African rangelands habitat coevolved with grazing herds — they depend on each other for a balanced ecosystem.”

Sarah Frazee, former Country Director, Conservation South Africa