

Making it happen...

All stakeholders have a role to play in ensuring successful adaptation, which includes valuing and taking account of the natural world in our actions. Processes should be fully inclusive and participatory at all levels.

The role of ecosystems in climate change adaptation is relevant to, and should be applied at, all scales: local, landscape, national, transboundary and international. Understanding how ecosystems work can provide a useful organising principle in determining the most appropriate scale to work at, and can improve the effectiveness of co-operation between different stakeholders, levels of governance and natural resource-dependent sectors. BirdLife's unique local-to-global structure has enabled structures and processes to be established that contribute to long-term and flexible approaches to climate change adaptation.

BirdLife is engaging with policy and practice at local, national and international levels, and leading by example on land that Partners own or manage with local people. This involves building the capacity of national NGOs, building effective links to government planning processes, and providing sound, science-based information and guidance. We are helping to improve understanding of the role of ecosystems in national, sub-regional and regional plans, as well as in individual projects, and using evidence from case studies to contribute to 'learning by doing', and to national adaptation plans. Also, as part of a coalition of conservation organisations and businesses, BirdLife has developed the new Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT). This allows integration of biodiversity considerations at the earliest stages of adaptation and other project planning, helping governments, funders and companies to ensure that development doesn't damage the natural resource base (including biodiversity) of the country.

What governments can do (at home)

BirdLife believes that to create a climate-resilient society, adaptation priorities need to be agreed in-country, through nationally-led, inclusive and participatory processes. As countries develop, implement and revise their climate change adaptation plans and strategies in the light of growing climate change impacts, BirdLife urges all governments to:

- **base policy on sound science, recognise ecosystems** as cross-cutting and underpinning for adaptation, and **address them within national adaptation frameworks, strategies and plans**, including Least Developed Countries' National Adaptation Programmes for Action (NAPAs)
- **fully involve local communities and resource users in adaptation planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation**, recognising that important information and traditional knowledge may be held by local NGOs and indigenous groups
- **link or integrate national adaptation plans with other strategic plans and processes**, such as national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies, and national land-use plans, mainstreaming the value and significance of ecosystems and their services throughout, prioritising vulnerable ecosystems communities depend on
- **work with other nations to address trans-boundary interests** such as shared water resources, migratory species and ecosystems
- **link plans and action to other global commitments** agreed nationally, such as the CBD and the Ramsar Convention
- **significantly step up efforts to protect nature and biodiversity**, as a prime strategy to ensure ecosystem resilience and sustainable adaptation
- **use environmental mainstreaming tools** such as strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) and EIAs in planning and policy, and in project and programme delivery, and ensure that these tools include ecosystem resilience-proofing of plans and projects
- help **foster shared learning, and develop capacity** regarding climate change and the role and value of ecosystems. This is needed within all relevant government departments and national agencies, as well as at sectoral and community levels. It should be gender sensitive
- channel experience of implementation and delivery into appropriate work streams of the UNFCCC, through 'learning by doing'
- support co-ordinated efforts to enable **sustainable management of natural assets** and trans-boundary resources, and to ensure the effective, inclusive engagement of local communities
- address the value and **importance of ecosystems within guidelines for adaptation funding** at the national level.