

# Joint Statement on Upscaling Ecosystem-based Adaptation in Maharashtra

2nd EbA state-level consultation

16 February 2021

**W**e, a group of experts and key stakeholders, discussing a Roadmap for upscaling Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) in Maharashtra, recognise EbA as a holistic approach to foster resilient livelihoods and healthy ecosystems in rural Maharashtra. The EbA approach takes on greater significance,

## Considering

1. **The climate crisis in India:** The Global Climate Risk Index 2021 ranks India as the seventh most affected country by extreme weather events worldwide. In 2019 alone, climate-related hazards caused an economic loss in India of around USD 69 billion in purchasing power parity and displaced millions of people (Eckstein, et. al., 2021).
2. **The climate vulnerability of Maharashtra:** Maharashtra is particularly vulnerable to climate change. About 80% of its area is classified as semi-arid. About half its population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods, of which around 80% are small and marginal farmers. Land degradation is a major issue in Maharashtra with over 43% of its cultivable lands classified as degraded (ISRO, 2016).
3. **The growing recognition of nature-based solutions as a systemic response to climate change:** Nature-based solutions (NbS) are now being advocated worldwide as a cost-effective, scalable and systemic response to climate change. Based on the vital role ecosystems play in climate mitigation and adaptation, EbA is a compelling example of NbS that enhances the resilience of nature and society to the impacts of climate change. Studies confirm that EbA can deliver pro-poor outcomes including increasing incomes of farmers, fishers, and natural resource dependent communities, enhancing food security and reducing poverty. It is also regarded as a low cost and no-regret adaptation option (Reid et al., 2019).
4. **A wealth of experience in implementing EbA type interventions exist:** Though not labelled as EbA, climate adaptation based on the sustainable management, restoration and protection of natural resources has been practiced for many years in Maharashtra, for example, through Watershed Development, Climate Change Adaptation and other programmes. These valuable experiences need to be capitalised on and fed into processes of mainstreaming and scaling EbA.
5. **Mainstreaming EbA into government policies and programmes is feasible:** Aligning and integrating the EbA approach into the State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) and the State Action Plan on Biodiversity; the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and other flagship programmes such as the Prime Minister's Krishi Sinchayi Yojana (PMKSY), which includes the Integrated Watershed Management Program (IWMP) as well as bringing about effective convergence of existing schemes, can enhance outcomes related to climate resilience, livelihood improvement, food security, and ecosystem health.
6. **EbA can help India achieve its national priorities and international commitments:** This current decade (2021 -2030) is critical for Maharashtra and the rest of India for several reasons: Meeting the 17 United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030; delivering on India's Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; fulfilling India's target of restoring 26 million ha of degraded land by 2030 under the Land Degradation Neutrality goals of the United Nations Convention on Combatting Desertification (UNCCD); as well as protecting biodiversity under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD).
7. **A participatory and inclusive process of further developing and implementing a Roadmap can significantly ramp up EbA upscaling:** The design, planning and implementation of a roadmap for scaling EbA in Maharashtra needs to consider the experiences, knowledge and perspectives of all stakeholders, including government, civil society, academia, and the private sector. A consensus-driven, evidence-based and demand-responsive roadmap for EbA will be crucial for its relevance and widespread adoption contributing to economic opportunities, food and nutritional security and environmental sustainability.

## Therefore, we, the participants of the 2nd EbA state level consultation

- Acknowledge the importance of EbA as a holistic approach to resilient livelihoods and ecosystems in rural Maharashtra;
- Believe that EbA has the potential to foster a climate-resilient, prosperous and just future for Maharashtra, especially for its rural communities;
- Emphasise that EbA can significantly contribute towards achieving the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the commitments under the UNCCD and the UNCBD in this important decade of 2021 to 2030.
- Recommend and urge that the people and Government of Maharashtra seize this opportunity and integrate EbA in its way of life, state development policies, convergence of programs and works.

## Annexure: Knowledge products highlighting the case for EbA



Adapting to climate change in India – the value of an ecosystem-based response.  
EbA Info Brief Series #1  
<https://bit.ly/30pa7nB>



Strengthening Biodiversity to Enhance Ecosystem-based Adaptation.  
EbA Info Brief Series #2  
<https://bit.ly/2OxLxyq>



Managing Land and Forests – the value of ecosystem-based adaptation.  
EbA Info Brief Series #3  
<https://bit.ly/30s95Hr>



An Ecosystem - based approach to Climate Resilient Agriculture.  
EbA Info Brief Series #4  
<https://bit.ly/2PN6o1h>



Livestock and Ecosystem-based Adaptation.  
EbA Info Brief Series #5  
<https://bit.ly/3qtTQZa>



Why Ecosystem-based Adaptation for Water Management?  
EbA Info Brief Series #6  
<https://bit.ly/38n67s2>



Scaling Ecosystem based Adaptation in Maharashtra India: An Analysis of Policies and Programmes  
<https://bit.ly/3kZRyQh>



More information on EbA and WOTR  
<https://wotr.org/eba/>

## About the project

This Joint Statement is part of a broader initiative on upscaling EbA in Maharashtra. This initiative is implemented by the [Watershed Organisation Trust \(WOTR\)](https://wotr.org/), based in Pune, India, and [TMG Research gGmbH](https://www.tmg-thinktank.com/), based in Berlin, with financial support by the [International Climate Initiative](https://www.bmu.de/) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMU). For more information about this initiative, visit our website: [www.wotr.org/eba](https://www.wotr.org/eba) and [www.tmg-thinktank.com/eba](https://www.tmg-thinktank.com/eba)