



KEY LESSONS LEARNED

GreenWatersheds



Building Governance Mechanisms for Adaptation

Many effective solutions to climate change adaptation already exist, with Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) being a prime example. However, the mainstreaming of EbA principles into laws, policies, urban planning and landscape management is still lacking. Already by 2017, as pointed out by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), 67 percent of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) mentioned adaptation actions involving ecosystems.

However, quantifiable targets and structures to facilitate knowledge-sharing, replication, or up-scaling are still scarce. Governance mechanisms have a crucial role in filling this gap and serving as facilitating factors by involving all relevant stakeholders and uniting them around a common goal. Governance is a complex issue highly dependent on local actors and contexts. Each mechanism therefore needs to be tailored to local conditions and needs.

In the GreenWatersheds-project, OroVerde and its partner organizations in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean have identified four key lessons:

1 Mapping and Engaging Local Actors

Don't just think about national policies. Effective governance starts at the local level, and often existing structures can be used to engage, connect, unite and empower local and regional actors. A thorough analysis of actors, their participation in decision-making and networks of cooperation will help to identify promising avenues for engagement as well as potential challenges. Approached in this way, governance becomes a process with potential for transforming social structures as well.

2 Common Interests and Common Vision

Local actors usually have limited financial, time and human resources and one must carefully calculate how to allocate them. To convince a critical mass of actors that it is worth investing time and effort in governance initiatives and to keep them engaged, it is important to identify common interests and use them to build a joint vision. Empirical evidence, success stories and joint field visits can be very helpful in this regard.

3 Communication and Conflict Management Capacities

Bringing together different actors and building cohesion around common interests is all about communication. It is therefore important to develop both external and internal communication strategies, considering specific target groups and identifying messages, communication channels and a language that appeal to them. Conflict management capacities are also crucial. While conflicts can tear a group apart, resolving them in a constructive way builds trust and creates powerful shared experiences.

4 Patience and Persistence

Organizing diverse actors, agreeing upon concerted approaches and messages, and taking them to higher political levels for upscaling and institutional support takes time and dedication, but the rewards are worth it! Keeping your patience, being persistent and adapting strategies when necessary is key.



Success Stories for Implementing Governance Mechanisms

PROTECTED AREA ADVISORY COUNCIL

In 2023, the **Technical Advisory Council for Mexico's Sierra de Guadalupe State Park** was established after more than a year of preparatory meetings, community dialogues and consultations. The Council provides a space for input and advice to the park's management, led by the Mexican Secretary of the Environment, and includes representatives from the private sector, academia, local governments, small farmers, and civil society organizations from the areas surrounding the park. As the first structure of its kind at state level, it aims to promote agreements and shared responsibilities for the conservation of natural resources, ecosystem services and biodiversity.

WATERSHED GOVERNANCE

A particularly successful model of watershed governance is the **CONORYAQUE Watershed Council in the Valverde region of the Dominican Republic**. With a membership of over 20 organizations and institutions, it has already successfully secured private and public funding for its initiatives. It is also working towards the establishment of a trust fund for the financing of adaptation measures, such as sustainable agroforestry and reforestation.

REGIONAL POLICY INTEGRATION

In **Cuba**, GreenWatersheds supported the **strengthening of local water committee structures in the Jaguaní watershed**, through the creation of new committees where there were none and the involvement of more stakeholders in already existing ones. This led to better coordination of the committees with governmental institutions and thereby improved the coherence and integration of regional water governance.

Interested in more lessons learned?



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[Local Implementation of Ecosystem-based Adaptation](#)



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