



International Ecosystem Management Partnership
国际生态系统管理伙伴计划



United Nations Environment Programme - International Ecosystem Management Partnership (UNEP-IEMP)





UNEP - International Ecosystem Management Partnership

The United Nations Environment Programme - International Ecosystem Management Partnership (UNEP-IEMP) is the first UNEP Collaborating Centre in the South and for the South. It is a joint venture between the UNEP and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), supported by the Government of China.

Since its inception in 2011, UNEP-IEMP has been playing an important role in promoting South-South Cooperation, facilitating the science-policy interface, and advancing integrated approaches that contribute to global efforts in addressing the intertwined environmental challenges. It serves as a scientific and technical arm and an implementing body of UNEP, leveraging support from its host country, China. The Chinese Ecosystem Research Network (CERN), as part of CAS and one of the world's largest national ecosystem monitoring and research networks, provides major technical support for the programme.

UNEP-IEMP is committed to broadening and strengthening the voice and participation of Global South countries, further enhancing cross-sectoral dialogue and enabling greater policy coherence. It has a proven track record in identifying and piloting of viable technologies for ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and improved livelihoods in developing countries.

VISION

To enhance the role of ecosystem management as a vital approach to working with nature for a world with a green economy.

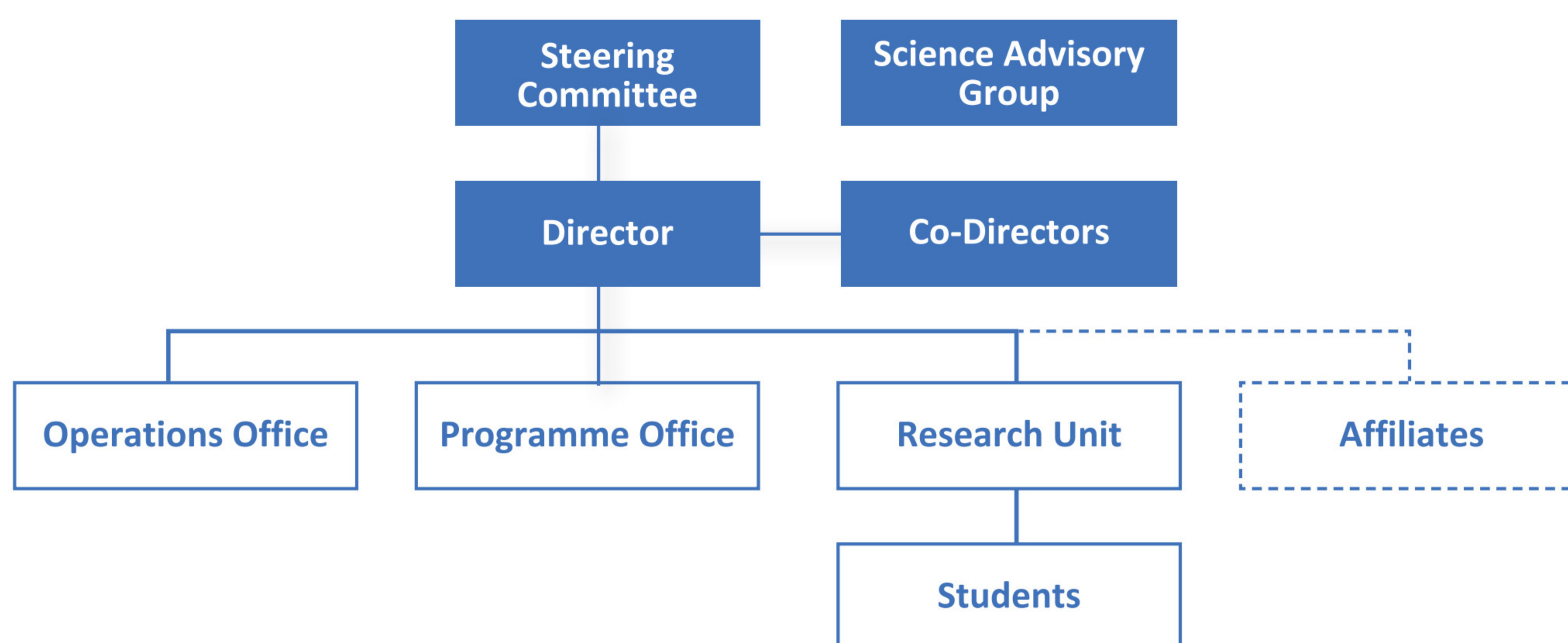
MISSION

To provide science, policy, and capacity support to developing countries to integrate ecosystem-based approaches into national policies and development plans to enhance the delivery of ecosystem services for human well-being.

NICHE

- Promoting nexus approaches of Climate, Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CEL) for the implementation of SDGs, Paris Agreement and Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- Supporting South-South cooperation that engages China with other developing/developed countries
- Enhancing evidence-based science for policy

UNEP-IEMP is overseen and guided by a Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Director of Ecosystems Division (UNEP) and Director General, Bureau of International Cooperation (CAS). The Steering Committee provides strategic advice and oversight to UNEP-IEMP on partnership matters and programme implementation. An international Scientific Advisory Group is established by the Steering Committee to provide scientific advice on the directions of future UNEP-IMEP activities; and review the scientific relevance, quality and impact of projects.

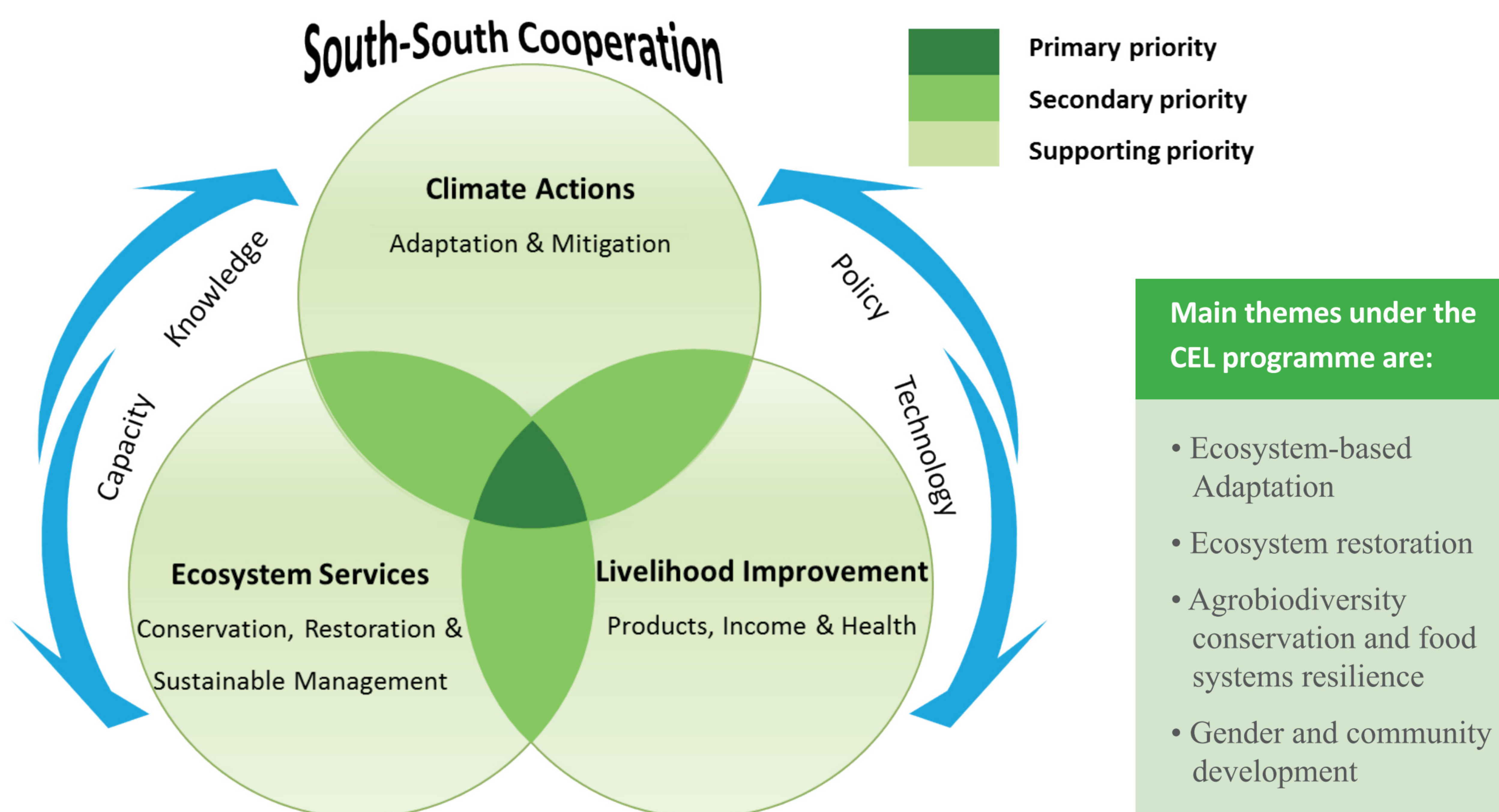


UNEP-IEMP Organogram

Strategy

Since 2016, UNEP-IEMP has been implementing a UNEP Flagship Programme on Climate, Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CEL). As a major South-South cooperation initiative supported by UNEP and China, the CEL programme is designed to assist developing countries in delivering the SDGs and climate and biodiversity targets while protecting their ecosystems and improving the livelihoods of their people.

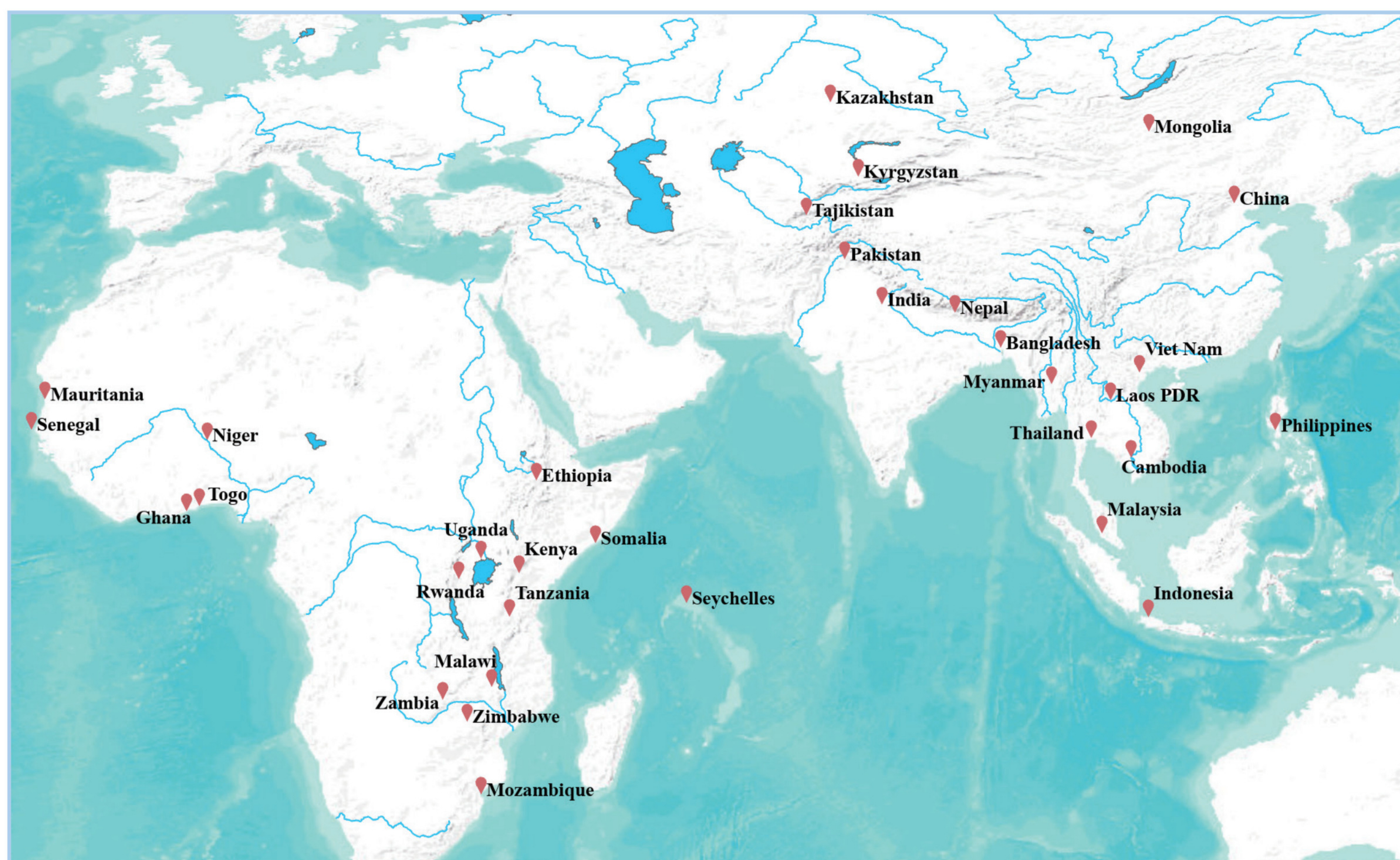
UNEP-IEMP focuses its work on the nexus of climate change, ecosystem services, and sustainable livelihoods as the primary priority. Particularly, UNEP-IEMP promotes cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder cooperation, enhances interdisciplinary work that brings together natural science, economics and social science, and strives for breakthroughs that cross disciplinary boundaries.



Conceptual framework of the CEL Flagship Programme

Geographical coverage

Geographically, UNEP-IEMP covers the most fragile ecosystems, especially drylands, mountains, river basins, and coastal zones in Asia Pacific and Africa – see the map below. It draws on the relevant knowledge, expertise, and other resources of a substantial network of partners, both locally and globally.



Functions

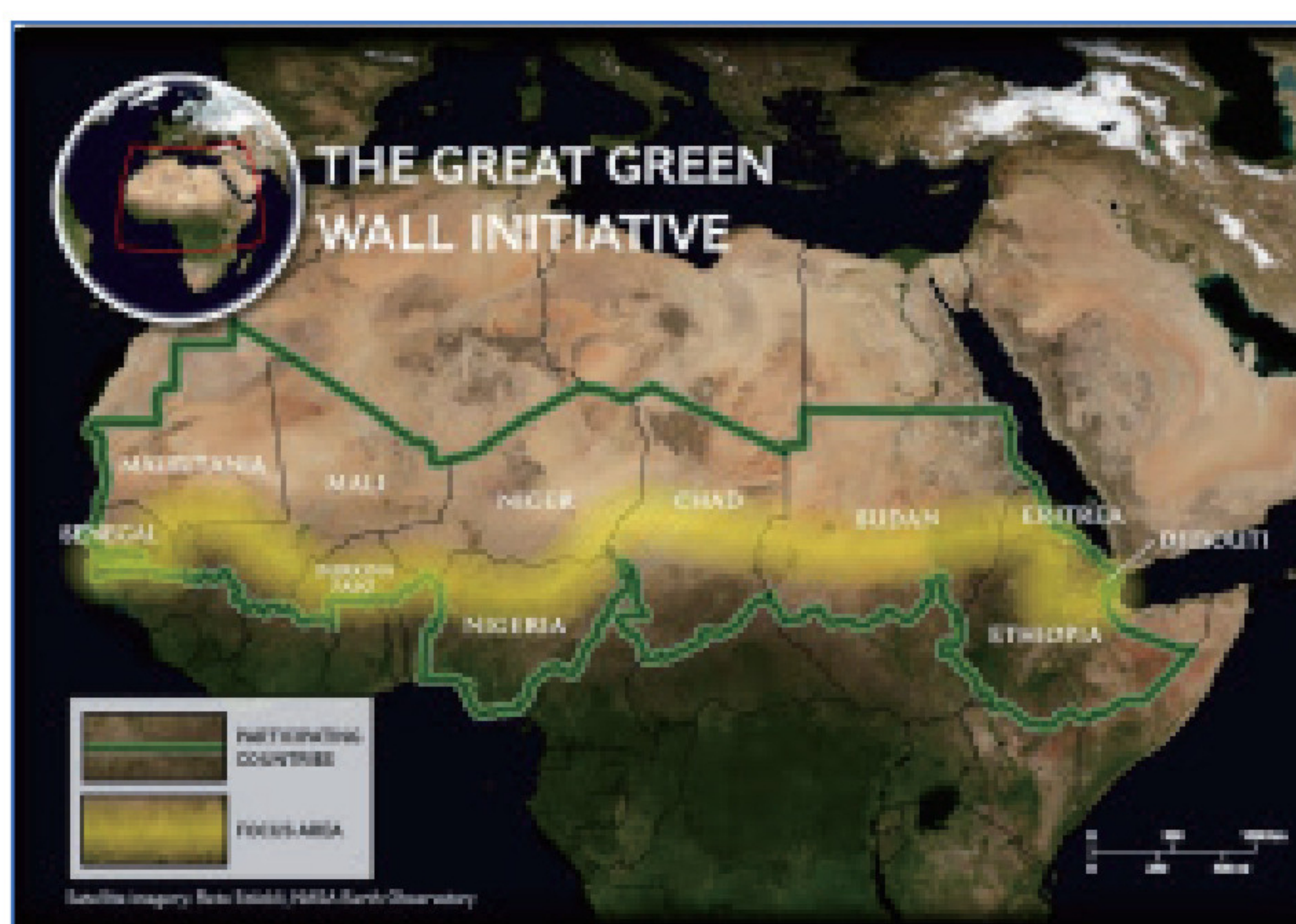
1 Initiating: Taking the lead in UNEP's South-South cooperation

As UNEP's first global center in the South and for the South, South-South cooperation has been designed as a key feature of all initiatives and projects at UNEP-IEMP. It supports UNEP's Strategy for South-South and Triangular Cooperation and leverages technical and financial resources from both the host country and international development agencies. The functions of South-South cooperation platform include providing policy dialogue mechanisms, establishing standing funding programmes, pioneering global programmes, and more.



UNEP and the Chinese Government signed MOU on South-South Cooperation in 2014, witnessed by the Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (© UNEP)

2 Catalyzing: Bridging various understandings and interests, and engaging with more partners for joint delivery



Supporting China's cooperation with Africa's Great Green Wall (© PA-GGW)

UNEP-IEMP plays a crucial role in catalyzing collaboration among scientists, practitioners, and policymakers in developing countries, while also fostering connections between individuals and organizations from both the Global South and North. Furthermore, UNEP-IEMP has successfully established strategic alliances with foundations, NGOs, and private sector entities across multiple levels—international, regional, national, and local—through its CEL flagship programme, amplifying its impact and reach.

3 Convening: Promoting science for policy and capacity building

UNEP-IEMP plays an important role in organizing the joint efforts of the Global South in response to global agreements and policy agenda. These include a series of high-level policy dialogues on various important environmental issues, including the green economy, climate change, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and food systems transformation. Moreover, UNEP-IEMP has led a number of multilateral events to support capacity building and awareness raising for beneficiaries in the Global South. All these have been highly recognized as important approaches with unique value in bridging science and policy.



3rd Conference on Climate, Ecosystems and Livelihoods in Africa (© UNEP-IEMP)

4 Implementing: Piloting projects and tasks on the ground



A tree nursery containing seedlings to protect crops from floods, drought, and erosion in the Nepalese mountains (© EbA South)

As UNEP's scientific and technical arm, UNEP-IEMP has been implementing projects in the Global South to address various issues under the four main themes of the CEL programme. These on-the-ground projects have so far covered over 30 countries in Asia Pacific and Africa. Apart from China, key working regions include West Asia, Central Asia, the South Asia/Himalayan region, the Greater Mekong Sub-region, the Zambezi River Basin in Southern Africa, the Sahel region of Western and North-Central Africa, and the Lake Victoria Basin in East Africa.

Highlights

- UNEP-IEMP played a catalytic role in initiating the High-Level Forum on South-South Cooperation on Climate Change, launched at the UNFCCC COP 20 (Lima, 2014) by the National Development and Reform Commission of China and UNEP. This high-level forum provided an important platform for integrating a South-South dimension into global efforts to address climate challenges. UNEP-IEMP continued to serve as the lead organizer at the COP 21 (Paris, 2015) and COP 22 (Marrakech, 2016). The forum was so well-received, with participation from many heads of UN organizations and ministers, that by 2017 it was subsequently taken up as a standing policy mechanism, carried forward by the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General.



1st South-South Cooperation on Climate Change Forum (2014) (© UNEP-IEMP)

- Since 2013, with UNEP-IEMP playing a UNEP-wide coordination role to strengthen science support for policy and interdisciplinary innovations, the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) has initiated a collaborative research programme with UNEP to support research projects jointly undertaken by Chinese scientists and their international counterparts



UNEP-NSFC MoU signed in 2010
(© UNEP-IEMP)

in the thematic areas of ecosystems, climate change, resource efficiency, and environmental governance. In 2023, another NSFC-UNEP joint research collaboration began under the "Sustainable Development International Cooperation Programme" to fund cooperation research projects addressing significant sustainable development challenges in the Global South. To date, a total of 30 million USD has been raised to support more than 90 joint research projects conducted in over 50 countries.

- Ecosystem-based Adaptation through South-South Cooperation (EbA South) project, funded by the GEF, was implemented by UNEP and executed by the National Development and Reform Commission of China through CAS, with project management services provided by UNEP-IEMP. As a flagship initiative for South-South cooperation, the project catalyzed global and regional collaboration on EbA, particularly sharing China's experience and research know-how in ecological restoration and climate change adaptation, with on-the-ground interventions. The EbA approaches involved the ecological restoration of 450ha in the deserts of Mauritania, 20ha of mangroves in Seychelles, and over 840,000 seedlings in the mountain slopes in Nepal. 34 technical reports and research papers were developed, and nearly 4,900 people were reached through public awareness activities.



The planting day in Mauritania
(© EbA South)

- With support from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, UNEP-IEMP has been implementing several projects in developing countries, including Kenya, Nepal, Thailand, Myanmar, and

Cambodia, to address sustainable livelihood and green development issues in vulnerable developing regions. In Kenya, an ecosystem-based approach has been applied to address SDG challenges in the Lake Victoria Basin through bamboo agroforestry and its value chain development. A 25ha agroforestry for restoration along a 3km strip of the riverbanks has been established to regulate floods, stabilize riverbanks, reduce soil erosion, and provide food. The bamboo value chain development was enhanced locally through technology transfer and training, including nurseries setup producing 8,000 seedlings in one month, bamboo building demonstration as shelters for flood victims, and bamboo handicraft making to create income opportunities for women and youth groups. The initiative directly contributes to 16 SDGs. A UNEP report on the climate, ecosystem and livelihood nexus approach was produced.



Community participating in riverbank restoration in Kenya (© UNEP-IEMP)



Bamboo classroom demo as climate resilient infrastructure (© UNEP-IEMP)



Showcasing the successful gender cases at an agricultural ministerial meeting (© UNEP-IEMP)



Promoting women farmers' income security and resilience in Qinghai (© UNEP-IEMP)

- As an ongoing effort, UNEP-IEMP has been working with various partners to promote women empowerment towards climate-resilient livelihoods and food systems. These include jointly organizing regional dialogues and conducting studies with sister UN organizations, NGOs, and development partners on the roles of gender in climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and food security; providing capacity support to nearly 70,000 women farmers in Qinghai Province (China) to improve their economic resilience in a changing climate; and enhancing the crucial role of women in farmers' seed system conservation and traditional knowledge revitalization for climate adaptation in four Naxi mountain communities in Yunnan Province (China).

- Financed by the China-UNEP Trust Fund (Phase 1 and 2), UNEP-IEMP collaborated with the governments of the Greater Mekong Sub-region countries and other partners to strengthen basin-wide institutional capacity on ecosystem management by integrating ecosystem approaches into national plans and regional cooperation strategies. Moreover, the projects also increased awareness, as well as the technical and financial capacities of countries in the region to promote integrated ecosystem management approach, with demonstration of its benefits at targeted project sites, contributing to the improvement of local livelihoods.



Community training on agroforestry in Cambodia (© UNEP-IEMP)

Knowledge products



UNEP-IEMP

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