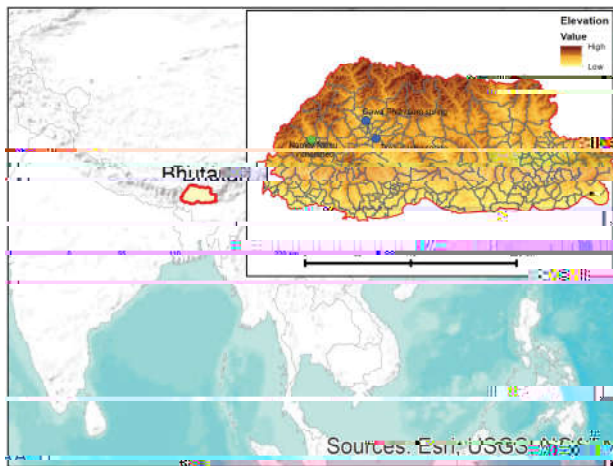




Background

Bordered by India – except on the north by China – Bhutan is a landlocked country that lies on the southern slopes of the eastern Himalayas within the Hindu-Kush Mountain range. Its elevation ranges from more than 7,000 m to 100 m in the southern foothills. Draining from these steep and high mountains is a network of rivers. The sharp changes in elevation, combined with attendant changes in

SCALING-UP MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEM-BASED ADAPTATION



springs comprise 67% of the total water sources in the country. However, recent studies have shown that springs throughout the country are drying. While currently, only 1% of the total water sources have dried up, it is forecast that 25% of water sources in the country are in the process of drying, because of a combination of factors, including climate change and other anthropogenic causes.

Scaling-up Mountain Ecosystem-based Adaptation in Bhutan

The Scaling-up Mountain EbA Project in Bhutan focused on strengthening existing policies and plans at the national level, so that EbA approaches are better integrated in long-term investments. The Asia Regional Office, IUCN led the Bhutan component of the project, in close collaboration with the Watershed Management Division of the Royal Government of Bhutan, the Tarayana Foundation and the College of Natural Resources, Royal University of Bhutan.

Direction of work 2017-2019

During this period, the project had two main components.

1. *Analysis of the policy framework for EbA (with a focus on water)*
 - A policy review and analysis was carried out through two consultations with a range of key government and non-government actors to ensure that the link between biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation was acknowledged.
 - The report on 'Review of Policies, Laws/ Legislations, Rules & Regulations, Environmental Strategies, Plans and Framework of Bhutan in the context of Ecosystem-based Adaptation' was completed, with recommendations for improved integration of EbA within different policies.



Hiatus of work and implications for the project in Bhutan

At the end of 2019, the global project was overwhelmed by an unexpected administrative issue that resulted in its abrupt cessation. This was followed almost immediately by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in long and repeated lockdowns in project countries.

These two major issues caused a two-year hiatus in project work. For Bhutan, this hiatus was complicated by government restructuring. When work commenced again



