

## Transcript

### Season 2, Episode 2

#### *Scaling up Climate Action: Experiences from Latin America*

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*This transcript has been edited to improve clarity while preserving the original meaning and tone of the conversation. Nonverbal audio elements are described in brackets.*

### Participants

- Ann-Kathrin Schloenvoigt (moderator, IKI interface project ACCIÓN Clima, GIZ)
- Sabrina Geppert (co-moderator, country director in Costa Rica, EbA LAC program, GIZ)
- Angélica Tista, specialist in Planning and Territorial Zoning, SEGEPLAN, Guatemala
- Miguel Guerrero, deputy director of Territorial Planning at the Provincial Government of Manabí, Ecuador
- Mariana Garita, head of the Department of Tourism Sustainability at the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT), Costa Rica

### Transcript

#### **Moderator (Ann-Kathrin):**

In many rural communities in Latin America, the climate no longer behaves as it used to. Rainfall, for example, either doesn't arrive when it should, or comes with an intensity that affects crops, infrastructure, and livelihoods.

However, in the face of phenomena like this, interesting responses have emerged. From restoring mangroves in Guatemala to protecting watersheds in Costa Rica or caring for the páramos in Ecuador, in many places nature itself is becoming part of the solution through ecosystem-based adaptation.

But now comes the big question: How do we take these solutions further? How do we move from pilot projects to sustained actions over time?

In this episode we will explore how to scale ecosystem-based adaptation with concrete experiences from Guatemala, Ecuador, and Costa Rica.

My name is **Ann-Kathrin Schloenvoigt**, and I will delve into this topic today with my co-moderator, **Sabrina Geppert**. Sabrina is the coordinator of the EbA LAC program in Costa Rica of German Development Cooperation, GIZ.

Hello Sabrina, great to have you with me.

#### **Co-Moderator (Sabrina):**

Hi, Ann, thanks for letting me join you today.

### --- Segment 1: Context: EbA and Climate Change ---

#### **Moderator:**

Well, to start, let's set a bit of context. When we talk about climate change in Latin America, we often think of very large numbers or global climate phenomena. But let's bring it down to earth. How is this really being experienced in rural communities across the region?

**Co-moderator:**

The climate emergency is already being felt in the daily lives of many rural communities in Latin America. We're seeing more frequent extreme events like droughts and floods, but also slower changes such as soil degradation or the loss of water sources that are affecting people's everyday lives in noticeable ways. All of this puts a lot of pressure on ecosystems and, above all, on the people who depend most directly on them for their livelihoods.

**Moderator:**

I mentioned this in the intro: ecosystem-based adaptation. Could you tell us a bit about what it is and why it's a key solution in the contexts you mention?

**Co-moderator:**

Well, Ann, it's because it harnesses what nature already offers. Ecosystem-based adaptation, or EbA for short, uses natural functions like water regulation or protection against extreme events to reduce climate-related risks to people. And it does so in a way that also protects biodiversity, which in turn supports rural communities. The challenge is that it's still not being applied at the necessary scale.

**Moderator:**

I think you're mentioning a key word: scale. What does it really mean to scale these adaptation measures?

**Co-moderator:**

Yes, scaling means going beyond isolated projects. In recent years, we've seen many valuable EbA experiences in different countries in the region that show us what works and what doesn't. So, we already know EbA works and is cost-effective, but the next step is to raise ambition, go further, and integrate these solutions into public policies, development plans, and investment decisions so they don't remain isolated projects. It's about replicating these practices, adapting them to other contexts, and sustaining them over time so the benefits reach everyone who needs them.

**Moderator:**

Okay, I understand. And how those the EbA LAC program come into play in all of this?

**Co-moderator:**

The EbA LAC program of the German Development Cooperation GIZ supports precisely in this leap towards scaling. We implement the program with our partners IUCN and CATIE in Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Ecuador to build capacities and bring these solutions into concrete policies and decisions. The idea is for them to stop being pilot measures and become common practice. And in this, a multitude of actors, such as national and subnational governments, communities, academic and non-governmental organizations, and also the private sector, all play an important role.

**Moderator:**

Perfect, I think with this brief introduction we're all on the same page with a clearer picture of what we'll be talking about today. So, let's get to the interesting part: the challenge we mentioned – how to put solutions into practice and, above all, how to scale them. And I'd like to use this episode to ground it with some concrete examples.

## --- Segment 2: Guatemala: Integrating EbA into local planning ---

### **Co-moderator:**

Sure, Ann, let's start with the example of Guatemala, where, as one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, ecosystem-based adaptation measures are already being promoted at the local level, especially by municipalities. And to tell us more about this, I'd like to welcome Angélica Tista.

Angélica works as a specialist in Planning and Territorial Zoning at the SEGEPLAN delegation and is also president of the Ixqi'b MIRIAM Association Guatemala.

Angélica, to kick off the example from Guatemala and connect it with what we discussed about climate and its impacts: How do municipalities learn about these climate risks? In other words, how do they integrate climate risk analysis into their territorial planning?

### **Angélica Tista:**

Indeed, in Guatemala these practices are being institutionalized, following the guidelines of the lead institution, SEGEPLAN. It is addressed as a cross-cutting axis in strategic and operational territorial planning tools. In the case of municipal development and land-use plans, this is evident from the problem analysis, its indicators, trend analysis, and the formulation of municipal goals and results.

In this case, under the 2032 vision we have, namely the National Development Plan "K'atun: Our Guatemala 2032", we translate this into deliverables, products of results-based management that benefit the population and serve as the linkage between the strategic and the programmatic. In strategic and operational planning, planning is linked to the budget. As a result, each action in the annual and multi-annual programming is directly tied to the municipality's problems – environmental in this case – as reflected in the municipal development and land-use plans, and aligned with each municipality's strategic and operational planning.

### **Moderator:**

And once municipalities have this clearer picture, how do they make it more concrete, how do they incorporate these adaptation measures into their budgets? Can you tell us a bit about that?

### **Angélica Tista:**

Of course. I'd like to highlight the case of the municipality of Salamá regarding solid waste management. Among the measures they have incorporated is agroecology directly with families, who produce organically. They have composting units and produce organic fertilizer that they provide to these same families for their vegetable production, among other agricultural actions.

On the environmental side, there is inter-institutional coordination. All of this is tied to environmental education and solid waste management with the Ministry of Education. They also work on public awareness along roadways in coordination with Community Development Councils and with women's organizations.

In the forestry area, they have their own nursery and carry out reforestation, conservation, and restoration of water recharge areas. They generally do this between June and July, which is the rainy season. When needed and when demand is higher, they coordinate plant supply with other entities' nurseries.

How are these practices institutionalized? They are financed through the Conservation Project of the Municipal Environmental Management Unit, included in the Municipality's Annual Operating Plan. Specifically, they are executed with municipal funds. Results include having 200 farmer field schools composed of women, and over the last five years, 300 hectares reforested. This is a very relevant achievement for Salamá.

**Co-moderator:**

Thank you very much, Angélica, very interesting insights, and it is clear the municipality has generated strong momentum and is tackling the issue from multiple fronts. To make it even more concrete, could you share another brief example of an EbA measure you have implemented?

**Angélica Tista:**

Yes, the case of San Miguel Chicaj. We have an agroecological center coordinated specifically by a women's group from the municipality. There, they work on vegetable production that supports women's incomes, produce medicinal remedies, and have a space for training sessions, which institutions also use. So, it is a space that, in one way or another, fosters interpersonal communication and relationships among women's groups and is proving sustainable over time.

**Moderator:**

I find it very interesting to see how these measures are already being integrated at the municipal level in Guatemala, especially how they are starting to translate into concrete, funded actions. I also really appreciate the gender focus you mentioned in both examples. Now, scaling does not only happen at the local level, it also requires coordination across different levels of government, right, Sabrina?

**--- Segment 3: Ecuador: Multilevel coordination in the territories ---**

**Co-moderator:**

Yes, Ann, that is correct, and a good example of this is in Ecuador, where efforts are underway to integrate adaptation not only at the municipal level but also at the provincial level, connecting different planning scales. This is key because it allows priorities to be aligned, investments to be coordinated, and a much greater impact to be generated.

To delve into this, we are joined by Miguel Guerrero, deputy director of Territorial Planning at the Provincial Government of Manabí. He has led transformative processes such as the implementation of the Local Information System, the Voluntary Local Review, and the Territorial Development and Land-Use Plan.

Miguel, to start, tell us a bit about how you are integrating climate change adaptation into territorial planning at the provincial level.

**Miguel Guerrero:**

Absolutely. Under national regulations, we updated the Territorial Development and Land-Use Plan in 2024. At that time, GIZ had been implementing the EbA LAC program for several years and had established links with provincial, cantonal, and parish governments in Manabí. We coordinated effectively with the EbA LAC program so that our Territorial Development and Land-Use Plan would include all proposals related to ecosystem-based adaptation from the outset.

Manabí is a vast province with more than 19,000 square kilometers and a population of over 1.6 million people, making it the third most populous province in the country and the fourth

largest by area. It is a coastal province with the longest coastline in Ecuador as well, with more than 307 kilometers of coasts, and a topography that includes various valleys, such as the Portoviejo and Chone river basins, and a mountain system bordering the Andes. In this sense, in Manabí we have many areas exposed to climate change events due to the use or extraction of natural resources without a sustainable approach. We have several dams that can supply water to our fields and towns, but they have been affected by deforestation.

In addition, our cultivated lands had practices that used many agrochemicals, and their water retention capacity was decreasing due to desertification caused by extensive monocultures. Related to this, we had a very strong livestock industry, the largest in the country, where almost 60 percent of areas that were once forest had been converted to grazing land. This reduced soils' water retention capacity, and each intense rainfall event led to worse flooding and more impacts on our towns and citizens.

Therefore, for us it was a substantial improvement opportunity to include an ecosystem-based sustainability vision and policy, aiming to coexist properly with our ecosystems, ensuring that our resource use is sustainable, and recognizing that the land is not only there for living or extraction but is a system that must coexist with us to enable long-term sustainability, prioritizing the long term over short-term gains that might seem beneficial but are not sustainable.

**Moderator:**

Thank you very much, Miguel, very interesting insights. I would like to know why you consider it so important, for implementing EbA measures, to work in a coordinated way among municipal, regional, and national levels with all these different actors.

**Miguel Guerrero:**

In Ecuador, as in the rest of the world, we have different levels of government, each with its own set of responsibilities through which it can intervene in the territory. That said, the Provincial Government of Manabí, as part of its responsibilities, is in charge of maintaining the provincial road network, managing water basins, environmental management, productivity, international cooperation, tourism, among others. However, it has no authority over urban areas, urban traffic, urban land use planning, types of construction, or the consumption patterns of cities.

On the other hand, in rural areas we also lack authority to intervene in water systems, stormwater or sanitary sewage systems. Additionally, at the national level, we need to be involved in state roads or infrastructure that exceeds our operational and financial capacity, such as the construction of dams. In this sense, it is absolutely essential to foster dialogue so that we can reach agreements where each party assumes its shared responsibility and also fulfills its competencies in order to achieve sustainable development.

Our Development and Territorial Planning Plan is characterized by having brought together more than 28 strategic partners, including academia, the private sector, the public sector, NGOs, and within the governmental sphere, institutions at the national, cantonal, and parish levels. In this way, we have sought to consolidate in a single document the opinions and visions of all stakeholders involved in local development, so that we can later implement projects in a coordinated manner.

We have achieved considerable success by developing projects that involve more than three partner institutions. Typically, agreements are bilateral, involving just two parties, but here we have managed to coordinate among five or six institutions. This represents a significant administrative challenge, but it emerges from and is strengthened by the relationships we

built while updating the PDOT, by listening to the voices of all these organizations and individuals involved in local development.

Additionally, we also have the support of private companies, non-profit organizations, and citizens. Depending on how dialogue and negotiation are conducted with each of these stakeholders, different financing strategies can be developed. To be more specific, we have managed, for example, to implement one of our most ambitious projects, which initially emerged from one of the technical working groups in collaboration with farmers, the business sector, and the government sector, through which the “producer schools” were created.

These schools were established as an initiative aimed at improving production capacity based on ecosystems, avoiding extractive land use and the gradual degradation of soil caused by agroecological or agricultural practices that are not environmentally friendly. To implement the project, we initially funded it exclusively with resources from the Prefecture of Manabí, investing around 1.1 million dollars in 2024 for 25 (schools/projects).

Now, for the 2025–2026 project phase, a total of 2.3 million dollars has been allocated, of which approximately 200,000 to 300,000 dollars have been financed by other entities or partners, including local governments as well as non-profit organizations. This is because, from the outset, the Provincial Government of Manabí has demonstrated its capacity to execute and achieve results, both in terms of impact and in managing the project’s implementation. This provides greater confidence and assurance to strategic partners, encouraging them to invest, knowing their contributions will yield tangible results in the territory.

**Moderator:**

Thank you very much, Miguel, for all this detail. I find it very interesting to see all the efforts already being made in Manabí, and also that you provided concrete figures to give a sense of the costs associated with these different initiatives.

I think we have seen how the public sector—from municipal-level efforts in Guatemala to multilevel work in Ecuador involving many actors—is advancing ecosystem-based adaptation with tangible results that benefit communities. I would also like to talk about another important actor in climate action, which is the private sector, especially in key sectors such as tourism, which depends directly on ecosystems.

**--- Segment 4: Costa Rica: Innovation with the Private Sector – FuTurismo ---**

**Co-moderator:**

Yes, Ann, that’s right. A very interesting example of this can be found in Costa Rica, where one of the sectors most vulnerable to climate change is tourism. At the same time, this sector is driving innovation so that companies can adapt while also benefiting local communities.

To tell us more about this experience, we are joined by Mariana Garita, Head of the Tourism Sustainability Department at the Costa Rican Tourism Institute. One of the most recent initiatives she has been working on is the digital platform FuTurismo, which we will explore in more detail.

Mariana, could you tell us what FuTurismo is exactly and how this initiative came about?

**Mariana Garita:**

Well, as you mentioned, FuTurismo is an innovative digital platform and also a pioneer in Latin America, designed to strengthen the adaptive capacities of small and medium-sized

hotels in Costa Rica in the face of the challenges posed by the climate emergency, and thus increase the resilience of the sector.

It specifically aims to help lodging businesses adapt to climate change, while ensuring they are prepared to face phenomena such as increasingly intense rainfall, droughts, water-related issues, heat waves, and so that they can continue operating, strengthen their businesses, and offer the unique experiences that distinguish us as a destination.

FuTurismo also emerged from a partnership between the General Superintendence of Insurance and a group of insurance companies and operators, including Internacional Seguros de Costa Rica, BN Seguros, Popular Seguros, Sagicor, and the Costa Rican Tourism Institute. This group has been led by SUGESE (the Superintendence), and several years ago we joined forces to work on this project as an initiative specifically aimed at building and increasing resilience in the tourism sector.

This technological platform is free of charge and is made up of three modules focused on helping companies: first, to learn about climate change and climate risks; second, to understand and assess their level of climate risk, including their exposure and vulnerability; and third, to identify solutions and actions they can take to address these challenges and increase their adaptive capacity.

I would also like to mention that the origin of this project came from an idea we identified at the time. In Costa Rica, the hotel sector and the destination in general have long been pioneers and benchmarks in sustainability. Lodging businesses have generally been very responsible and aware, and have become accustomed to measuring their environmental, cultural, and social footprint wherever they operate.

However, they have not always known how to learn about and manage risks, or how these phenomena affect their own businesses, something that has undoubtedly had impacts in terms of losses and business continuity. So here, we are building capacities and strengthening ourselves from this additional perspective.

**Moderator:**

And in practical terms, you already told us a bit about the modules, what services or benefits does FuTurismo provide to tourism businesses, and how can they access this platform?

**Mariana Garita:**

Well, as I mentioned, the platform is online and free. You can access it through the link [www.futurismocr.com](http://www.futurismocr.com), where you will find information and be able to register. The platform itself guides business owners through a step-by-step process so they can access all these educational resources and virtual courses, which are designed to be short, recognizing that they have limited time and that tourism staff often have complex schedules.

Once they begin learning, each company can also create multiple users so different team members can access the platform and its resources. They will complete a personalized self-assessment questionnaire that uses geolocation, geographic preferences, and specific business characteristics such as number of rooms, areas, size, dimensions, and whether they have gardens, trails, conservation areas, and more.

The platform will then measure their level of vulnerability and exposure. After that, they will receive an action plan that includes measures they can implement. Many of these are related to staff training or providing information to guests.

Other measures may involve financial solutions or some level of investment, which we aim to keep as low and accessible as possible. In addition, businesses can connect with insurance

experts if this type of measure is needed. The overall purpose of the tool is to help reduce damage and therefore losses, once each business understands its specific level of vulnerability.

The action plan they develop can also include a designated person responsible for implementation, along with tracking and monitoring within the platform. This allows businesses to make progress and improve in the short to medium term, based on the recommended actions, strengthening their current capacity to adapt.

In this sense, we invite all businesses that are interested to take part and to access the platform now at [www.futurismocr.com](http://www.futurismocr.com).

**Co-moderator:**

Mariana, thank you very much, very interesting.

What stands out to me from what you shared about FuTurismo is that it is a tool that not only allows businesses to understand and interpret the problem, but also to find and implement concrete solutions right away. In other words, it helps move from understanding to action.

So, going into that practical side, that action oriented aspect, how does the platform help companies identify concrete actions to address climate risk? And perhaps beyond taking action, how does it also help determine whether those measures are working or not? In other words, what kind of evidence or information does the FuTurismo platform generate?

**Mariana Garita:**

In terms of results, after completing the questionnaire that each company fills out based on its characteristics, location, infrastructure, and other factors, the platform also generates risk maps using national data and vulnerability indicators.

This allows businesses to understand, in simpler terms, what their exposure and vulnerability mean, and how they can manage the risks associated with their specific location, whether they are affected by coastal erosion, for example in the case of a beach hotel, or located in areas more prone to landslides, flooding, and similar hazards.

The platform includes a resource kit, informational capsules, and access to videos. Once the assessment is completed and the action plan is generated, companies can define priorities and set deadlines for each activity they choose to undertake. These actions may include purchasing natural disaster insurance to minimize losses, creating an emergency fund, accessing credit designed to mitigate economic losses, improving how they inform guests about sustainability measures, pursuing sustainability certification, or adopting the Certification for Sustainable Tourism.

Other actions may involve planting trees to provide shade and regulate temperature, installing green roofs or plant covered walls to reduce heat, creating trails surrounded by dense vegetation, reforestation, implementing living fences or natural barriers, among other examples. These measures are suggested based on each company's characteristics and the level of risk identified for the business.

**Moderator:**

And looking a bit ahead, you already mentioned the possibility of scaling it to other companies and other sectors. From what we've heard, FuTurismo has delivered very good results in Costa Rica. We would also be interested in knowing what might be needed to replicate this experience in the rest of Latin America.

**Mariana Garita:**

In this case, the platform is already available and enabled for companies that wish to access it. However, we are still awaiting an official launch. We are, so to speak, in a preliminary phase, but it is ready to be used. It has already been tested through a pilot plan with lodging businesses in different areas of the country, which has given us very positive results in terms of adaptation and has effectively contributed to improving risk management among lodging companies.

Without a doubt, in order to scale it at a regional level, as it is a technological platform, its entire structure and development are documented. However, what is important is that it must be adapted to the conditions of each country and also developed in coordination with the relevant institutions in each destination and country.

In our case, it has been developed with the support of GIZ, as well as the Climate Change Directorate, the National Meteorological Institute, and the National Emergency Commission, who were also part of the process of creating and designing FuTurismo.

It is information and data that will need to be incorporated into the platform's mapping system. But it can certainly be replicated, and it represents a major opportunity for other destinations to advance in this direction as well.

**Moderator:**

Thank you very much, Mariana, for sharing about FuTurismo, and congratulations on the impact you have already achieved as well as the upcoming regional launch. And hopefully companies across the region will join in to take advantage of this important resource, which undoubtedly provides knowledge and strengthens key capacities.

**--- Key lessons for scaling EbA and future vision ---**

**Moderator:**

With this, we have now gone through three experiences, from the municipalities in Guatemala, to multilevel coordination in Ecuador, and finally private sector innovation in Costa Rica. We are now almost at the end of this episode, and we would like to close with some key reflections and give our guests the opportunity to share a few final ideas.

For Angélica, Miguel, and Mariana, if you could give one key recommendation from your respective contexts for ecosystem-based adaptation to truly scale in the region, what would it be?

**Angélica Tista:**

Scaling measures involves continuing the institutionalization of these practices, as mentioned, from the national level to the local level. As my colleagues also said, budgeting is key, as is continuous training of human resources, because we also need to raise awareness among the population in order to put these practices into action and sustain them over time. Public private partnerships are also extremely important.

**Miguel Guerrero:**

From Ecuador's perspective, I would suggest that two important aspects must be considered. The first is shared responsibility. We must understand that we are all responsible for what is happening now and what will happen in the future, and it is important that through this shared responsibility we combine efforts to achieve the second element, which is having a clear

vision of what we want, where we want to go, and what we want our territory to look like in the near and more distant future.

In that sense, if in Manabí, for example, we want to be resilient to climate change, for our communities not to be affected by floods or severe droughts, for our land to remain cultivable in the future, and for there to be water to sustain our people, then we must all contribute to that collectively built vision and each act responsibly to achieve it. If we work with these two tools, shared responsibility and a shared vision, I assure you we can combine efforts to achieve larger goals that at first may even seem impossible.

**Mariana Garita:**

I believe that education and capacity building for entrepreneurs and small and medium sized enterprises in the region is fundamental to strengthening the process and, in general, advancing ecosystem-based adaptation and making progress in this direction.

**Co-moderator:**

Thank you very much to all three of you for your responses to the first question. As a second final reflection, perhaps you could each share, in one keyword, what you consider to be the biggest remaining challenge for these solutions to be sustainable and have lasting impact in communities.

**Angélica Tista:**

Based on experience, partnerships are very important, and so is avoiding duplication of efforts.

**Miguel Guerrero:**

I believe empathy is one of the key things we need to take into account. Empathy for people living in vulnerable areas, for those who consume and produce food, for those who do not have access to basic services due to lack of resources or infrastructure, for those who are farther from development and who are generally the ones providing food for cities.

**Mariana Garita:**

From my side, I would add will, the desire to work toward a shared purpose and common objectives.

**Co-moderator:**

Thank you all three for these final reflections. If you allow me, I would also like to close with a couple of additional thoughts:

It is essential to promote inclusive and multilevel governance that empowers local actors and communities, ensures results, and closes gaps in capacities and in access to information, collaboration networks, and support, all under the principle of leaving no one behind.

It is also key to mobilize innovative and blended finance for ecosystem-based adaptation. I think it is important to combine public, private, and international resources, while facilitating subnational access through bankable project pipelines and clear criteria for climate rationale. If we manage to advance in these two areas, we can ensure that ecosystem-based adaptation stops being an isolated project and becomes a sustainable and replicable strategy across the region.

**--- Closing and sign-off ---**

**Moderator:**

Well, we are now reaching the end of this episode. Before we go, we would like to thank Angélica, Miguel, and Mariana. Thank you very much for joining us today and for contributing so much to this conversation.

I think something they have made very clear is that with good coordination, innovation, and strong commitment, it is possible to scale ecosystem-based adaptation solutions that protect both communities and nature. I think this leaves us with a strong closing message. And also, many thanks to Sabrina for joining me today as co-moderator. It has been a pleasure having you in this conversation, Sabrina.

**Co-moderator:**

The pleasure is mine as well. Thank you very much, Ann.

**Moderator:**

With this, we conclude this episode of The Countdown to 2050. In this regional podcast, we explore how countries in Central America and the Caribbean are addressing climate change, protecting biodiversity, and building resilience, all with the support of the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the Government of Germany.

We produce this podcast under the IKI Interface project for the region, as part of our efforts to promote regional knowledge exchange. For more information, you can visit our website in the episode description. There you will also find all the links mentioned throughout this episode.

And with that, I would like to invite you to join us in the next episode, where we will continue sharing stories like these. And if you want more content, you already know you can find all previous episodes on Spotify. Go check them out.