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# AFRICA BIODIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE GROUP



Photo credit: Kimberly Holbrook, TNC

## ABOUT US

The Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG) accesses the wide-ranging expertise of its members' network to **advance understanding of critical conservation challenges and their solutions in sub-Saharan Africa**. ABCG creates innovative conservation solutions by fostering collaborative and adaptive learning opportunities that help practitioners improve, scale and replicate. We generate valuable user-driven knowledge that is disseminated globally.

Together, ABCG members: analyze critical issues affecting Africa's biodiversity conservation efforts; design and pilot innovative approaches for addressing those issues; and synthesize collective lessons from field activities to share with a multi-sector community for data-driven decision making and integration.

## CURRENT ISSUES WE'RE TACKLING

Building on the expertise of its member organizations, ABCG is addressing the following issues that influence the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation efforts.

### Land Use Management

Landscapes are being reshaped, not by a single driver, but by a suite of drivers including population growth, changing resource utilization patterns, expanding infrastructure, and climate change. By employing scenario analysis, ABCG is assessing the extent to which conservation is integrated into designing and prioritizing landscape investments in order to develop a methodological approach to conservation, and land use planning. We are developing tools to incorporate equitable and environmentally-smart alternatives into land use decisions to ensure that investments in conservation consider not only present conditions, but also probable future scenarios.

### Global Change Impacts on Biodiversity

ABCG has been working to understand the coping responses of human communities to climate change and the potential impacts of these behaviors on biodiversity. We have carried out community surveys at 19 sites across sub-Saharan Africa and performed a comprehensive literature review. Data and information gathered is used to identify ecosystem-based adaptation interventions that reduce human vulnerability to climate change while benefiting nature. This information is generating knowledge to guide adaptation strategies towards improving conservation outcomes under future climatic conditions.

## Community-Based Forest Management

This activity builds upon ABCG's previous work on community forests under the Land Rights Tenure Rights thematic area. Our first approach focuses on promoting and understanding best practices in the implementation of Community Based Forestry Management (CBFM) projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo for improved conservation outcomes. ABCG is working to initiate a Community of Practice of CBFM stakeholders, where organizations can convene at local, provincial and national scales to share experiences, best practices and develop common standards for program design and implementation.

The second approach focuses on the better understanding of the impacts of CBFM on forest cover. To achieve this, we are conducting research on the environmental (principally the forest cover change) outcomes of CBFM in several African countries.

## Population, Health and Environment

There are strong linkages between biodiversity conservation and human health, the health of domestic animals, wildlife health, and ecosystem health. ABCG implements and promotes effective approaches that integrate biodiversity with actions that contribute to improved global health.

Through the Population, Health and Environment (PHE) working group, we have built and continue to support multi-sectoral partnerships to ensure biodiversity conservation and human wellbeing outcomes are achieved in tandem. Our research provides an evidence base of successful examples that integrate biodiversity indicators into conservation and development planning. Throughout these activities, the inclusion of women and marginalized populations, such as the poor and youth, in decision-making processes is particularly important in relation to health and ecosystem services, and a key component of piloting and promoting best practices in PHE activities.

## Freshwater Conservation and WASH

ABCG is working to reduce watershed degradation and pollution to increase the health of watershed ecosystems and species by linking freshwater conservation, access and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). Pilot projects in Uganda and South Africa, examine the effectiveness of implementing integrated development and conservation projects from a freshwater ecosystems perspective. Our activities are contributing to the conservation of freshwater ecosystems and improving efficient use of diminishing water resources due to climate change, that lead to increased access to potable water and improved human health.

ABCG has created a freshwater-WASH Community of Practice that is instrumental in sharing practical, ground-level experiences, and the applicability of both implementation and monitoring and evaluation tools. By developing a collective 'know-how' among practitioners in the field, knowledge sharing improves and better informs integrated approaches to freshwater conservation and WASH.

## Gender Integration

ABCG employs a participatory approach that seeks to provide improved access to opportunities (meetings, workshops, decision making on natural resource use, etc.) for women and vulnerable groups. This includes ensuring that gender considerations are included in project design and implementation.

By integrating gender dimensions into all thematic and cross-cutting program components, ABCG aims to more explicitly address the issues that limit the ability of women and vulnerable populations to participate fully in conservation and natural resource management.

