

Availability is Not Accessibility: Assessing Adaptation and Nature-based Solution Platforms

1. Background

Nature-based solutions, such as restoring wetlands and protecting forests, can help communities adapt to climate change. Yet including these approaches in national climate plans has not consistently led to funding or implementation. During my six-week internship with the Nature-based Solutions team at UNEP-WCMC, I contributed to Project PLAN, a collaboration with WWF that examines how governments can better access support to put these solutions into practice

My research asked whether the existing platforms and tools meet that need. I reviewed 31 support platforms and analysed 253 adaptation tools, looking at what they offer, who they reach, and what makes them difficult to use. The findings informed a report on how Project PLAN could build on existing support while addressing gaps in accessibility, coordination and local delivery.

4. Key Findings

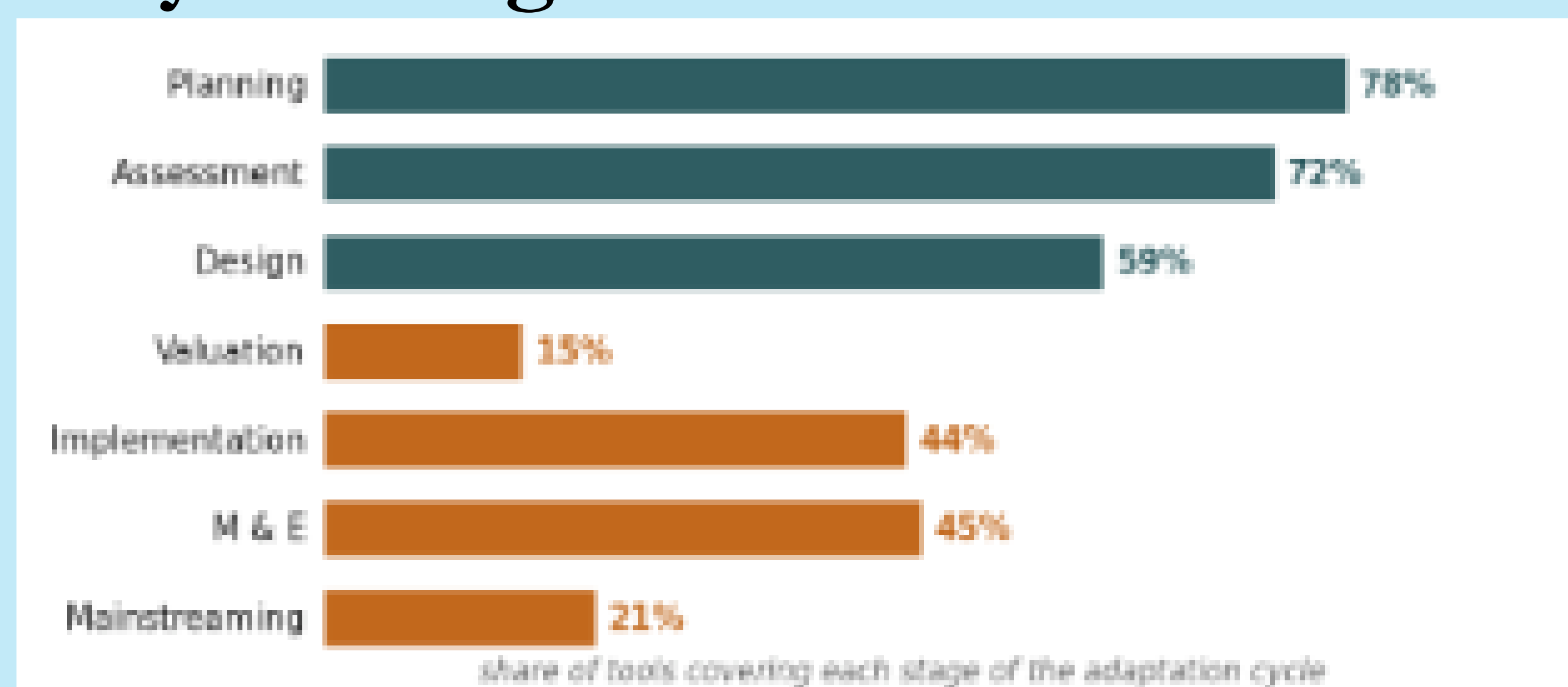


Figure 2: Share of 253 tools covering each stage of the adaptation cycle. Provision is front-loaded onto planning and assessment and falls away toward valuation, mainstreaming and implementation.

Tools cluster at the start of the adaptation cycle: 78% cover planning and 72% cover assessment, but only 15% cover valuation. Governments have less support when they need to cost a proposal and move it towards delivery.

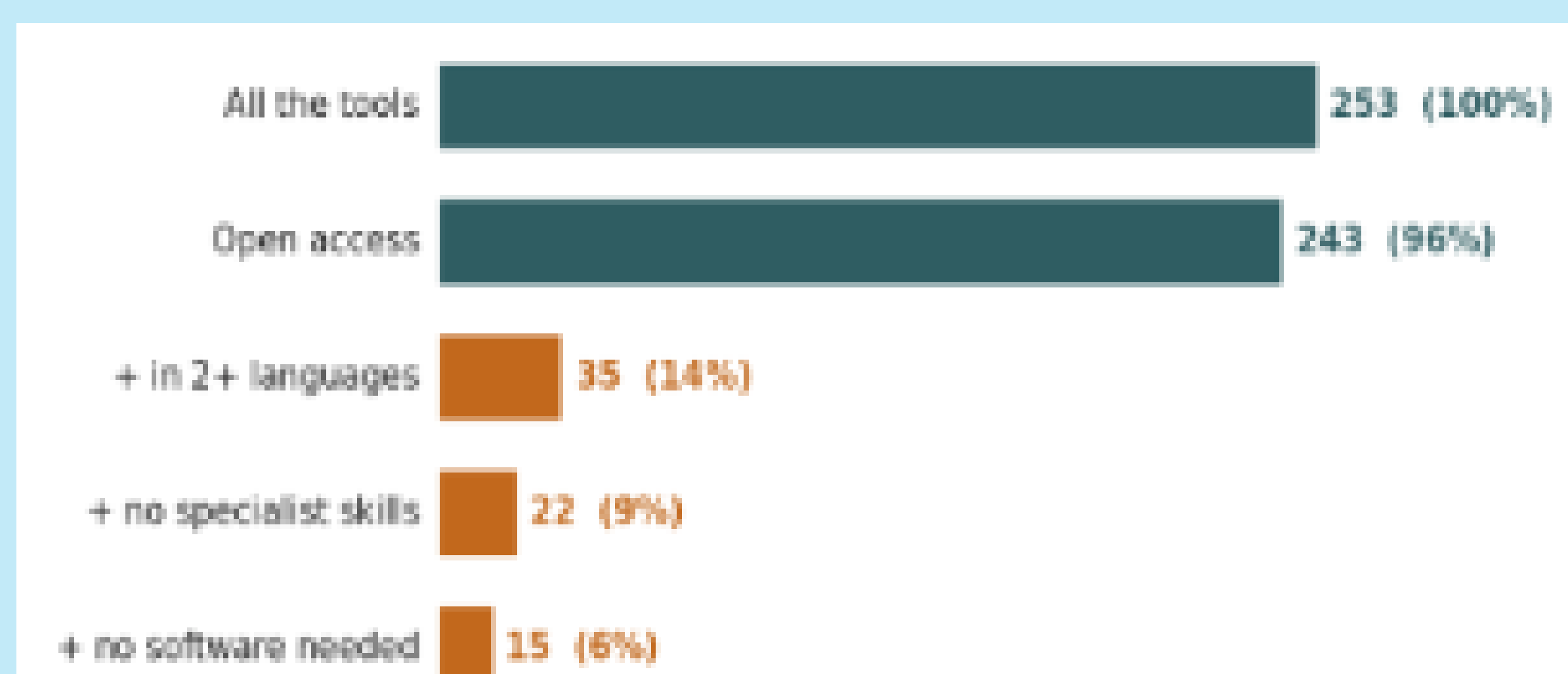


Figure 3: Accessibility of tools after applying language, skills and software requirements.

Open access does not guarantee usable access. Although 243 of 253 tools were free to obtain, only 15 met all four conditions: open access, availability in at least two languages, no specialist skills and no software requirement. Language was a major barrier: 85% of tools were available only in English.

7. Acknowledgements

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2. Introduction

Nature-based Solutions for adaptation are widely endorsed and persistently under-funded and under-used. They are recognised in the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as cost-effective and integrated approaches to building climate resilience. Nature-based solutions could deliver around a third of the mitigation the Paris temperature goals require, and every dollar invested in adaptation and resilience returns an estimated four dollars in avoided losses and co-benefits. yet they remain marginal in mainstream policy, planning, and investment, delivered through small and isolated projects rather than durable, large-scale programmes on the scale of climate risk demands.

3. Research question and action

Why are nature-based solutions included in national climate plans but still difficult to finance and deliver? I investigated whether the platforms and tools intended to support governments are accessible and useful at the points where decisions are made.

I mapped 31 support platforms by the type of help they provide, from knowledge and training to planning assistance and finance. I then analysed 253 tools in the EbA Tools Navigator by adaptation stage, intended audience, language, specialist skills and software requirements. Finally, I compared four platforms that could host a dedicated nature-based adaptation support function.

5. What did I learn?

Making a tool free to access does not make it easy to use. Governments and practitioners also need to find the right guidance, read it in a usable language and apply it without unnecessary technical barriers. My analysis points to practical improvements: clearer tool descriptions, translation and support designed for people working at local level.

6. Leadership in Action

I supported the UNEP-WCMC Nature-based Solutions team in its work with WWF to improve how governments access support for climate adaptation. I helped by undertaking a quantitative and qualitative analysis of 253 tools, mapping the organisations that provide support and writing a report that brought the evidence together for the team. The intended beneficiaries are governments and the communities whose resilience depends on effective adaptation. Leadership in Action gave me the responsibility to frame a question, assess the evidence and present findings. As a historian of political economy working in a new field, I gained confidence that my research skills could contribute to environmental work with practical aims.