



IUCN 2017

**INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR CONSERVATION
OF NATURE**

**ASIA
REGIONAL OFFICE
ANNUAL REPORT 2017**

About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,300 Member organisations and some 10,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development.

Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being.

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Outskirts of a floating village near Boeung Chhmar Ramsar Site, Cambodia © Elaine Mumford - IUCN/CEPF

Building Resilience for the Future

Foreword by Prof. Ma Keping and Aban Marker Kabraji

In 2017, Asia continued to experience rapid socioeconomic growth. The region is projected to continue to grow financially by 5.5% in 2018, which will account for almost two thirds of global economic growth. In the coming years, China's Belt and Road Initiative will give the economy an even greater boost, and the London School of Economics and Political Science has predicted that Asia will be driving the global economy by 2050.

Urban growth is booming. A 2017 UNESCAP report estimated that 2.1 billion people in the Asia-Pacific region live in cities, and predicts this number to grow to two thirds of the region's population by 2050.

While these trends are undoubtedly good for the region's prosperity, such economic strides are also expected to have a dramatic impact on the continent's environment.

According to a recent report, a worrying 80% of global marine pollution originates on land. Five Asian countries account for 60% of the eight million tons of plastic that end up in the oceans annually – a figure set to soar to 80% by 2025, if present mismanagement continues.

Southeast Asia and Oceania have lost 385,000 km² of forest cover – a land mass equivalent to the size of Norway – between 1990 and 2010. And while Southeast Asia is home to 34% of the world's mangroves, they are severely under threat. In Indonesia, for example, 70% of mangroves have been cleared for aquaculture or other uses.

Such drastic impact on the environment is affecting society. The frequency of natural disasters is increasing, marine plastics are progressively creeping into our food chain, and local jobs that depend on healthy ecosystems are being threatened. This in turn affects the economy adversely.

In 2017, the region witnessed countless disasters, including heavy flooding in Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. Local communities are at the centre of these tragedies, and are the most affected. With every tragedy, they lose their loved ones, their homes and their livelihoods.

BUILDING RESILIENCE IS KEY

As threats to the region's environment are mounting at unprecedented rates, we must ensure that ecosystems are able to endure the impending cycles of pressures caused by population growth and climate change.

Throughout 2017, IUCN Asia continued to adopt a multi-stakeholder approach to developing nature-based solutions that build ecosystem and community resilience, and directly contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

At the global level, IUCN Asia participated in the United Nations Ocean Conference in New York, highlighting the importance of mangroves, the threats they face and the solutions to conserving them.

At the event, the United Nations formed nine Communities of Ocean Action (COA) based on the 1400 voluntary commitments made by international participants from all sectors. The Mangroves COA will be coordinated by IUCN, with the Asia Regional Office expected to play a leading role. Over the next few years, IUCN will be working with United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and members of the communities to follow up on existing commitments, and to spur new commitments by all stakeholders.

At the regional level, IUCN Asia, in its capacity as permanent observer to the United Nations, participated at the Fourth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. Held in Bangkok, the event brought together Ministerial level representatives from Asia-Pacific to address the theme of 'Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing Asia-Pacific.' This forum led to the adoption of a regional roadmap for implementation of the 2030 agenda for Asia and the Pacific. Very much aligned with IUCN Asia's priorities, the roadmap gave IUCN the opportunity to expand its partnership network, and focus on the task at hand: transforming our world for the better.

In East Asia, the ministries of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the Yellow Sea Eco-Region Resolution, adopted at the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i. To facilitate cooperation, share knowledge, raise awareness, and strengthen science on intertidal wetlands, these governments formed a working group at the International Symposium on the Conservation and Management of Intertidal Wetlands in the Yellow/West Sea, held in China in December.

IUCN Pakistan and IUCN China continued to work together in 2017 to assist both Pakistan and Chinese governments to incorporate environmental aspects into the China Pakistan Economic Corridor - a development megaproject which aims to connect the Gwadar port in southwest Pakistan to Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in the northwest of China.



Prof. Ma Keping

Chair, IUCN Asia Regional
Members Committee



Aban Marker Krabaj

Regional Director,
IUCN Asia

UNITED FOR IMPACTFUL ACTION

The commercial sector can significantly influence a move towards sustainable – or circular – economies, and towards reforming business practices to reduce pressures on our finite and declining natural resources.

To highlight the importance of private sector engagement in biodiversity conservation, IUCN and Toyota Motor Corporation jointly organised a partnership event ‘The Road Ahead: Toyota and the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species – The power of private sector engagement for biodiversity conservation’ in May 2017, in Bangkok, Thailand.

Organised in conjunction with a five-day reptilian assessment workshop, which brought together top experts from all over the world to conduct more thorough and more rigorous research into the biodiversity of the Asian region, the reception was held to mark the five-year partnership between IUCN and Toyota to broaden the scope of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.

IUCN India has also been scaling up its engagement with the private sector through its business and biodiversity platform, Leaders for Nature (LfN). In 2017, LfN worked closely with TATA Group to organise several learning events and exposure visits for staff of TATA Power and TATA Steel, as a step towards mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into company operations at all levels.

Through initiatives such as Mangroves for the Future (MFF), IUCN continued to help coastal communities in 11 countries to protect and restore degraded mangrove forests, help improve communities’ livelihoods, and in the process prevent coastal erosion, sequester carbon dioxide, and build resilience to natural disasters. In 2017, MFF also focused its efforts on promoting inclusive and collaborative approaches to sustainable management and protection of coastal resources.

One focus area was to support the design and implementation of governance arrangements for Marine Protected Areas. As previously mentioned, IUCN – through MFF – played a pivotal role in establishing Pakistan’s first Marine Protected Area at Astola Island in June 2017.

As always, IUCN’s convening power brought together various stakeholders to build inclusive transboundary programmes in 2017. The Asian Protected Areas Partnership (APAP), launched in 2014 to help governments and other stakeholders collaborate for more effective management of protected areas in the region, is a testament to this. 2017 saw continued

momentum for the partnership, with the appointment of the Republic of Korea’s Ministry of Environment as the partnership’s new co-chair.

During the year, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, for which IUCN Asia is part of the Regional Implementation Team for the Indo-Burma region, reached a project milestone of over US \$1 million in small grants provided to conservation projects in the Indo-Burma region since the fund’s inception in 2013. These grants were used in biodiversity conservation, community empowerment in conservation, and capacity building, all focused on the common goal of building ecosystem and community resilience.

2017 also saw the establishment of Mekong WET, Building Resilience of Wetlands in the Lower Mekong Region. The three-year project supports three IUCN State Members – Lao PDR, Viet Nam and Thailand – as well as the Government of Cambodia, to reach their commitments to the Ramsar Convention and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and to build climate resilience in the region by recognising and harnessing the array of benefits of wetlands.

On the membership front, 20 new organisations, including three government agencies, 15 NGOs and two international NGOs, joined IUCN in 2017, bringing the number of Members in Asia to 259.

The Asia Regional Members’ Committee (ARMC) also continued to be instrumental in providing strategic guidance to the Union. At the ARMC meeting, held in Zhejiang, China, in September and chaired by President Zhang Xinsheng, members from 17 countries, Regional Councillors from Asia, Commission representatives and Secretariat staff reviewed progress to date in implementing the IUCN programme and identified future priorities for collective action.

OUR COMMITMENT

While we remain committed to engage in dialogues at all levels while implementing our projects, we aim to build a resilient organisation – one, which will always stay true to its mission and continue to work with its Members, Commissions, like-minded partners and local communities to thrust the conservation and sustainable development agenda forward.

We would like to thank all of our partners – our Members and National Committees, our Commissions, our donors, our community and our private sector partners – for allowing us to take important steps to keep the hopes of our future alive. We look forward to continue working with you in the years ahead.

Our Work in Asia



Country Office

Programme/Project Office

Liaison Office

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

Mangroves for the Future (MFF)

MFF is a partnership-based regional initiative promoting investment in coastal ecosystems to support sustainable development. The Programme is active in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. MFF is co-chaired by IUCN and UNDP, and is funded by Sida, Norad, Danida and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Thailand.

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)

CEPF is a funding mechanism that enables civil society to participate in the conservation of some of the world's most critical ecosystems. It is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. IUCN leads the Regional Implementation Team in the Indo-Burma hotspot. The project

is active in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and parts of southern China.

Building River Dialogue and Governance in the Mekong Region (BRIDGE)

BRIDGE promotes a shared vision for sustainable use of water resources in the 3S river basin (the Sekong, Sesan and Sre Pok trans-boundary rivers of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam) through hydrodiplomacy, knowledge sharing and enhancing leadership capacity. The project is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Mekong WET: building resilience of wetlands in the Lower Mekong Region

Mekong WET aims to build climate resilience in the Mekong countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam by harnessing the benefits of wetlands, and by addressing the countries' commitments to the Ramsar Convention. Through its focus on

wetland ecosystems, the project also supports governments to implement their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity and to pursue their commitments on climate change adaptation and mitigation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Measuring, understanding and adapting to Nexus trade-offs in the 3S river basins

The Sekong, Sesan and Sre Pok – collectively the 3S Basins – are transboundary tributaries of the Mekong River in Lao PDR, Cambodia and Viet Nam. The 3S Nexus project compiles data and information on the 3S basins in order to identify trade-offs in decision-making and the social and economic risks that accompany these decisions, and arranges dialogues between the countries to incorporate the findings and recommendations from the Nexus assessment in regional decision-making processes.

BANGLADESH

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1973

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1992

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Establishing pilot co-management system for the Tanguar Haor wetland ecosystem in Northern Bangladesh
- Ensuring the long term conservation of Asian elephants and their habitats
- Improving conservation of Indian vulture species including the white-rumped vultures
- Preventing transmission of Avian influenza from wild to domesticated birds
- Updating the National Conservation Strategy
- Managing hilsa fisheries through the Enhanced Coastal Fisheries (ECOFISHBD) Project
- Preparing a scoping study to declare the the Nijhum Dwip seascape a Marine Protected Area

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- BRIDGE GBM
- TROSA
- APAP
- World Bank Hydrodiplomacy

BHUTAN

STATE MEMBER SINCE 2012

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- BRIDGE GBM
- Water Diplomacy – Making Water Cooperation Work (WADI Project)
- TROSA
- APAP

CAMBODIA

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1992

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Enhancing the resilience of coastal communities to the impacts of climate change
- Working with government and partners on forest landscape restoration projects
- Cooperating with the Ministry of Environment (MOE) to establish a karst protected landscape in Kampot Province

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- CEPF
- BRIDGE
- 3S Nexus
- Shared Resources Joint Solutions (SRJS)
- Mekong WET

CHINA

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1996

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2003

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Restoring critical but degraded watersheds in Upper Dongjiang
- Undertaking the Gross Ecosystem Product assessment of Xishui County, Guizhou Province located in southern China
- Supporting the government of the People's Republic of China with the effective management of protected areas
- Scoping of forest landscape restoration potential in China
- Supporting the government of the People's Republic of China in identifying tentative sites for Green Listing as well as enhancing capacity on Green Listing

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- CEPF
- BRIDGE GBM
- APAP

INDIA

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1969

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2007

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Developing conservation strategies for rare, endangered and threatened species
- Addressing critical impacts of climate change on water, energy, livelihoods, and biodiversity, as well as to build climate resilient strategies for reducing communities and ecosystem vulnerabilities in the Indian Himalayan region
- Developing robust biodiversity conservation and management standards for Tata Steel, Ultratech Cement company of Aditya Group and Tata Power Company Limited
- Assisting ITC Company Limited to establish sustainable agriscapes
- Developing a 'Toolkit for Management and Restoration of Mining Areas in India'
- Implementing the CITES-related 'Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants programme in South Asia' initiative for supporting relevant Asian Elephant Range Countries to report on elephant mortality data

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- Water Diplomacy – Making Water Cooperation Work (WADI Project)
- BRIDGE GBM
- TROSA
- APAP
- World Bank Hydrodiplomacy

INDONESIA

**COUNTRY PROGRAMME OFFICE
ESTABLISHED 2015 (HOSTED BY
WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL)
FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES**

- Catalysing processes contributing to forest landscape restoration in line with the Bonn Challenge Commitments through application of the ROAM toolkit

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF

JAPAN

**STATE MEMBER SINCE 1995
LIAISON OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2009
FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES**

- Jointly working on expanding the scope of the Asia Protected Areas Partnership

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- APAP

KOREA (DPRK)

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Facilitating the trilateral Working Group on the conservation and sustainable management of the intertidal and associated coastal wetlands of the Yellow/West Sea including representatives from China, DPRK and RoK
- Supporting the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the DPRK by supporting a number of national workshops, trainings and field visits and organising a regional workshop on the management of the wetlands of the Yellow/West Sea

KOREA (ROK)

**STATE MEMBER SINCE 2006
FRAMEWORK DONOR TO IUCN
FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES**

- IUCN Asia Regional office is

collaborating with ROK on the implementation of a number of World Conservation Congress Resolutions

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- APAP

LAO PDR

**STATE MEMBER SINCE 1969
OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1992
FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES**

- Protecting globally significant gibbon populations
- Supporting the government of Lao PDR in effective conservation and management of wetlands to enable dependent communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- CEPF
- BRIDGE
- 3S Nexus Project
- Mekong WET
- APAP

MALAYSIA

**STATE MEMBER SINCE 1961
TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS**

- MFF outreach country
- APAP

MALDIVES

**PROJECT OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2009
FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES**

- Supporting the government of the Maldives to strengthen sustainable management of coastal resources

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF

MONGOLIA

**STATE MEMBER SINCE 2015
TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS**

- APAP

MYANMAR

**STATE MEMBER SINCE 2018
OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2018
FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES**

- Piloting wetland co-management model in the Gulf of Mottama
- Supporting the government of Myanmar in designing the GEF Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- CEPF
- TROSA
- SRJS
- APAP

NEPAL

**STATE MEMBER SINCE 1974
OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1995
FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES**

- Promoting sustainable restoration, conservation and management of mountain ecosystems for climate change adaptation
- Facilitating ways to enhance livelihoods and food security via improved agroforestry and community forestry systems
- Scaling up mountain ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change
- Developing the interactive, cutting-edge JaiBik Map to fill biodiversity knowledge gaps
- Strengthening Capacities for Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit sharing, according to Global Environment Facility criteria
- Promoting Eco-safe roads to enhance resilience of communities

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- BRIDGE GBM
- Water Diplomacy – Making

Water Cooperation Work
(WADI Project)

- TROSA
- APAP

PAKISTAN

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1975

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1985

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Developing technical capacities for water governance in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas
- Addressing sea intrusion through restoration of mangrove ecosystems in the Indus Delta
- Supporting the updating of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
- Supporting the government of Pakistan to promote sustainable forest management
- Assisting the private sector to support mangrove restoration and related sustainable livelihood initiatives
- Supporting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province with the billion tree tsunami FLR effort

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- APAP

PHILIPPINES

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- SRJS

SRI LANKA

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1987

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1988

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan to conservation in the context of large development projects
- Reviving traditional tank

irrigation systems in the face of climate change

- Conservation of the dugong in the transboundary Gulf of Mannar area
- Coordinating efforts towards the sustainable management of the Kelani River Basin
- Supporting the government to develop biodiversity management plans for irrigation and water reservoir-related projects to mitigate human-elephant conflict

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- APAP

THAILAND

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1962

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2001

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Promoting mangrove restoration by linking climate protection and adaptation to sustainable aquaculture
- Advancing sustainable management of Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai World Heritage Site
- Supporting Marriott Hotels and Resorts to enhance the sustainability of their supply chain
- Assisting the government of Thailand and local communities in the conservation of the Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex, nominated as a World Heritage Site
- Demonstrating the role of mangroves for climate change resilience
- Collaborating to enhance community capacity and develop a long-term plan for community-based coastal resources management

in Pathiu Bay, Chumphon Province

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- CEPF
- Dolphin Conservation
- Mekong WET
- APAP

VIET NAM

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1993

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1993

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Promoting community-based sea turtle conservation in Quang Tri Province
- Demonstrating mangrove shrimp sustainable polyculture models involving local communities and the private sector
- Convening partnerships between government, business and civil society to improve environmental management of Ha Long Bay and the Cat Ba Archipelago
- Supporting the implementation of the Mekong Development Plan
- Supporting the government of Viet Nam in identifying tentative sites, and enhancing capacity, for Green Listing
- Business development and skills training for women from relocated fishing families In Ha Phong

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- CEPF
- BRIDGE
- 3S Nexus Project
- Mekong WET
- APAP

Working ^{for} People and Nature

The IUCN Programme provides the framework for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the conservation work undertaken by the Commissions and the Secretariat, with and on behalf of IUCN Members.

The IUCN Membership endorses a new Programme every four years during the World Conservation Congress (WCC), the world's largest conservation event, which aims to improve how societies manage our natural environment for human, social and economic development.

The IUCN Programme (2017-2020) was approved in September 2016 at the WCC in Honolulu, Hawai'i. It aimed to mobilise communities to act collectively and at all levels to prevent the loss and degradation of biodiversity, by halting the species extinction crisis and by ensuring ecosystem integrity in order to enhance the resilience of healthy natural ecosystems on which all human societies depend; and to promote equity and social justice, particularly in the context of conservation work.

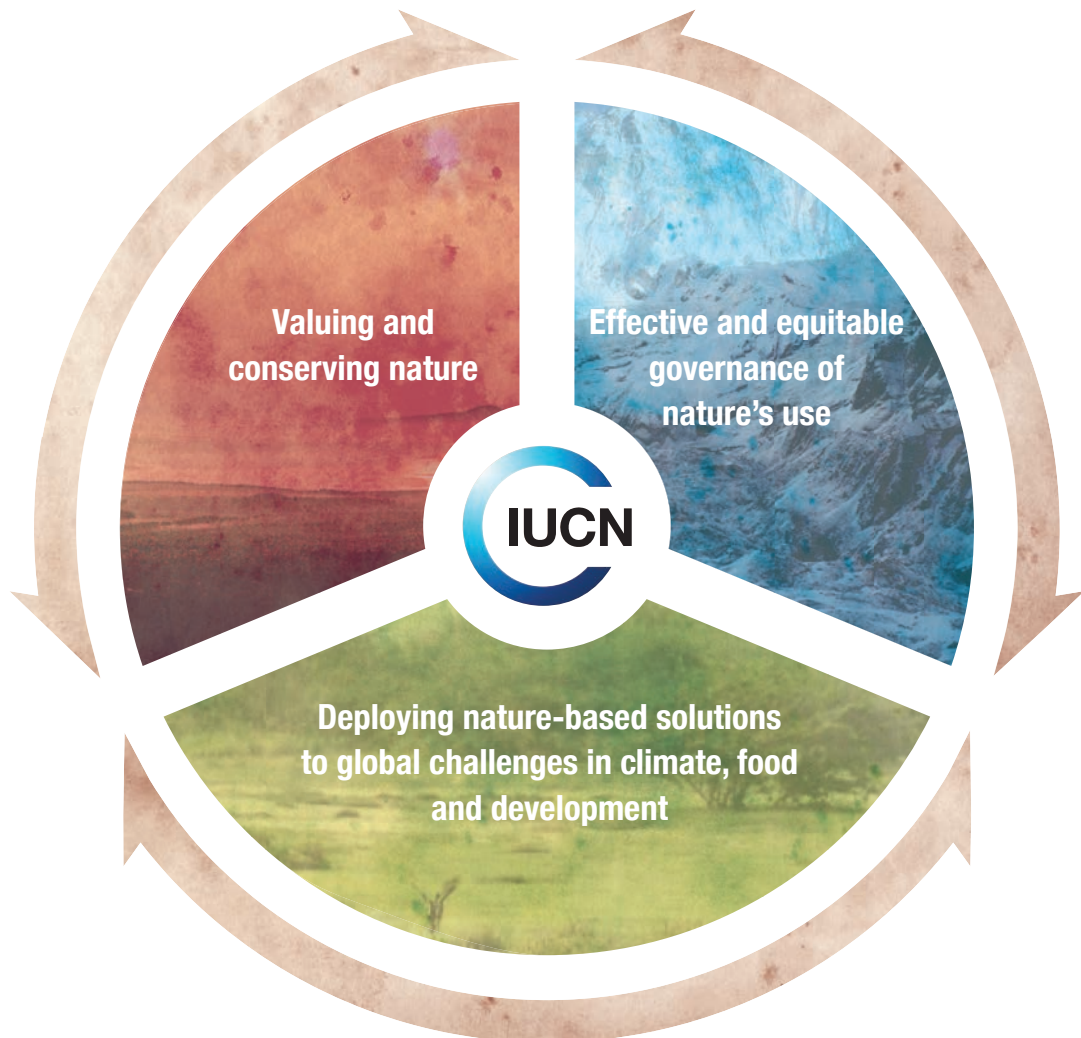
The IUCN Programme 2017-2020 responds to the challenge posed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to make systemic changes to shift the trajectory of the world towards sustainability, promotes concerted action at all levels to achieve the SDGs, and emphasises

the urgency of such action. It is aligned with IUCN's Mission: "To influence, encourage, and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable."

The Programme builds on IUCN's niche as the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. It has three priority areas:

- **Valuing and conserving nature** enhances IUCN's heartland work on biodiversity conservation, emphasising both tangible and intangible values of nature.
- **Promoting and supporting effective and equitable governance of natural resources** consolidates IUCN's work on people-nature relations, rights and responsibilities, and the political economy of nature.
- **Deploying nature-based solutions to societal challenges** expands IUCN's work on nature's contribution to tackling problems of sustainable development, particularly in climate change, food security and social and economic development.

The IUCN Programme



The Programme is implemented through the combined efforts of six IUCN Commissions, Members and the Secretariat. This report provides an update on progress in Asia within each of the three Programme Areas.



Valuing and Conserving Nature

Fishing with garo jal (traditional fishing net) in Tanguar Haor, Bangladesh © Md. Mehedi Hasan/IUCN

Nature conservation is crucial to achieving sustainable development. Healthy nature provides us with countless benefits that are vital for our survival and wellbeing, including food, water, medicine and protection against disasters. Valuing and conserving nature is therefore at the core of IUCN's work. And this task is most urgent in the Asia Region.

Asia is known for its exceptional biodiversity – its tropical forests, reefs and river basins are among the most globally significant ecosystems in the world. South and East Asia alone are home to seven of the world's recognised biodiversity hotspots. But the region's biodiversity is experiencing unprecedented levels of decline. In the past decade, Asia has recorded the world's highest number of threatened species and the

highest rate of habitat loss. The risk of extinction of mammals and birds, as well as the rates of deforestation in the region, particularly in Southeast Asia, are among the highest in the world. The region's coral reefs are also recognised as the most threatened in the world.

Proactive and targeted conservation action, however, can prevent and reverse biodiversity loss. IUCN is working in Asia, through interventions at local, national and regional levels, to protect natural habitats and species in a way that ensures community engagement and benefit.

FOSTERING PROTECTED AREA PARTNERSHIPS

Asia's protected landscapes and seascapes play a vital role in

nurturing biodiversity and delivering ecosystem services for communities throughout the region. Protected areas directly address environmental and social challenges faced by the region: they reduce the risk of disasters, help mitigate the impacts of climate change, improve food and water security, boost human health and wellbeing, and foster cooperation and peace.

One of the pillars of IUCN's work on protected areas in the region is the Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP). Launched in 2014, APAP is an informal regional platform for sharing best practices in protected area management in the region. It seeks to provide a forum for exchange and learning among protected area managers, policy makers and academics in Asia.



“Even though protected areas across Asia have different fauna and flora and are managed differently, we have a common goal of conserving our nature for a better future. We will do our best to work with the Ministry of Environment, Korea and see that Asia takes the lead in biodiversity conservation through APAP.”

– Mr Jong-hee Kim, Director of the Korea National Park Service (KNPS) Partnership Department (IUCN Government Agency Member).

The partnership continued to gather momentum in 2017, culminating in several key developments that are steering APAP into a new level of collaboration. After three years of partnership building, APAP is shifting focus to developing joint activities among its members. There is also renewed emphasis on capacity-building and experience-sharing events, and a new mandate for the partnership to explore potential trans-boundary initiatives.

On the governance front, in November 2017, the Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea (MoEK) (IUCN State Member) has become the new co-chair, together with IUCN. MOE-Korea succeeds the Ministry of Environment, Japan (MoEJ), (IUCN Government Agency Member) which has held the position for the last three years. In

terms of the programme’s financial sustainability, The MoEK will work closely with the Korea National Park Service (KNPS) to offer technical and financial support to APAP.

APAP is an initiative under IUCN’s One Programme Approach, bringing together IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas, Members and the Secretariat. In the coming years, APAP will continue to expand it’s membership and promote the partnership at regional and global events.

At the national level, IUCN works with government and NGO partners on supporting the establishment and management of protected areas.

In Cambodia, IUCN is supporting the Ministry of Environment’s (MOE-Cambodia) strategic priority

to create protected areas. In 2017, IUCN Cambodia worked with MOE-Cambodia to declare the karst hills in Kampot a new protected area.

In China, an IUCN Green List partnership event was held in Hubei Province in May 2017. The IUCN Green List is recognised by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as a key programme to help measure and demonstrate the quality of protected area sites and systems. The objective of the event was to share lessons from IUCN’s new ‘Green List’ Standard for Protected and Conserved Areas. China is one of the leading advocates and implementing partners for the new sustainability standard for conservation. This project was implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing, Urban and Rural Development.

Bangkok, Thailand



IUCN Asia Regional Director Aban Marker Kabraji (right) welcomes the Ministry of Environment Republic of Korea, as APAP co-chair © IUCN

In Pakistan, IUCN, in collaboration with the Government of Balochistan (IUCN Government Agency Member), commenced work on an ecological baseline survey of Astola Island. The island and its surrounds, an ecologically important site in Balochistan Province, was declared Pakistan's first Marine Protected Area (MPA) in 2017. IUCN is currently working on the baseline survey through a grant from the WAITT Foundation.

In Viet Nam, the Ha Long – Cat Ba Alliance was established in 2014 to build a partnership between government, business, and community leaders that catalyses action to preserve and protect Ha Long Bay and the Cat Ba Archipelago.

To date, the Alliance has partnered with nearly 20 cruise companies, local and international businesses, and civil society organisations. It has also leveraged

more than US \$210,000 from the private sector to invest in awareness– raising and community development activities in Hai Phong City and Quang Ninh Province. The Alliance has organised three large-scale coastal clean-ups with over 300 volunteers that collected nearly four tons of trash along four kilometers of coastline. As more than 60% of the trash was expanded polystyrene, the Alliance worked with the Ha Long City People's Committee to issue a decision banning the use of this material in Ha Long Bay and worked with the Hai Phong City People's Committee on alternatives. The Alliance has trained over 70 tour guides on the environmental and biodiversity values of the site and has advocated for the need to design tourism infrastructure in ways that do not threaten the outstanding universal value of the expanded site.



Astola Island, Pakistan © IUCN Pakistan

In Thailand, the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (IUCN State Member) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in December with five international organisations working in the country, including IUCN, World Wildlife Fund (IUCN Member), Wildlife Conservation Society (IUCN Member), Freeland (IUCN Member) and the Zoological Society of London (IUCN Member), with the aim of fostering effective conservation and management of the country's natural World Heritage Sites.

GROSS ECOSYSTEM PRODUCT ACCOUNTING

IUCN released three case studies in China on Gross Ecosystem Product and Ecological Assets (GEP). Focusing on three areas in the country which were implementing GEP accounting – Arxan City, Tonghua City, and Xishui County – the aim of the case studies

is to show the value of nature to the public, policy-makers, stakeholders and others sectors. GEP also has previously drawn attention from the Government of China. In the 2013-2020 Promoting Ecological Civilization Planning of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (formerly the State Forestry Administration) of China (IUCN State Member), constructing the GEP accounting system was highlighted as a key measure for promoting Eco-civilisation. The Ministry of Environmental Protection has also supported GEP trainings and the development of the technical guidelines for GEP accounting.

MILESTONES IN PROTECTING INDO-BURMA'S RICH BIODIVERSITY

Encompassing more than two million square kilometres of tropical Asia, Indo-Burma is one of the most



A Critically Endangered Sunda pangolin (Manis javanica) mother and young at a CEPF grantee rehabilitation centre in Viet Nam © Nguyen Van Thai/SVW

threatened of the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots, with only 5% of its natural habitat remaining in relatively pristine condition.

The Indo-Burma Hotspot – comprising Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and parts of southern China – is one of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund's (CEPF) focus areas of investment. CEPF is an innovative grant-making mechanism that aims to protect Earth's most biologically rich yet threatened areas.

IUCN is leading the second phase (2013-2019) of CEPF's investment in the Indo-Burma hotspot, collaborating with the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden and the Myanmar Environment Rehabilitation-Conservation Network, to form the CEPF Regional Implementation Team (RIT).

Since 2013, CEPF has awarded 69 small grants to over 30 civil society organisations throughout the region (of which a number are IUCN NGO Members). In 2017, CEPF awarded 21 grants, with a total value of about

US \$700,000, to 20 different grantees, including 16 local groups. The year 2017 marked a milestone for the CEPF in Indo-Burma: over US \$1 million in small grants has been disbursed to conservation projects within the region since the fund's inception. These grants have been used to safeguard globally threatened species, empower local communities to engage in conservation and management of key biodiversity areas, and strengthen the capacity of civil society to work on biodiversity, communities and livelihoods at regional, national, local and grassroots levels.

Examples of these projects include the work of Viet Nam NGO GreenViet Biodiversity Conservation Centre (IUCN Member), which implemented a project on emergency actions to protect the endangered red-shanked douc langur and its habitat in Son Tra; and Inn Chit Thu Ecotourism Group's initiatives to build capacity for community-based tourism and environmental awareness at the Indawgi Wildlife Sanctuary in Myanmar.

CEPF recognises that sharing stories and lessons learned is crucial to the success of conservation efforts. Storytelling about biodiversity also helps



CEPF grantees MFF and IUCN representatives at the Strategic Communications Workshop © IUCN

drive policy change and can encourage more investments in conservation. To strengthen the communications capacity of conservation practitioners in Asia, CEPF co-organised a capacity-building workshop on strategic communications. Forty conservation practitioners across 13 countries in Asia attended the workshop, held in July 2017.

SAVING WILDLIFE FROM EXTINCTION

IUCN works at the national and regional levels in strategic programmes and partnerships to help save threatened species from extinction.

STAVING OFF THREATS TO VULTURES

In January, Bangladesh banned the vulture-toxic veterinary drug, Ketoprofen, in two Vulture Safe Zones (VSZs) to protect the country's remaining vulture population from extinction. The ban was the result of two years of groundwork and campaigning at local and national levels.

Ketoprofen, a veterinary painkiller, is the second drug to be banned in the country after Diclofenac in 2010. Both drugs are fatal to vultures, which feed on cattle carcasses containing the medicine. Only around 260 white-rumped vultures remain in Bangladesh, and conserving the species is an urgent priority. These two VSZs are the only two places in Asia where Ketoprofen is banned. (The government of Tamil Nadu in India banned the drug in 2015).

Bangladesh was the first country in 2014 to designate official VSZs. VSZs are areas where there is at least one vulture colony and all threats to vultures are minimised. Through the Vulture Conservation Project with the Bangladesh Forest Department (IUCN State Member), IUCN conducted surveys and communicated with local veterinarians, pharmacists and cattle owners to understand the status of Ketoprofen in the VSZs and in Bangladesh.

PROTECTING ELEPHANTS IN THE WILD

An important part of saving wildlife is monitoring species populations. In India, IUCN is leading the



White-rumped vultures in Moulvibazar, Bangladesh © ABM Sarowar Alam/IUCN

implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) programme on Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE). The MIKE South Asia programme collects and analyses elephant carcass reports from 14 sites in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Partners of this initiative are key government agencies in these five IUCN Member Countries, the IUCN Asian Elephant Specialist Group, and IUCN Members.

IUCN and the Bangladesh Forest Department (IUCN State Member) carried out an extensive survey in elephant ranges from 2013 to 2016. In March 2017, IUCN released the results of the study, which tallied a total of 268 resident Asian elephants, 93 non-resident elephants, and 96 individuals in captivity. The study also identified and mapped out 12 corridors and 57 trans-boundary crossing points used by elephants.

The last comprehensive elephant census was conducted by IUCN from 2002 to 2003.

Part of protecting wildlife is addressing human-wildlife conflict. IUCN supported the Government of Sri Lanka (IUCN State Member) to minimise human-elephant conflicts by using existing research on elephant presence and movements, and by using field studies and development proposals to engage stakeholders in preparing Wildlife Management Plans. The plans were used to enhance the sustainability and resilience of proposed large irrigation diversions. The work produced 'Human Elephant Conflict Management and Mitigation' plans, which cover seven elephant corridors in the country.

TACKLING THE TIGER CRISIS

IUCN is supporting the Sahyadri Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra, India, in the development of conservation strategies for

endemic species of lower mammals and herpetofauna (reptiles). The report of the study is under discussion with the Maharashtra government. Once approved, IUCN will support the government with the strategy's implementation

Key efforts on tiger conservation in India are conducted through the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP), a strategic funding mechanism that aims to save wild tigers and their habitats, and to support human populations in key locations throughout Asia. The fund, which currently supports five projects in the country, is implemented by IUCN.

In October 2017, IUCN India and the Maharashtra Government also jointly organised a global workshop focusing on issues such as tiger monitoring, patrolling, human and tiger conflicts, communities and livelihoods. 2017 also saw the start of



A herd of elephants in Bangladesh © Rajib Mahamud

implementation of a two-year project in India geared toward tackling challenges around tiger conservation including managing tiger habitats, anti-poaching measures and law enforcement.

BREEDING GHARIALS

The gharial, a crocodile-like reptile, is classified as an Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. In 2017, IUCN and Bangladesh Forest Department, in collaboration with Bangladesh zoo authorities, have introduced an innovative gharial exchange breeding programme, the first of its kind in the world. The project was conducted with the Bangladesh Forest Department (IUCN State Member) and Bangladesh Zoo.

In Bangladesh, adult gharials are not found in the wild, and the remaining captive gharials have been isolated at different institutions. To conserve gharials

in the wild, IUCN proposed a Gharial Conservation and Management Action Plan, and in August 2017, by transferring a female Gharial from Rajshahi to Dhaka and a male from Dhaka to Rajshahi, the breeding programme was officially initiated.

SAVING THE SAOLA

The saola, discovered in 1992, is one of the world's most elusive ungulates (hoofed animals). The world's first and only breeding centre for these rare mammals was established in July 2017. The centre is located in Bach Ma National Park, Viet Nam, and is a collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Government of Viet Nam (IUCN State Member), in technical partnership with the Saola Working Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission.

DEFENDING DUGONGS

Global populations of dugongs, the only herbivorous marine mammals, are declining due to resource conflicts, unsustainable fishery management practices and the disappearance of seagrass meadows caused by pollution and climate change. In Sri Lanka, IUCN is protecting the country's Dugong populations through the Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project, funded by the Global Environment Facility.

Three Community Conservation Groups were formed in 2017 to protect the species and support the conservation efforts of the Department of Wildlife Conservation (IUCN Government Agency Member) in the project area bordering the Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay.

Conservation efforts to save dugongs are also underway in Thailand, where a CEPF grant is



Flowers growing on Phnom La'ang © Jaap Jan Vermeulen/IUCN

supporting a local fishery network in Trang Province. Under the project, a collaborative action plan was initiated to holistically manage and monitor all human impacts on the dugong habitat and life cycle in the province's Koh Libong sub-district.

In addition, a provincial strategic direction for dugong and biodiversity conservation was developed and a provincial committee for dugong conservation established. In a meeting organised through the project, policy recommendations for provincial strategies on dugong conservation were drafted, including legalisation of dugong and biodiversity conservation committees at provincial levels.

MONITORING THE STATUS OF SPECIES

Throughout 2017, IUCN, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment Cambodia and the Centre for Biodiversity Conservation (CBC) at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), conducted two field studies in Kampot Province. Both surveys yielded significant findings of endemic and new species.

In January, a botanical survey on the karst hills in the Kampong Trach District of Kampot Province was conducted. The province's karst hills are under threat of decimation, being quarried for cement production to fuel the country's construction boom. In September, an invertebrate biodiversity survey was conducted in Kampot's Phnom La'ang district.

Initial results of the biodiversity survey identified a plant species, *Ornithoboea emarginata*, which is listed in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ as Critically Endangered, and at least three species of snail (*Opisthostoma sp.n.*, *Gyliotrachela sp. n.*, and *Macrochlamys sp. n.*) that are new to science and endemic to Phnom La'ang. Results of both surveys were sent to the government to help guide policy and the preservation of the karst hills.

Capitalising on the new developments in the IUCN Red Listing process, as demonstrated at the Hawai'i IUCN World Congress in 2016, a five-day international knowledge event was facilitated by IUCN in Sri Lanka to build capacity and add new techniques to update the country's Red List. The Red List assessment, co-organised with the



Phou Hin Poun National Biodiversity Conservation Area, Lao PDR © Elaine Mumford - IUCN/CEPF

National Herbarium of Peradeniya Royal Botanical Gardens, the Institute of Fundamental Studies, and the Biodiversity Secretariat of the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment, Sri Lanka (IUCN State Member), focused on species which belong to the family *Ebenaceae*. 26 leading Sri Lankan botanists attended the training programme. To add value to the process, IUCN invited four renowned botanists attached to the Botanical Survey of India. The Sri Lankan botanists were trained to assess plant species by using global Red List assessment criteria, which will be mainstreamed in the future by the Biodiversity Secretariat.

In order to address emerging conservation and development challenges, IUCN has started the development of an interactive portal of mammalian species in

Nepal. So far, data modelling of 50 species has been completed using the IUCN Red List categories for abundance, status, distribution and habitat requirements. This project was implemented in collaboration with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Nepal (IUCN State Member).

SUPPORTING NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

IUCN provides technical support to countries for the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), which guide country efforts to implement commitments to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). IUCN and the Lao National Mekong Committee Secretariat, under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) (IUCN State Member),

UN Environment (formerly the UN Environment Programme) and MONRE co-organised a workshop in February to facilitate discussions on the modalities and arrangements for implementing Lao PDR's NBSAP 2016-2025.

IUCN also supported the formulation of Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (PBSAP) 2017-2025 for Luang Prabang Province, and provided technical support to MONRE for the preparation of the National Action Plan on Synergies between the Biodiversity Conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sowing the Seeds for a **Green Future**



YOUNG PEOPLE RAISE THEIR VOICES FOR NATURE

IUCN Asia is working with two of the largest grant-making mechanisms in Asia – the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), which safeguards biodiversity; and Mangroves for the Future (MFF), which promotes investment in coastal ecosystems – to help youth in 13 countries gain the knowledge and capacity to make the world a better place to grow up in.

For International Youth Day we highlighted 10 projects from Thailand, Viet Nam, Cambodia, the Maldives, India, Sri Lanka and China featuring young people of all ages taking action for the environment and their communities.



Children from Tamui Village, Ubun Ratchathani, Thailand, swim paper fish through the air on the bank of the river as a reminder that their well-being depends on the resources it provides. © Kumpin Akson – MCI



Tree-huggers: Through a project organised by MCI, their partners and the local community, these children from Boonrueng Village in Chiang Rai Province are learning about the local wetland forest ecosystem by collecting data about the flora – and by getting up close and personal with the trees © Arita Ratchathani – MCI

1. Waste management in Thailand

In Trat Province, Thailand, a 60,000 tonne pile of waste dubbed the “Golden Mountain” is a prominent feature of the Mairood sub-district.

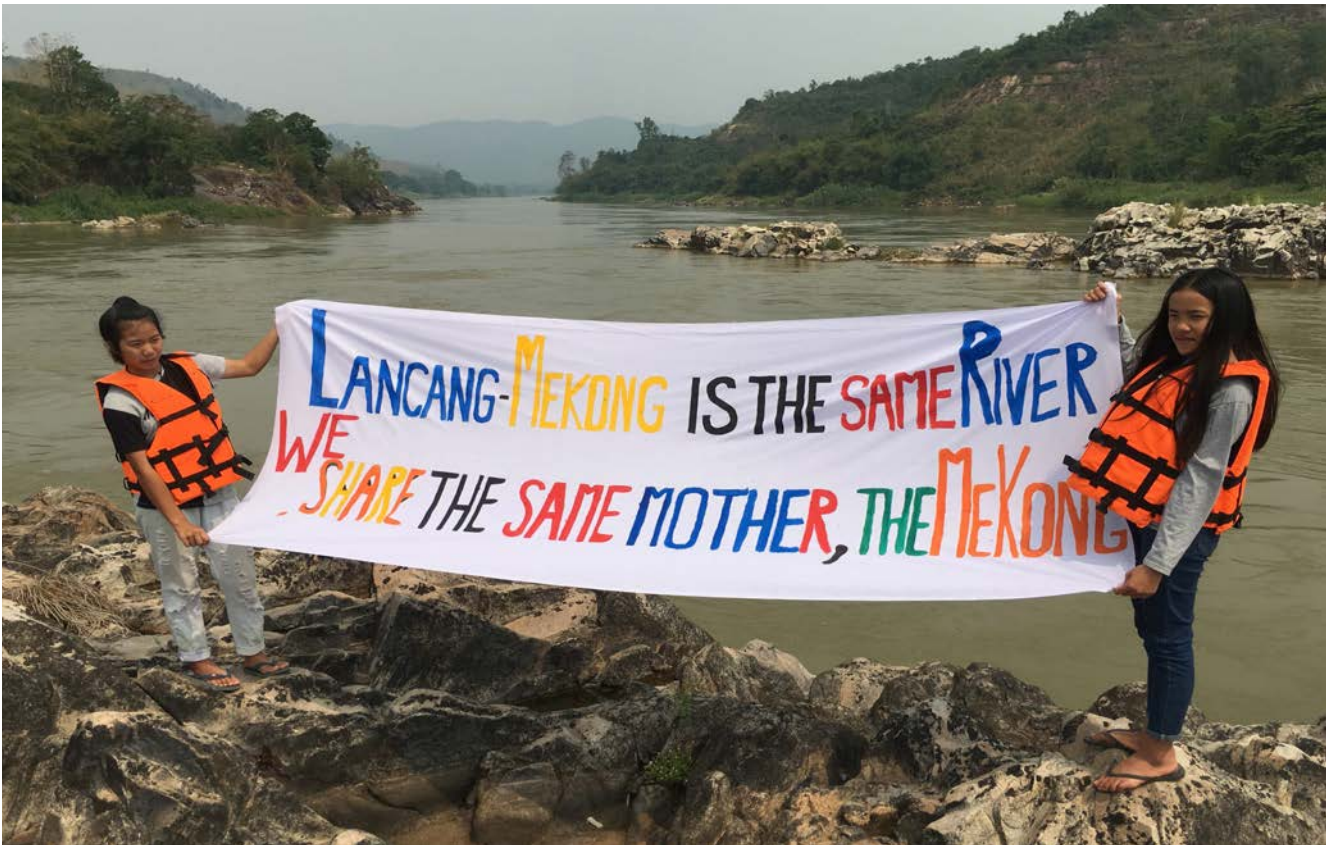
With support from MFF, two community-based waste management projects have empowered over 700 schoolchildren to bring home waste sorting and recycling best practices.

The ‘7 Rs’ – ‘Reduce,’ ‘Reuse,’ ‘Recycle,’ ‘Rethink,’ ‘Reject,’ ‘Repair’ and ‘Return’ – have transformed the way families in Mairood interact with consumption habits and waste management.

The programme teaches students that waste is destructive and hazardous, but that it can be effectively neutralised and even used to save and earn money. Students bring this knowledge home and are also encouraged to participate in monthly community meetings where waste management is often discussed.



These students have cleaned their milk cartons and are hanging them out to dry. The cartons will later be recycled and used to build shelter for victims of natural disasters. © Siriporn Sriaram – MFF/IUCN



March 2017: Young women in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand, protest plans to dynamite blast the rapids on the Mekong River © Teerapong Pomun – MCI



These future conservationists are learning about the damage being caused by the illegal wildlife trade © Education for Nature - Viet Nam

2. Mekong voices: Thailand

In Thailand, the Mekong Community Institute (MCI) Association is making young people in eight provinces the collective voice of the Mekong River.

With support from CEPF, MCI is establishing local learning centres in districts such as Chiang Khong and Ubon Ratchathani to train young people, from toddlers to teenagers, in the effective communication of environmental issues to the public. These centres strengthen the capacity of young people to advocate for the protection of the Mekong River in Thailand.



Young people were instrumental in helping Education for Nature - Viet Nam gather thousands of signatures for a petition calling on South Africa not to legalise the domestic sale of rhino horn. © Education for Nature - Viet Nam

3. Combating illegal wildlife trade in Viet Nam

You're never too young to start learning about protecting wildlife!

Education for Nature - Viet Nam (ENV)'s young volunteers know that eliminating the illegal wildlife trade means not just discouraging supply, but also killing demand. They stage regular exhibitions in shopping malls and other public spaces to get their message across and call the next generation to action.

Convincing senior citizens that bear bile and tiger bone aren't 'magic cures' for illness is a challenge the volunteers have taken on. By educating young children, they can cut off such misconceptions at their root.

“I don't agree with using tiger bone to cure diseases under any circumstances.”

– Nguyen Thi Lan Anh, 21, who pledged to help stop wildlife consumption in Viet Nam

4. Investing in Viet Nam's future School gardens

With the increasing number of decorative plant species being introduced to Hoi An, native plants and traditional gardening techniques are more important than ever. Through an MFF project, students from eight schools in Hoi

An are learning the value of organic agriculture, native flora – such as traditional medicinal herbs – and food safety. They're also getting an opportunity to practice what they've learned and bring biodiversity back to their city.



5. I learn, I play, I am safe

Another MFF project in Hoi An is tackling climate change and natural disaster resilience in at-risk communes like Cam Kim.

‘Green living reading corners’ give young children the opportunity to read about climate change and understand how it affects them. They also learn how to live more sustainably by saving water and energy, and reducing, reusing and recycling waste. These students can then bring this knowledge home and share it with family and friends.

Students at Huynh Thi Luu School, Hoi An, learn about the uses of native plant species © Tran Viet Duy – MFF



The Green Living Corner, Thanh Ha Ceramic Village, is the perfect place for kids to read and learn © Nguyen Van Nguyen – MFF



A boy watches birds in Prek Toal Ramsar site during a class on local fauna conducted by OSMOSE environmental teacher Chhun Teav © OSMOSE

6. Outdoor classrooms in Cambodia

Teaching can be tough, but less so when the wilderness you want to conserve is right in your backyard.

With CEPF support, OSMOSE is making nature the classroom in the Prek Toal Ramsar site, part of Cambodia's Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, by integrating conservation into the curriculum of the elementary school in Peak Kantiel village. Outdoor classes immerse students in the lessons, and teacher-led activities like trash cleanups help drive home the message, and make the children feel empowered to make a difference.

Students from Peak Kantiel also have the opportunity to participate in events to help strengthen the resilience of the wetland they learn about in classes. On World Environment Day 2017, for example, OSMOSE staff led a tree-planting celebration in the village where over 20 children collaborated with park rangers, community members and village leaders to contribute to reforestation efforts in Prek Toal.

As their boat floats through the amphibious forest, OSMOSE environmental teacher Phan Channath gives the children of Peak Kantiel Village a lesson on the trees – how they grow, and why they are important to the ecosystem and the community. © OSMOSE

7. Monitoring Maldivian mangroves

In Huraa, Maldives, Environmental Management undergraduates at the Maldivian National University (MNU) conducted a mangrove ecosystem survey for MFF, gaining hands-on experience with the techniques they learned in the classroom.

MFF benefited from the students' enthusiasm and knowledge. The students, in turn, not only gained practical skills, but also rediscovered the passion that had led them to pursue environmentally-focused studies in the first place.





Nafha, from the Maldivian National University, is passionate about mangroves © Munshid Mohamed – UNDP Maldives



MFF National Coordinator Abdulla Adam (far right) gives Nafha, Mariyam, Shazra (left to right) and their classmates a quick test on plant identification before they head into the mangroves to count, measure and make an inventory of the trees. © Munshid Mohamed – UNDP Maldives



(Left to right): Lugmaan, Nafha and Hassan use quadrats to determine the local distribution of bottom-dwelling organisms in the mangrove wetland. © Munshid Mohamed – UNDP Maldives



Green Rhinos planting mangrove seeds in Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary © MFF India



Upcycling: Green Rhinos learn how to transform household plastic waste – like candy and biscuit wrappers – into baskets and sitting mats © MFF India

8. India's young leaders

Students in Rajnagar, a small town inside Odisha's Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary, are getting the chance to think critically about the environment around them and have their thoughts and opinions heard.

One of the most disaster-prone areas in India, Bhitarkanika is feeling the effects of climate change as cyclones and violent storm surges threaten to submerge it entirely. The area is also becoming choked with litter – especially plastic bags – as most residents are unaware of the hazards of waste.

Teams of students called the Green Rhinos are taught how to tackle these challenges through an MFF project that encourages creative thinking and non-traditional problem solving – like making over 3,000 reusable shopping bags out of their fathers' old trousers. Green Rhino groups have also been working closely with their local governments to mitigate disaster risk by planting mangroves along riversides – 1,800 so far – and have been instrumental in teaching their communities the benefits of conserving and planting trees, composting for fertiliser and reducing plastic use.

9. Tour guide training in Sri Lanka

Traditional livelihoods in Mannar Province in Sri Lanka are mostly restricted to fishing and farming, but the possibility of more tourism in the beautiful and biodiverse Gulf of Mannar provides potential for local economic growth.

This would not only help people in the area, but also reduce pressure on their precious natural resources. To help youth in Mannar take advantage of this promising prospect, MFF is working with the Green Movement of Sri Lanka (GMSL) and the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority to help train tour guides – some as young as 18 years – in Sinhalese and English language and skills like basic first aid, bird-watching techniques, snorkeling and tour management.

The training programme, which took place over the course of three months, not only gave 30 young men and women the skills to build the area's reputation as a historically and ecologically significant destination, but also gave them direct access to jobs and immediate opportunities to apply what they have learned.



At a training session in the district of Mannar, MFF and the Green Movement of Sri Lanka help young people develop skills in tourism management © GMSL



A young tour guide-in-training learns bird-watching techniques on the Gulf of Mannar © GMSL



Volunteers and students from No. 12 Qiongshan Primary School clear water hyacinth from Yangshan wetland © Squirrel School



Students at No. 12 Qiongshan Primary School listen to a lecture on the biodiversity of Hainan © Squirrel School

10. Getting their feet wet in China

On the island of Hainan, China, an educational facility called the Squirrel School is, with CEPF support, giving children the opportunity to learn about nature through classroom lectures and hands-on activities

After a lesson with Squirrel School founders Gaogao and Jakie or volunteers from Hainan University, students get the chance to go on a field trip into Hainan's critical Yangshan Wetland. Depending on the students' curricula, activities in the wetland may include further lessons, doing simple water quality assessments or even pulling up water hyacinth, an invasive weed that pushes out native plants and suffocates wildlife.

Sometimes students also volunteer to participate in the activities beyond what is mandated by their schools. The Squirrel School promotes wetland protection through outreach materials like brochures, and also through lectures and field activities that are open to the public. On average, the Squirrel School reaches 800-1000 students per month.

Promoting and Supporting effective and equitable governance of nature

Good governance of natural resources is key to sustainable development. IUCN has a long history of working on governance issues. This programme area is at the heart of IUCN's contribution to sustainable development, to ensure that decisions that affect natural resources at local, national, bilateral and multilateral levels are well-informed, implemented equitably, and gender sensitive. Good governance allows for partnerships – between governments, civil society, indigenous peoples, local communities and the private sector – that lead to positive social and conservation outcomes.

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR WATER GOVERNANCE

Water governance sets the 'rules of the game' for the way water is managed. It determines whether and how water resources management is implemented. Without effective water governance, planning for water management remains unimplemented and water-related vulnerabilities go unaddressed, leading to less resilient livelihoods and economic growth. Effective water governance capacity is therefore the art of building and facilitating convergence of

technical expertise, information, stakeholder dialogue and local and international politics.

Through the global Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE) initiative, and in partnership with the IUCN Global Water Programme and the IUCN Environmental Law Centre, IUCN works to promote greater cooperation among riparian countries in Asia, through Water Diplomacy and Transboundary Water Management.

In the Mekong Region, BRIDGE has helped to catalyse trans-boundary dialogue in the Sekong, Sesan and Sre Pok River Basins. The 3S Rivers, as they are collectively known, support the livelihoods of 3.5 million people living in Cambodia, Lao PDR (IUCN State Member) and Viet Nam (IUCN State Member).

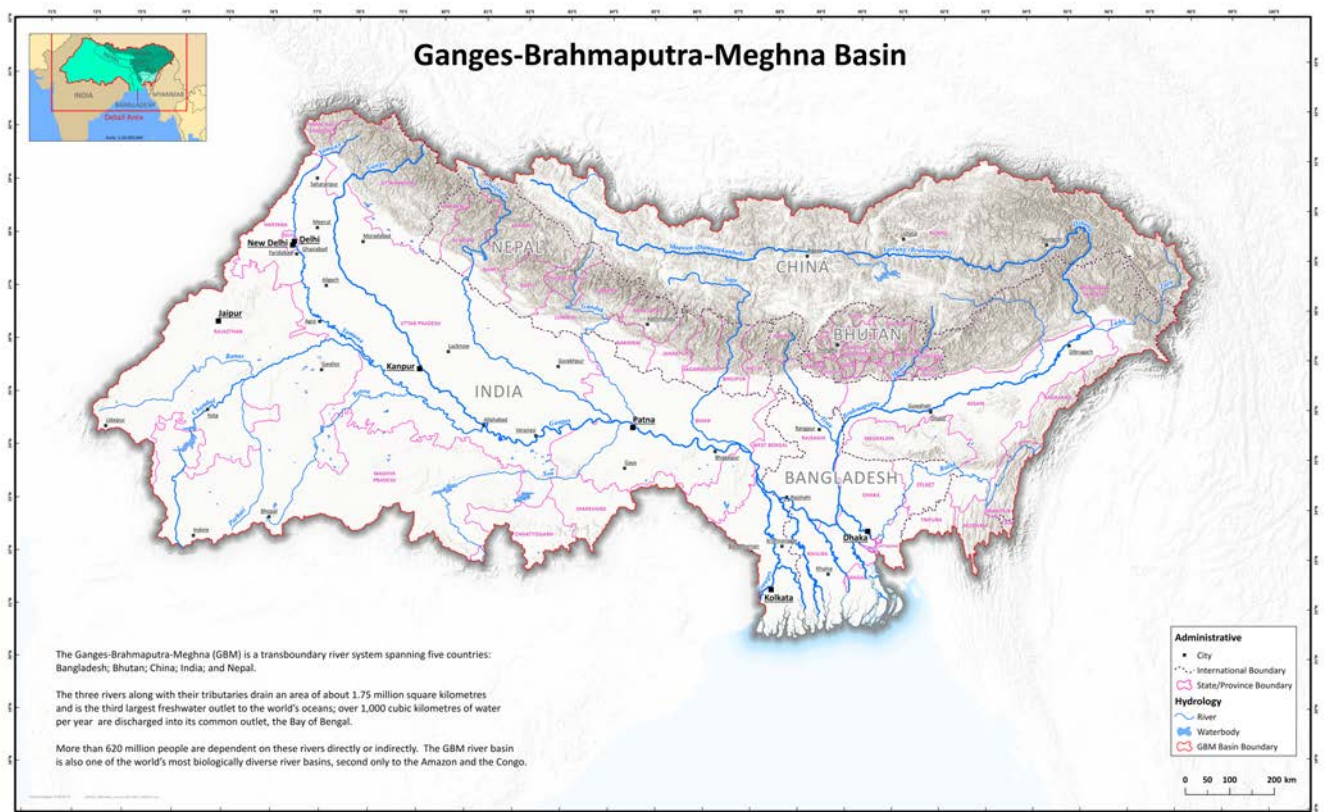
The year 2017 saw the launch of the project Measuring, Understanding and Adapting to Nexus Trade-offs in the 3S River Basins, a study aimed at improving the quality of planning and investment in the 3S Region. By adopting a Nexus approach to evaluating past studies and information, the project seeks to stimulate in-depth understanding of the state of the 3S Basins and the inter-linkages (conflicts and

synergies) between water-related sectors (agriculture, fisheries, hydropower and household use) including drivers of change and social implications.

The study enabled the BRIDGE programme to strengthen its science and technical base approach in the 3S Basins. The project supported a regional multi-stakeholder meeting in March in Hanoi to launch the initiative, provide a dialogue platform for its implementation, and support the creation of a Technical Advisory Group, built to guide the development of the Nexus study.

By using the development of a Nexus study as a structuring element for the work on the 3S Basins, BRIDGE could orient its network and dialogue platforms toward a more technical and concrete approach. The 3S Nexus assessment is expected to reinforce regional integration and advance integrated planning and development.

Through BRIDGE, IUCN further strengthened its connections with two key regional bodies in Asia: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Mekong River Commission (MRC). In April, BRIDGE organised, for



Data sources:
 Borders, Towns, Rivers: Natural Earth
 Waterbodies: GBMID Reservoirs
 Basin boundaries: Hydrosheds
 Elevation: GMT SRTM (v.4.1);
<http://www.naturalearthdata.com/>
<http://www.gbmid.org/>
<http://www.hydrosheds.org/>
<http://srtm.csi.cgiar.org/>

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 12,500,000. Bangkok, Thailand, March 2018.

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The Asia Foundation

Map of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna River Basin © IUCN



A boat on the Mekong © Raphael Glémet/IUCN



Sunset on the Brahmaputra River © AJM Zobaidur Rahman/IUCN

the first time, a training seminar for the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management (WGWRM). The ASEAN WGWRM seminar enabled IUCN to present the BRIDGE approach and advise on the development of the upcoming Environment Plan and the integration of trans-boundary water governance issues and pilot projects in the region. Meanwhile, the seminar for the Mekong River Commission was conducted in September.

In June, BRIDGE conducted a series of half-day workshops in Viet Nam, together with energy specialists from the Stimson Institute. Multiple

stakeholders discussed the future of the power grid in the Mekong Region, and its implications for hydropower development and power selling and buying. The workshops provided strong arguments for the need to increase cooperation in energy between Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Cambodia, in order to bring economic benefits and significantly reduce ecological, social, and political risk to the Mekong Basin. The workshops were conducted in collaboration with the Government of Viet Nam (IUCN State Member) and Lao PDR (IUCN State Member).

Together with Conservation

International (IUCN Member), BRIDGE further supported the development of the Freshwater Health Index (FHI) tool by organising two consultations with a multi-stakeholder group, and testing the index in the context of the 3S Basins.

BRIDGE is also implemented in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) River Basins of Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India and Nepal. The BRIDGE GBM project was launched in 2016 to develop a regional civil society organisation vision for cooperative transboundary water resource



management in the GBM River Basins. In 2017, through IUCN India, the project conducted two community consultations and one Bangladesh-India consultation to finalise a roadmap for sustainable trans-boundary inland navigation and fisheries management between Bangladesh and India.

The following IUCN Members are involved in the BRIDGE GBM project:

Bangladesh - Brotee Samaj Kallyan Sangstha (NGO), Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (NGO), Center for

Environmental and Geographic Information Services (NGO), and the Center for Natural Resource Studies (NGO)

Bhutan - Royal Society for Protection of Nature (NGO)

China - Centre for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge (NGO), and Shan Shui Conservation Center (NGO)

India - World Wildlife Fund - India (NGO), Development Alternatives (NGO), and Aaranyak (NGO)

Nepal - Association for Protection

of the Environment and Culture (NGO), and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (INGO).

Beyond the BRIDGE project, IUCN led a regional capacity - building initiative under the Water Governance Project, with funding support from the World Bank, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan (IUCN State Member), and the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (IUCN Member). Under the initiative, capacity-building modules on water governance tailored for the South



A fishing boat anchored among mangroves, Thailand © Siriporn Sriaram – MFF/IUCN

Asian context were developed and tested in India and Bangladesh following two national workshops (in India and Dhaka) and a regional workshop in Bangkok. An online platform, which will host the final training modules, is scheduled to be launched in 2018.

INVESTING IN COASTAL RESILIENCE

Healthy coastal ecosystems provide food and livelihoods for millions of people in Asia. They protect people living near the coast from storms and tidal waves, and reduce the risk of natural disasters. But these ecosystems are increasingly under threat from unsustainable use and the impacts of climate change.

Mangroves for the Future (MFF) is a partnership-based initiative working in 11 member countries throughout Asia to support investments in coastal ecosystems for sustainable development. The goal is to promote healthy ecosystems through an approach that applies knowledge, empowers communities and enhances governance to secure livelihoods and build resilience to climate change. MFF involves IUCN State Members of Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam, as well as a number of Government Agency Members and NGO Members.

In 2017, MFF's grants facility continued to be an important mechanism for supporting strategic

actions to address priorities for sustainable coastal ecosystem management, with four new small grant projects initiated in the Seychelles and Maldives. Thus far, MFF has supported more than 240 projects across Asia since 2010.

Several small and medium grants projects concluded in 2017. In Pakistan, a 179 hectare fish sanctuary was established in Miani Hor, and MFF supported the declaration of Astola Island as Pakistan's first marine protected area. In Shyamnagar, Bangladesh, a medium grant project concept was developed based on the Citizen Action Plan-Sonar Shyamnagar Vision 2050, which has been adapting MFF's Resilience Framework to protect people from



the recurring effects of cyclones and tidal surges. In Can Thanh Commune of Hoi An, Viet Nam, MFF helped develop an eco-tourism plan and homestays involving 27 households, and in Cambodia, the Peam Krasop Wildlife Sanctuary Management Plan was endorsed by the Ministry of Environment.

During the year, MFF's longstanding regional Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) training course was successfully extended to national Member countries. The Royal University of Phnom Penh has already completed the first national-level ICM course in Cambodia, attended by 18 coastal managers and practitioners. Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

completed steps to integrate the course curriculum into national higher education institutions.

With support from the US Department of State, and in collaboration with The Stimson Center, MFF hosted the US-ASEAN Conference on Marine Environmental Issues in September, 2017. Attended by more than 50 stakeholders from all sectors, the conference strengthened networks for partnerships and led to policy recommendations for addressing key marine environment issues in the ASEAN region.

In partnership with FAO, MFF also produced four publications from the project Income for Coastal Communities for Mangrove

Protection, which aimed to develop a low-cost mechanism enabling investors to responsibly promote mangrove conservation and restoration, carbon emissions reduction and sustainable development by providing funding to local communities.

Moving forward, MFF will continue to support a diverse range of projects in the region and strive to identify best practices that harness and utilise the diverse knowledge generated by the programme to date. With increasing attention to climate change mitigation actions, MFF has also initiated a new component aimed at including mangrove forests more consistently in national REDD+ approaches.



SUPPORTING WETLAND PROTECTION

In the Lower Mekong region, millions of people rely on wetlands for their survival. The Lower Mekong Delta supports the world's most productive inland fisheries, valued at around US \$3 billion per year and providing local communities with up to 80% of their animal protein intake.

In recent decades, however, infrastructure development, deforestation, the expansion of irrigated agriculture and increasing urbanisation have led to a dramatic decline in the region's wetlands. Farmers in many areas are also increasingly affected by saltwater

intrusion, landslides and flash floods, which are further intensified by climate change.

In January, IUCN started the implementation of the project Mekong WET: Building Resilience of Wetlands in the Lower Mekong Region. Funded by the International Climate Initiative of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, the project aims to build climate resilience by harnessing the benefits of wetlands in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. The project involves IUCN State Members of Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam, as well as IUCN INGO Members WWF-US, International Crane Foundation, Wildfowl and Wetlands



Degraded wetlands in Cambodia © Giacomo Abrusci/IUCN

Trust (UK), and Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association Myanmar (IUCN NGO Member).

The three-year project will help the four countries to address their commitments to the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, and to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The overarching goal is the establishment of an effective and replicable framework for delivery of ecosystem-based adaptation and mitigation benefits from existing and planned Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance) in the region, including through trans-boundary collaboration.

In Viet Nam, an ongoing project is helping strengthen resilience to climate change in the Mekong Delta. The Integrated Planning (IP) project is supporting the implementation of socio-economic planning at a sub-regional level in the Delta on a pilot basis. In June, the IP project facilitated a high-level planning workshop for the 600,000-hectare Long Xuyen Quadrangle floodplain. In September, the project worked with development partners, led by the World Bank, to provide input to the third high-level Mekong Delta Conference, chaired by the Prime Minister and members of the cabinet.



A village chief and a Women's Union member from Donyeng village, Lao PDR, participate in a focus group discussion on how both men and women use wetland resources. © Anushae Parakh – MFF/IUCN



PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Gender equality and equity are matters of fundamental human rights and social justice, as well as a pre-condition for sustainable development. IUCN is committed to furthering gender equality and equity in order to build a Union that understands the importance of equal opportunity and inclusion, and whose policies respect diversity.

Gender and development is a key pillar in MFF programming. Since its inception, 52% of MFF's Small Grant Facility projects have contributed to addressing women's needs. Of these projects, 75% provided education, skills development and awareness-raising opportunities to women and their families.

In 2017, MFF, in partnership with the Stockholm Environment Institute and Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre, began the implementation of a Regional Gender Study to explore gender patterns in coastal and marine management. Training has been completed and a research toolkit has been developed. MFF member countries have also been provided with special grants of US \$5,000 to conduct gender analyses with the help of the toolkit.

MFF is also implementing the application of gender mainstreaming processes in other IUCN water governance programmes. In 2017, MFF conducted a Gender Analysis of the Xe Champhone Ramsar site and supported the development of a Gender Integration Strategy for the Climate Adaptation in Wetland Areas Project in Lao PDR.

In October, BRIDGE 3S, in collaboration with Oxfam, initiated research on 'Gender and Water Governance' to identify strategic opportunities for gender mainstreaming in the Mekong region. BRIDGE and Oxfam also facilitated a 'Regional Forum on Gender Equity and Women's Leadership in Transboundary Water Governance in the Lower Mekong Basin', in Lao PDR. The workshop identified the need to break silos among sectors, and the need to build a network of organisations committed to a common vision of integrating gender in the water governance sector. A number of IUCN Members were involved as workshop participants.

Gender equality: A game-changer **for nature**



Leena collecting reeds from the marshlands near her home © Aishath Niyaz

This opinion editorial was written by Aban Marker Kabraji, Regional Director for IUCN Asia and Director of IUCN's Asia-Oceania Regional Hub. It was published on International Women's Day in numerous media outlets across the region including Al Jazeera, Thomson Reuters Foundation News, The Daily Sun (Bangladesh), Dawn (Pakistan), Mihaaru (Maldives) and Jakarta Globe (Indonesia).

In Fiyoaree, Maldives, Leena wakes up every day just a little before sunrise for her morning prayer. She prepares breakfast for her family and gets her two children, 9-year-old Fathimah and 5-year-old Ahmed, ready for school, which starts at 7:30 a.m.

Once she returns home, she tidies her house and takes care of the laundry, before she heads out to her parents' farm, located 1.5 km away, to help water their vegetables. Approximately two hours later, Leena returns home to prepare lunch for her children.

Throughout the day, she juggles other household duties, including tending to her 4-month-old baby, Moan, while her husband, a fisherman, is out at sea.

At night, after she tucks her children in, Leena spends three hours making mats out of reeds that grow in nearby marshlands and wetlands.

Along with 30 other women in her village, 30-year-old Leena sells these multi-coloured woven mats to a cooperative in the capital, Malé. The co-op then sells the handicrafts to high-end tourist resorts. If the women weave on a regular basis, they can

earn up to MVR 1000 (US \$65) per month from the activity – which amounts to approximately 30% additional income to the average household in Fiyoaree.

Like many other women in her village, and many parts of the world, Leena is the primary caregiver for the family, while her husband goes out to work. Most of the time, these women also take on the responsibility of collecting water and firewood, as well as growing and harvesting crops.

Even though the past decades have seen huge changes for women in many communities in terms of employment, there are still many women who simply cannot have a job away from their villages because of their duties at home. This is why home or village-based income-generating opportunities, such as Leena's weaving, are so important.

Women key to conservation

Leena is a beneficiary of a regional coastal conservation initiative spanning 11 countries in Asia and the Indian Ocean that aims to empower women economically, in Leena's case by being trained in the traditional Maldivian art of Thun'du Kunaan weaving.

Implemented through MFF, this income-generating initiative also helps women better understand the value of wetlands and the fundamentally important services they provide, such as the supply of reeds for their weaving.

With their traditional knowledge of sustainability at the household and community level, women can play

a critical role in the conservation of natural resources. Coupled with the fact that they are instrumental in running the household, they also hold the key to positively influencing and shaping their husbands' and children's views about the importance of safeguarding nature. They, in turn, then go on to positively influence their peers, creating ripples of change that spread across the community.

Empowered with more knowledge on the sustainable use of natural resources, these women can become strong advocates for nature-based approaches to sustainable development. Numerous studies have indicated that women also play a crucial part in building resilience: from ensuring that fragile ecosystems are protected; to helping their families become more resilient in the face of natural disasters.

Additionally, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has made it crystal clear that a commitment to gender equality is necessary to secure a better future for all. This is explicitly evidenced in Sustainable Development Goal 5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."

Unfortunately, in many nations, gender-based discrimination and inequality are still deeply woven into the social fabric. And despite the fact that women play such a critical role in the conservation of ecosystems, their contribution is often overlooked, undervalued, and sadly, undermined. The recent World Economic Forum predicts that the gender gap won't close entirely until 2186.

Growth threatening ecosystems

Though Asia's unprecedented economic growth has brought many benefits to its communities through higher incomes and a better quality of life, it has also exacerbated threats to the region's ecosystems through natural habitat degradation and biodiversity loss, due to commercial, agricultural and industrial activity.

Rates of mangrove, wetland and forest loss in Asia are among the highest in the world; 95% of Southeast Asian coral reefs are at risk; and almost 1,400 plants and animals in the region are listed as Critically Endangered and Endangered.

All is not lost, though. Thankfully, this is the 21st century, and the vital role of gender equality, equity and inclusion in conservation and environmental protection has been receiving increasing attention from both the scientific and political community. A large number of international organisations have been relentlessly advocating for the empowerment of women, and for them to take real ownership of the ecosystems on which they rely.

For instance, IUCN's gender policy calls for the promotion of equity and equality as a crucial factor for environmental sustainability, and as an integral part of all conservation efforts.

Since its inception, 38% of MFF's projects have directly contributed to addressing women's needs. Through the provision of education and skills development training to women and their families,



more than 80% of these projects resulted in measurable increases in women's incomes, and went hand-in-hand with improved management of natural resources.

This year's theme for International Women's Day is 'Be bold for change.'

In the Maldives, women like Leena are leading the way. By fruitfully engaging in a sustainable income-generating activity, Leena

encourages other women to take the leap and do the same.

As increasing numbers of women are empowered through conservation projects that systemically mainstream gender equality into programmatic outcomes, collective efforts in sustainable development become more impactful, and can indeed secure a better future for all.



A woman collecting shellfish © BANCA

PROMOTING FAIR AND EQUITABLE SHARING OF BENEFITS

Recognising the significance of fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation of Nepal (IUCN State Member), in its capacity as the focal point to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and

Benefit Sharing, implemented a project to strengthen capacity for the implementation of the Protocol in the country. IUCN has been supporting the Government of Nepal on the protocol and is the Implementing Agency of this Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded project. Adopted in 2010, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation to the Convention on Biological

Diversity is a supplementary agreement to the 1992 CBD.

Through the technical support of IUCN, and in collaboration with the Government of Nepal's Ministry of Environment and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (IUCN State Member), the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing is now in force in Nepal after the country's accession to the Protocol in September 2017.



Deploying Nature-based Solutions to Societal Challenges

Deforestation in Uttarakhand has loosened the soil, causing landslides that threaten homes © Li Jia/IUCN

Well-managed, healthy and diverse ecosystems and the biological resources they encompass are critical for a healthy, safe and prosperous world. They also enable communities – both in rural and urban settings – to be resilient to changes and stresses presented by hazards.

Many countries in Asia have been identified as among the worst affected by climate change in the world. The region is also recognised as the most disaster-prone. IUCN's ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction (DRR), food security and protecting livelihoods are of particular importance in the Asia Region. IUCN harnesses the synergies between science, practice and policy to ensure sustainable environmental management and nature-based solutions that enhance the resilience of communities in the face of risks and disasters.

MITIGATING DISASTER RISKS WITH HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS

In 2017, The Ecosystems Protecting Infrastructure and Communities (EPIC) project implemented in Nepal worked to integrate the concept of Eco-DRR and bio-engineering into the country's sectoral plans and strategies. These included sharing best practices such as planting stabilising grass species into sloped ridges, managing water along roadways to prevent erosion, and other innovative techniques that have been adopted and internalised by pilot communities as well as the local government. EPIC is implemented in collaboration with the Government of Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (IUCN State Member) and through funding by the German Federal Environment Ministry's International Climate Initiative.

RESTORING VALUABLE FORESTS

The Global Partnership for Forest Landscape Restoration estimated that there are more than two billion hectares of degraded land around the world where opportunities for some type of restoration intervention may be realised. Restoring forests and forest landscapes is an important step in regaining the health and functionality of these ecosystems.

In India, in the Himalayan State of Uttarakhand, IUCN is piloting the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM). ROAM is a flexible and cost-effective analytic process for identifying restoration opportunities at national or sub-national levels, as well as describing how those opportunities relate to food, water and energy security. The application of ROAM generates good context-specific knowledge

relevant to understanding and addressing forest and land-use planning and management. For the sub-national ROAM project in Uttarakhand, IUCN partnered with the G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Sustainable Development (GBPNIHESD) for the technical aspect of the assessment. As part of this assessment, IUCN and GBPNIHESD organised a State-level Stakeholder Consultative Workshop at Dehra Dun in June 2017.

In Cambodia, IUCN, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, have collaborated with the Ministry of Environment (MOE) to develop a forest and landscape restoration (FLR) planning roadmap using ROAM. The project will help support the MOE identify priority areas for forest restoration and provide a model for forest restoration analysis, which can be used in other areas in the





A woman in Uttarakhand carries fodder for livestock © Li Jia/IUCN

country. IUCN and FAO are also mobilising capital to implement recommended restoration projects.

In order to address the issue of land under-utilisation in Nepal, IUCN, in collaboration with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (IUCN Member), piloted work to enhance livelihoods through identifying, testing and adopting best agro-forestry options in abandoned agricultural land. The development of a National Action Plan for scaling up best agro-forestry practice is underway.

In Pakistan, the Sustainable Forest Management project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is being implemented by the provincial forest and wildlife departments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab

and Sindh Provinces, together with IUCN. The project aims to conserve biodiversity, mitigate climate change and secure forest ecosystem services. In 2017, IUCN initiated the study on forest ecosystem services in the three provinces. No such study had been conducted before, and there was no available data. Ecosystem services are not easily recognised, and doing so requires continued mobilisation of stakeholders, especially at the community level.

In China, the ongoing Mega-cities and Their Watersheds: Nature-based Solutions for Sustainable Drinking Water Sources is piloting nature-based solutions in the Miyun (Beijing) and Jiaquan (Guangdong) watersheds in China. The country's Ministry of Water Resources is a key partner. Lessons learned from this initiative are shared with other



simultaneously boosting thriving low-carbon and climate resilient ecosystems, societies and economies.

The Bonn Challenge is a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested land into restoration by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030. It was launched in Bonn in 2011 at an event hosted by IUCN and the Government of Germany. Underlying the Bonn Challenge is the FLR approach, which aims to restore ecological integrity at the same time as improving human wellbeing through multi-functional landscapes.

In May 2017, the Bonn Challenge crossed the 150 million hectare milestone with pledges from Pakistan (IUCN State Member), Bangladesh (IUCN State Member), Mongolia (IUCN State Member) and Sri Lanka (IUCN State Member). The four countries made restoration pledges totaling 1.65 million hectares at the first Asia Bonn Challenge High-level Roundtable event in South Sumatra, Indonesia. The new pledges included 0.75 million hectares by Bangladesh, 0.6 million hectares by Mongolia, 0.1 million hectares by Pakistan, and 0.2 million hectares by Sri Lanka.

The Billion Tree Tsunami Afforestation Project in Pakistan's northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province surpassed its target in August by restoring and planting trees in 350,000 hectares of degraded forest landscapes. Launched in 2015, the Billion Tree Tsunami aims to turn the tide on land degradation and loss in the mountainous, formerly forested KPK Province in the Hindu Kush mountain range. The campaign simultaneously helped KPK province fulfill its 348,400-hectare commitment to the Bonn Challenge, marking the first ever Bonn Challenge pledge to reach its restoration goal.

mega-cities throughout China under the Partnership for Mega-city Watershed Protection. Innovative methods and indexing systems were developed to assess ecological health of 26 main drinking water sources. To support sharing, several case studies were published, as well as guidelines for non-point source pollution control in rural areas based on pilot experiences. The 'China Mega-City Water Fund' was established to promote stakeholder engagement between funders, communities and knowledge partners.

RISING UP TO THE BONN CHALLENGE

Nature-based solutions, such as forest landscape restoration (FLR), are crucial to solving the climate change puzzle. They ensure sustained reductions in net carbon emissions across forest landscapes, while

Business and Biodiversity: Beyond corporate social responsibility

With the Asia Region experiencing dynamic economic growth, the imperative to engage with business is in some ways even greater than in other parts of the world. IUCN works towards a sustainable global economy in which Asian businesses are effective partners committed to achieving a just world that values and conserves nature.

The focus is on moving sector leaders to incorporate biodiversity considerations into their business planning and to develop standards and best practices that work towards making a net positive impact. IUCN is partnering with businesses throughout Asia to protect critical watersheds, work with media to raise environmental awareness, mainstream sustainable business practices, promote sustainable aquaculture, and helping transform industry and policy.



CONSOLIDATING FOR IMPACT

In 2017, IUCN Asia expanded its work to engage private sector actors throughout the region. IUCN Pakistan formally established its own business and biodiversity platform – Karachi Conservation – where companies can convene and consolidate their resources to fund larger, more impactful projects.

At the same time, work with other partners continued: with Engro Elengy, IUCN planted, protected and restored 500 hectares of mangrove forest, and also established a container plant nursery. With the Sui Southern Gas Company, IUCN planted over 10,000 mangrove saplings and trained local communities in mangrove protection.

Both these projects contribute to coastal sustainability of the country's Port Qasim Area, which is impacted by rapid industrial development.

In India, IUCN's strong partnerships with Tata Steel, Tata Power, Aditya Birla Group (ABG) and ITC, Ltd were strengthened in 2017.

Together with Tata Power, IUCN developed global biodiversity guidelines for the company's operations, as well as a site-specific Biodiversity Management Plan for a power plant, in line with global biodiversity standards.

IUCN supported Tata Steel to roll out its biodiversity policy with site-specific interventions at all mining locations. The site-specific interventions included general

restoration initiatives, awareness-raising programmes and species-specific conservation projects.

IUCN also supported biodiversity assessments at all the mining sites to monitor impacts on habitats.

Similarly, a group-level Biodiversity Policy and accompanying Technical Standards were developed with ABG.

The work with ITC, Ltd on the project 'Sustainable Agriscapes for the Future' also continued in 2017, with the development of landscape-level Agriscape Plans and pilot testing of different models of eco-restoration.

LEADING FOR NATURE

Since the Leaders for Nature (LfN) business and biodiversity platform's launch in India in 2012, the programme has brought together current and future corporate leaders to incorporate sustainable practices that promote biodiversity into their core business strategy.

In 2017, more than 200 corporate executives from 15 large corporations were trained in biodiversity and eco-restoration.

Additionally, the LfN master class in December, co-organised with the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management, brought business leaders together with national and international experts to deliberate on ecosystem challenges and nature-based solutions.

“Together with Tata Power, IUCN developed Global Biodiversity Guidelines for the company's operations, as well as a site-specific Biodiversity Management Plan for a power plant, in line with global biodiversity standards.”

GOING BEYOND CSR

IUCN's work to engage companies was also highlighted at international business forums and events throughout the year, including the India and Sustainability Standards: International Dialogues & Conference, and the Business and Nature Forum and Responsible Business Forum, both held in Singapore.

In Thailand, IUCN has a longstanding collaboration with Marriott Hotels and Resorts. Last year, the collaboration produced a new five-year sustainability plan for the hotel chain, with a focus on sustainable purchasing and livelihood improvement for communities.

Through the Mangroves for the Future's small grant facility, a new project co-funded by Marriott is being implemented by Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University to help the Bangkaeo community in Thailand apply community-based integrated coastal management and to secure management rights for critical ecosystem resources.

In Viet Nam, the success of the field demonstration of IUCN's Integrated Planning project on flood-based agriculture has prompted the Coca-Cola Company, through its foundation, to fund a three-year project to scale up work in the pilot area.

The fund will be used to invest in a 200 hectare site for flood-based agricultural models, which is expected to secure 2.9 million cubic metres of floodwater over the next three years.

COLLABORATING ACROSS SECTORS

In Bangladesh, the collaboration between an energy company, a financial organisation, and a conservation organisation highlights another positive step toward environmental protection in the country.

North-West Power Generation Company Limited (NWPGL) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are working with IUCN on an environmental impact assessment for a proposed power plant project at the confluence of the Bhairab-Atai-Rupsha river system at Khulna, in the south-west of Bangladesh.

The proposed 800 megawatt combined-cycle power plant is being financed by the ADB to help Bangladesh achieve its goal of providing power to communities without access to electricity.

IUCN is also determining the presence and populations size of Ganges river dolphins (*Platanista gangetica gangetica*), listed as Endangered in the





Sustainably caught black crabs purchased from the Pu Dam community were served at JW Marriott Phuket Resort and Spa in Mai Khao district on World Tourism Day to raise awareness on sustainable seafood. © Ana Grillo /IUCN

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, in the rivers near the NWPGL site.

The study is evaluating the availability of dolphin prey species, such as fish, and other factors – such as water quality and flow, and human activities in the rivers – which would directly affect aquatic life.

Knowledge gathered from the on-going study will help NWPGL and the ADB to adopt mitigation measures that will help ensure no net loss of biodiversity from the proposed project, and also create scope for wider conservation interventions in the area around the power plant site by involving local communities and other stakeholders.

IUCN ASIA EVENTS



A fisherman and his grandson in Boeung Chhmar Ramsar Site, Tonle Sap, Cambodia © Pheakdey Sorn/IUCN



Regular IUCN events bring together conservation experts, practitioners and our partners to share their experience and knowledge.

ENHANCING REGIONAL COOPERATION TO PROTECT AND RESTORE INDO-BURMA WETLANDS

The importance of regional cooperation took centre stage at the first Steering Committee meeting and inception workshop for the Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative (IBRRI), held in March 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The event shared the Ramsar Regional initiative's vision with the wider wetlands community and officially launched the new regional wetlands project: Mekong WET: Building Resilience of Wetlands in the Lower Mekong Region, which will support the technical implementation of IBRRI.

Ramsar Regional Initiatives (RRIs) are platforms recognised by the Ramsar Convention, the international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, as an effective way to promote and better implement the objectives of the Convention. By supporting cooperation and capacity-building on wetland-related issues and with IUCN Asia acting as the secretariat, IBRRI aims to support the effective implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The initiative provides a platform for collaborating with representatives of intergovernmental bodies, Ramsar International Organization Partners, NGOs, local communities and private sector entities.

During the meeting, Steering Committee members representing each of the IBRRI member countries highlighted the important role of IBRRI in assisting member countries to strengthen their capacity to implement sound wetland management practices and policies.

The Steering Committee also approved the initiative's Statutes and Operational Guidelines and programme for 2017, and explored linkages with existing Ramsar-related programmes and initiatives in the Indo-Burma Region.

“While saving species from extinction is a collective responsibility that has traditionally been led by governments and NGOs, the private sector has become increasingly involved. Toyota, for example, has stepped up by being the first private sector entity to provide significant support to the IUCN Red List in becoming a more complete Barometer of Life.”

– Dr. Jane Smart, Global Director of IUCN’s Biodiversity Conservation Group and Director of IUCN’s Global Species Programme

HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

To highlight the importance of private sector engagement in biodiversity conservation and to raise awareness of the species extinction crisis, IUCN and Toyota Motor Corporation jointly organised a partnership event ‘The Road Ahead: Toyota and the IUCN Red List Of Threatened Species – The power of private sector engagement for biodiversity conservation’ on 23 May, 2017, at the Hilton Hotel in Bangkok.

Organised in conjunction with a five-day reptile workshop which brought together top experts from all over the world to conduct more thorough and more rigorous research into the biodiversity of the Asian region, the reception was held to mark the five-year partnership between IUCN and Toyota to broaden the scope of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.

In 2016 alone, Toyota provided approximately US \$1.2 million to IUCN, with the aim of broadening the scope of the Red List. This new knowledge will provide a roadmap to

guide conservation – concrete action which could positively affect the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people worldwide. The collaboration is also in line with Toyota’s ‘Environmental Challenge 2050,’ which aims to reduce the negative impacts associated with automobiles to as close to zero as possible, whilst simultaneously making positive impacts on society.

The IUCN Red List is the world’s most comprehensive and trusted resource on the status of the world’s biodiversity. Its goal is to provide information and analyses on the status, trends and threats to species in order to inform and catalyse action for biodiversity conservation, protecting the natural resources that we rely on for survival.

The event in Thailand is the third in a series of The Road Ahead: IUCN and Toyota Red List Of Threatened Species events. The first were held in Hawai’i and Mexico.



Speakers at The Road Ahead event © Ann Moey/IUCN

U.S.-ASEAN CONFERENCE ON MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Over two days in September 2017, over 50 marine experts from think tanks, academia, the private sector, NGOs and governments in ASEAN Member countries as well as the United States, India, Japan and Australia came together to discuss a variety of marine environmental issues facing Southeast Asia.

Organised by The Stimson Center, on behalf of the U.S. State Department and in collaboration with IUCN and the MFF Programme, the conference built on commitments announced at the Our Oceans Conference 2016 and the recent UN Ocean Conference in 2017, providing the opportunity to explore policy strategies for meeting Sustainable Development Goal 14 – Life Below Water.

The conference also allowed participants to showcase regional collaboration efforts, build networks for future research and make recommendations for policymakers in ASEAN Member states. It also reiterated and reassured Members that US stakeholders in the government, academia and private industry are engaged in these critical issues.



Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins in Goa, India © Abhishek Jamalabad/MFF



Stronger Together for a Sustainable Future

Pallas' fish eagles (Haliaeetus leucoryphus) in Tanguar Haor, Bangladesh © IUCN / Md. Rezaul Karim Chowdhury

IUCN's strength lies in its membership, and over the past five years the Asia region has seen a significant growth in organisational membership. In 2017, 20 new Member organisations joined, including three Government Agencies, 15 NGOs and two International NGOs.

By becoming part of the world's largest environmental network, IUCN Members work together to help find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. They act collectively to lead, govern and set the organisation's strategic agenda. In turn, Members benefit from IUCN's scientific credibility, its unsurpassed knowledge base and convening power, extensive networking opportunities and access to high-level political, economic and social decision making.

By joining us, Members are able to advance their own causes, strengthen their credibility and capacity through association, and add to our collective strength in overcoming barriers to a sustainable future.

To find out how your organisation can be a part of IUCN, please contact Membership Manager Mr Raj Kumar.

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Email: raj.kumar@iucn.org

Our Members in Asia - 2017

BANGLADESH

State

Ministry of Environment and Forest

National NGOs

Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association

Bangladesh POUISH

Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad

BRAC

Brotee Samaj Kallyan Sangstha

Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services

Center for Natural Resource Studies

Centre for Coastal Environmental Conservation

Centre for Sustainable Development

Coastal Area Resource Development and Management Association

Community Development Centre
Development of Biotechnology & Environmental Conservation Centre

Environment and Social Development Organization

Jiban Bikash Karjocrom

Nature Conservation

Management

Prokriti O Jibon Foundation

Shushilan

Unnayan Onneshan

WildTeam

Indigenous Peoples' Organizations

Bolipara Nari Kalyan Somity

Gram Unnayan Sangathon

BHUTAN

State

Ministry of Agriculture and Forests

National NGOs

Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation

Royal Society for Protection of Nature

CAMBODIA

National NGOs

Culture and Environment Preservation Association

Fisheries Action Coalition Team

Mlup Baitong

CHINA

State

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Government Agencies

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Haikou Municipal Government

National NGO

All-China Environment Federation
Beijing Forestry Society
Beijing Xicheng District Evergreen Center For Sustainable Development
Biodiversity Committee, Chinese Academy of Sciences

Centre for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge

Chengdu Bird Watching Society

China Association for NGO

Cooperation

China Association of National Parks

and Scenic Sites

China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation

China Green Carbon Foundation

China Mangrove Conservation Network (legal name: Putian Green Sprout Coastal Wetlands Research Center)

China Wildlife Conservation Association

Chinese Society of Forestry

Eco Foundation Global

Elion Foundation

Friends of Nature

Friends of the Country Parks

Guangdong Operation Earth Environmental Service Center

Guangzhou Green City

Environmental and Cultural Development Center

Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences, Ministry of Environmental Protection

Shan Shui Conservation Center

Shangri-La Institute for Sustainable Communities

Shenzhen Mangrove Wetlands Conservation Foundation

Shenzhen Spring Environmental Protection Volunteer Association

Society of Entrepreneurs & Ecology

The Jane Goodall Institute China

World Wide Fund for Nature - Hong Kong SAR

Xiamen Green Cross Association

Affiliate

Mt. Huangshan Scenic Area Administrative Committee

INDIA

State

Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change

Government Agencies

National Board for Wild Life, Ministry of Environment and Forests

Wildlife Institute of India

National NGOs

Aaranyak

All India Disaster Mitigation Institute

Applied Environmental Research Foundation

Association for Rural Area Social Modification, Improvement and Nestling

Balipara Tract & Frontier Foundation

Bombay Natural History Society Centre for Environment

Education - Nehru Foundation for Development

Centre for Media Studies

COORG Wildlife Society

Development Alternatives

Foundation for Ecological Security

Green Future Foundation

Gujarat Ecological Education and Research Foundation

Gujarat Ecology Society

Gujarat Institute of Desert

Ecology

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage

InsPIRE Network for Environment

Institute for Integrated Rural

Development

International Society of

Naturalists

Keystone Foundation

M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation

Nature, Environment and Wildlife Society

OMCAR Foundation

Regional Centre for Development Cooperation

Sahjeevan

Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History

Society of Hill Resource

Management School

TERRE Policy Centre

The Corbett Foundation

Wildlife Conservation Trust

Wildlife Protection Society of India

Wildlife Trust of India

World Wide Fund for Nature - India

Zoo Outreach Organisation Trust

INDONESIA

Government Agencies

Directorate General Ecosystem and Natural Resources Conservation, Ministry of Environment and Forestry

National NGOs

Coral Triangle Center

The Indonesian Biodiversity Foundation

The Samdhana Institute Incorporated

World Wide Fund for Nature - Indonesia

Affiliate

Center for International Forestry Research

JAPAN

State

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Government Agency

Ministry of the Environment, Japan

National NGOs

Japan Centre for Human Environmental Problems

Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquariums

Kamehameha Okoku

Keidanren Committee on Nature Conservation

Nature Conservation Society of Japan

Nihon Gan-wo Hogo suru Kai

Nihon Umigame Kyougikai

Ramsar Network Japan

Save the Dugong Campaign Center

Seibutsu Tayosei Japan

(Biodiversity Network Japan)

Shizen Kankyo Kenkyu Senta

The Asahi Glass Foundation

Wild Bird Society of Japan

World Wide Fund for Nature - Japan

Yasei Seibutsu Hozenron

Kenkyukai

KOREA (DPRK)

Government Agency

Ministry of Land and Environment Protection

National NGO

Nature Conservation Union of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

KOREA (ROK)

State

Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea

Government Agencies

Cultural Heritage Administration
Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, Bureau of Environment Conservation
Korea Forest Service
Korea National Park Service

National NGOs

DaeJayon
Gotjawal Trust of Jeju
Jeju provincial Council for Sustainability Development
Korea Environmental Education Network
Korean Association for Conservation of Nature
Korean Environmental Law Association
Korean Society of Environmental Impact Assessment
Korean Wetlands Society
Local Agenda21-Seogwipo City
National Nature Trust
Sah-dahn-beob-in Jeju Gukje
Noksaek-Seom Forum
Sustainable Environmental Education Center of Jeju Special Self-Governing Province
The Ecological Society of Korea
The Korean Society of Conservation Biology
The Korean Society of Oceanography
World Heritage Promotion Team of Korean Tidal Flats

LAO PDR

State

Ministère des Affaires étrangères

National NGO

Lao Biodiversity Association

MALAYSIA

State

Department of Wildlife and National Parks - Peninsular Malaysia

Government Agencies

Sabah Wildlife Department
Sarawak Forestry Corporation Sdn Bhd
The Sabah Parks Board of Trustees

National NGOs

Malaysian Nature Society
Marine Research Foundation
World Wide Fund for Nature - Malaysia

MALDIVES

National NGO

Live & Learn Environmental Education

MONGOLIA

State

Ministry of Environment, Green Development and Tourism

National NGO

Hustai National Park Trust

MYANMAR

National NGOs

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association
Forest Resource Environment Development and Conservation Association
Friends of Wildlife

NEPAL

State

Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation

International NGOs

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
Red Panda Network

National NGOs

ASHMITA Nepal
Association for Protection of the Environment and Culture
Batabaraniya Susan Karya Samuha Nepal
Bird Conservation Nepal/Nepal Panchhi Samrakchyan Sangh
Centre for Rural Technology
Environmental Camps for Conservation Awareness
Himali Prakriti
Hoste Hainse
Khoj Tatha Bikas Kendra, Nepal
Manab Kallyantatha Batabaran Samrak Kendra
National Trust for Nature Conservation
Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists
Relief Fund for Wildlife Victims
Samrachayan Bikash Foundation
Sana Standhari Prani
Samrakshan Tatha Anusandhan

Foundation

SAVE THE PLANET Mission2020
NEPAL
Wildlife Conservation Nepal
Wildlife Watch Group
Women in Environment/Mahila
Batabaran Samooha
Yuwa Jagaran Paryabaraniya
Munch

PAKISTAN

State

National Council for Conservation
of Wildlife, Ministry of Climate
Change

Government Agencies

Government of Gilgit-Baltistan
Lahore Waste Management
Company
National Institute of
Oceanography
Planning and Development
Department, Government of
Balochistan
Planning and Development
Department, Government of
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Sindh Coastal Development
Authority, Planning &
Development Department,
Government of Sindh
Sindh Wildlife Department

International NGO

Aga Khan Rural Support
Programme

National NGOs

AWAZ Foundation Pakistan:
Center for Development Services
Baanhn Beli
Balochistan Rural Support

Programme

Centre for Peace and
Development
H.E.J. Research Institute of
Chemistry
Haashar Association
Health and Nutrition
Development Society
Human Resource Development
Network
Indus Earth Trust
Institute of Rural Management
Khwendo Kor
Leadership for Environment and
Development
Legends Society
New World Hope Organization
Pakistan Institute of Labour
Education and Research
Participatory Village
Development Programme
Research and Development
Foundation
Rural Aid Pakistan
SACAN Foundation
Sarhad Rural Support
Programme
Scientific and Cultural Society
of Pakistan
Shehri: Citizens for a Better
Environment
Shirkat Gah - Womens Resource
Centre
Society for Empowering Human
Resource
South Asia Partnership -
Pakistan
Strengthening Participatory
Organization
Sungi Development Foundation
Sustainable Development Policy
Institute
Taraqee Foundation

Thardeep Rural Development
Programme
Trust for Conservation of
Coastal Resources
Water, Environment and
Sanitation Society
World Wide Fund - Pakistan

PHILIPPINES

International NGO

Non-Timber Forest Products -
Exchange Programme Asia

National NGOs

Ecological Society of the
Philippines
Foundation for the Philippine
Environment
Haribon Foundation for the
Conservation of Natural Resources
Mindoro Biodiversity
Conservation Foundation, Inc.
World Wide Fund for Nature -
Philippines

SINGAPORE

National NGOs

Asia-Pacific Centre for
Environmental Law
Nature Society (Singapore)
Singapore Zoological Gardens

SRI LANKA

State

Ministry of Mahaweli Development
and Environment

Government Agencies

Department of National
Zoological Gardens
Department of Wildlife
Conservation
Forest Department



Endangered François's langurs (*Trachypithecus francoisi*) and young in Viet Nam © PRCF/CEPF

Ministry of Agriculture, Land, Irrigation, Fisheries, Animal Product & Health, and Agrarian Development (Western Province)

National NGOs

Federation of Wildlife Conservation
Sevalanka Foundation
Small Fishers Federation
Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka

THAILAND

State

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation

International NGOs

International Network of Engaged Buddhists

Regional Community Forestry Training Center

National NGOs

Freeland Foundation
Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment Institute Foundation
Mai Khao Marine Turtle Foundation
Seub Nakhasathien Foundation
Thai Conservation of Forest Foundation
Thai Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

VIET NAM

State

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

National NGOs

Center for Environment and Community Research
Central Institute for Natural Resources and Environment Studies
Centre for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development
Centre of Live and Learn for Environment and Community
Greenviet Biodiversity Conservation Centre
Viên Kinh tế sinh thái

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IUCN's six Commissions unite some 10,000 volunteer experts, 2,000 of whom are from Asia, from a range of disciplines. They assess the state of the world's natural resources and provide the Union with a sound know-how and policy advice on conservation issues.



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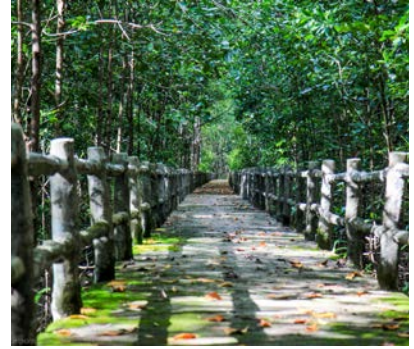
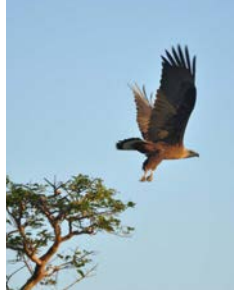
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