



Asia

Conserving nature for sustainable development of a diverse and dynamic region



Pioneering nature's solutions to Asia's challenges

IUCN brings together governments, non-governmental organisations, scientists, businesses and communities to make the right decisions for people and for the planet.

Founded in 1948, IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organisation, with more than 1,400 State, government, NGO, Indigenous Peoples' Organisations (IPOs) and affiliate Members and over 18,000 experts in more than 160 countries.

As one of the only two environmental organisations with official United Nations Observer Status, IUCN ensures that nature conservation has a voice at the highest level of international governance.

Our Vision

A just world that values and conserves nature

Our Mission

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.

IUCN helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges.

Our work focuses on valuing and conserving nature, ensuring effective and equitable governance of its use, and deploying nature-based solutions to global challenges in climate, food and development. We support scientific research, manage field projects all over the world, and are a neutral forum for bringing governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practices.

How we operate

Composed of its Members, Commissions and Secretariat, IUCN is a democratic Union that brings together the world's most influential organisations and top experts in a combined effort to conserve nature and accelerate the transition to sustainable development.

IUCN Members set the direction of the Union's work, and global conservation efforts more broadly, every four years at the IUCN World Conservation Congress by passing resolutions and agreeing on the IUCN Programme. For any queries, please contact your [regional membership focal point](#).

The **IUCN Commissions** are broad and active networks of scientists, experts and indigenous knowledge holders providing IUCN and its Members with sound know-how and policy advice to drive conservation and sustainable development. Commissions lead on education and communications; ecosystem management; environmental, economic, and social policy; gender; protected areas; rights-based approaches; species survival; environmental law and climate change*. Please visit the [IUCN Commission System](#) to apply for membership, directly to CEC, CEM, CEESP, WCEL and WCPA.

*At the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille France in 2021, IUCN Members voted to establish a new IUCN Climate Crisis Commission (CCC). As of May 2022, an Interim Chair of IUCN CCC has been appointed by the IUCN Council.

The **IUCN Council** is the principal governing body in between sessions of the World Conservation Congress - the general assembly of the Union's Members. The role of the IUCN Council is to set strategic direction and policy guidance for the work of the Union.

The **Secretariat** focusses its work on key themes through four centres and operational regions in order to anchor its knowledge locally and better serve Members' needs.

Where we work



IUCN Asia implements projects in and across countries of South, Northeast and Southeast Asia. There are more than 280 Members, including State, government agencies, NGOs, and IPOs in Asia.

IUCN operates in the region through its Secretariat offices in 12 countries:

- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- China
- India
- Lao PDR
- Maldives
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand (Country and Regional Office)
- Viet Nam

Additionally, we have programme presence and initiatives in other countries:

- Afghanistan
- Bhutan
- Brunei Darussalam
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- Republic of Korea
- Malaysia
- Mongolia
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Timor-Leste



Asia: A rich and dynamic region

Well-managed ecosystems and the diversity of life they encompass are critical for a healthy, safe and prosperous world. They provide us with food, clean air and water, energy, shelter, medicine, recreation and inspiration. Some of Asia's greatest wealth is contained in natural forests, mountains, wetlands, marine habitats and other ecosystem. But the future of Asia hangs in the balance.

The dynamic economic growth being experienced in Asia is driving dramatic losses of biodiversity which is impacting the health of societies and economies and increasing the vulnerability of many countries to the impacts of climate change and disasters.

IUCN takes a holistic approach to tackling these challenges – understanding that human, social and economic well-being depend on the health of natural ecosystems, and that conservation, development and social justice must go hand-in-hand.

Asia: Fast facts

Asia is home to almost 2/3 of the world population and accounts for 39% of the world GDP and 57% of the total global growth. However, over 320 million live in extreme poverty and the urban population in the region is predicted to grow over 60% in 2050.

Among the world's 17 most biodiverse countries, 5 of them are in Asia, but the loss of mangrove cover and the rate of loss of wetlands are the highest in the world. Southeast Asia has lost over half of its original forest cover, and the region has the highest proportion of endangered species facing extinction.

Sources: World Resources Institute (WRI); European Commission; International Monetary Fund; UN; UNFPA; IUCN; Earth.org; World Bank™



Our work in the region

To deliver on our mission toward a just world that values and conserves nature, our work in Asia builds on IUCN's niche as the world's authority on biodiversity conservation, environmental governance, and nature-based solutions. IUCN is involved in over 100 projects throughout Asia, including several initiatives in large ecosystems that extend beyond the shared borders of two or more countries. In Asia, the regional portfolio covers 5 programme areas and 3 strategic themes.



Species and their habitats

The countries of the Asia region are some of the most biodiverse on the planet, with unique and extraordinary species. However, the threats to species and biodiversity are also high in Asia. IUCN aims to halt and reverse the loss of species and promote the conservation of biodiversity across the Asia region.

Examples of our work include: supporting assessments of species and biodiversity, such as IUCN Red List assessments; raising awareness and advising policymakers; providing grants to civil society organisations to conserve biodiversity and threatened species; building partnerships for species conservation action, such as the IUCN SSC Asian Species Action Partnership; and seeking to address increasingly important issues such as illegal wildlife trade and invasive alien species.

Marine and coastal ecosystems

The Asia region is recognised as the centre of marine biodiversity globally, being home to 42% of the world's mangroves, and over 30% of seagrass beds. The Asia-Pacific region also includes part of the 'Pacific Rim of Fire' and is, therefore, vulnerable to earthquakes and tsunamis. IUCN works to reduce the risks posed coastal communities by supporting sound policy and integrated coastal management initiatives.

Our work includes: strengthening national integrated coastal management policy and implementation; marine protected and conserved areas management, marine species conservation and protection; fisheries management; restoration of coastal habitats; management of large marine transboundary ecosystems such as the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea.

Forest and agriculture landscapes

Asia's forests support globally important biodiversity and provide critically important ecosystem services to millions of people across the region. IUCN initiatives in Asia focus on promoting Forest Landscape Restoration.

Our work includes: promoting forest landscape restoration in Asia in line with the Bonn Challenge commitments related to the UNFCCC process; promoting rights-based governance approaches for indigenous peoples and local communities; effective management of forest protected areas; raising awareness of the many benefits of urban forests and promoting the integration of trees, woodlands, and forests in urban settings.

Water and wetlands

Sustainable water resource management is a key issue across Asia where the degradation of watersheds and wetlands is a critical challenge. IUCN's Regional Water and Wetlands Programme in Asia works on water resource management and strengthening cross-border cooperation on water issues.

Our work includes: supporting regional initiatives on transboundary water governance in the Mekong, Salween and Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna basins; strengthening fisheries management; supporting benefits-sharing and Nexus water-food, energy and ecosystems approaches in river basins. The water and wetlands programme also has a focus on the conservation, management and restoration of wetlands in the region, including peatlands. IUCN Asia supports the implementation of the Ramsar Convention on wetlands of international importance through the facilitation of the Indo-Burma Regional Ramsar Initiative (IBRRI) and through on-site actions to protect and manage wetlands.

Protected and conserved areas

Asia has an extensive system of protected and conserved areas, covering both terrestrial and marine ecosystems. IUCN works to help build healthy protected area systems across Asia as a foundation for nature and human well-being by strengthening the capacity for protected area establishment and management across the region.

Our work includes: promoting IUCN Green List Standard of protected and conserved areas; raising awareness on urban protected areas; and supporting the Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP).

IUCN Green List is a global campaign for successful nature conservation. It offers locally relevant expert guidance to help achieve fair and effective nature conservation results in protected and conserved areas. A protected or conserved area that reaches the IUCN Green List Standard is certified and recognised as achieving ongoing results for people and nature in a fair and effective way. Through the Green List, the Sugud Islands Marine Conservation Area (SIMCA) is now recognised globally as a well-managed Protected Area – the first of its kind in Malaysia.



Strategic themes

Nature-based Solutions

Nature-based Solutions address societal challenges through the protection, sustainable management and restoration of both natural and modified ecosystems, benefitting both biodiversity and human well-being. Nature-based Solutions are underpinned by benefits that flow from healthy ecosystems. They target major challenges like climate change, disaster risk reduction, food and water security, biodiversity loss and human health, and are critical to sustainable economic development. A number of national and/or regional projects specifically aiming at tackling climate adaptation and mitigation through nature-based solutions are currently being implemented in Asia. These include the restoration of forest landscapes, wetlands and coastal ecosystems to provide human and biodiversity benefits.

IUCN Asia has also been mainstreaming the IUCN Global standard for NbS through events, trainings and dialogues with governments, development partners, civil society and academics to guide stakeholders with a framework enabling the development, implementation and monitoring of NbS.

Livelihoods for nature

Across Asia, there are thousands of local communities and indigenous people who rely on forests for their livelihoods. IUCN Asia secures marine and coastal resilience and livelihoods through restoration and adaptation actions. The strategic theme includes in its purview, community enterprise development, conservation financing, green business development and private sector engagement.

Governance and rights

To ensure the realisation of the rights, roles, inclusive conservation and sustainable use of nature in Asia, we expand partnerships with indigenous peoples, promote access of women and girls to lands and natural resources, and empower youth in conservation through active engagement and intergenerational partnerships in the region.



Informing policy

IUCN engages in and influences international agreements that are relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of nature and natural resources.

IUCN's objectives are 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. Its policy work is essential to achieve these objectives and to have an impact on world conservation.

Setting conservation priorities

IUCN sets conservation priorities through a unique multi-stakeholder decision-making process resulting in policies and decisions that guide the development and promotion of recommendations to governments, and global conservation standards and policies. These outcomes are IUCN's Resolutions and Recommendations.

Through this process, IUCN has been instrumental in the creation and development of major environmental conventions and international agreements such as the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the World Heritage Convention, and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and has encouraged States to adhere to these agreements.

Informing and influencing international agreements

IUCN engages in and influences international agreements that are relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of nature and natural resources.

As the world's Conservation Union, including States, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, IUCN is in a unique position to reflect and promote the priorities of the global conservation community. As an observer at the United Nations General Assembly, IUCN delivers the policy perspectives of its Members at the highest international level of diplomacy.

Private sector engagement

The private sector has a critical role in ensuring sustainable management of natural resources in supply chain. There are clear benefits to businesses in improving environmental performance, including reduced costs, improved innovation, and increased likelihood of regulatory approval. Guided by a clear set of principles that respect mutual roles, IUCN works with an increasing number of businesses and business associations in Asia that have either, or are, in the process of committing to sustainability objectives. IUCN specifically works with them in transforming their business practices towards contributing to net positive impact on biodiversity and the livelihoods of dependent communities.

Our engagement with businesses ranges from undertaking dialogue, providing independent expert advice on the impact of their operations, providing where available and developing new knowledge products, improving corporate environmental performance and implementing joint conservation and development related projects in Asia.

Leveraging partnerships

The environmental and sustainability challenges we face today will only be effectively managed if all sectors work together to find and implement solutions. Around the region, we are working with governments, the private sector and communities to put the latest science and knowledge into practice.

We are helping to restore forests, rivers and wetlands, and bring our oceans back to life. IUCN represents an extraordinary partnership of governments and civil society. We find strength in our numbers and in our diversity, allowing us to bring both breadth and depth to our understanding of country-specific, regional and global challenges.

In Asia, we work with government, NGO Members, and Indigenous peoples' organisations, and over 2,500 experts in our Commissions as well as hundreds of partners from the government, non-government and private sectors. IUCN's Asia Regional Office is in Bangkok, Thailand. The IUCN Asia Regional Secretariat oversees country offices in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.

How to partner with us

- Become a Member organisation
- Join one of our six Commissions as a conservation and sustainable development professional
- Provide support to our work in general or to a specific project or initiative

Visit our website at www.iucn.org/asia or email asia@iucn.org for more details. Follow us on Facebook ([iucn.asia](https://www.facebook.com/iucn.asia)) and Twitter ([IUCNAsia](https://twitter.com/IUCNAsia)).





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