

INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR CONSERVATION
OF NATURE

WEST ASIA
REGIONAL OFFICE
ANNUAL REPORT 2024

INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR CONSERVATION
OF NATURE

WEST ASIA
REGIONAL OFFICE
ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Credits

The designation of geographical entities in this book, and the presentation of the material, do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of it's frontiers or boundaries.

Published by: IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.

Produced by: IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA), Amman, Jordan.

Copyright ©: 2025 IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

Reproduction of this publication for resale or other commercial purposes is prohibited without prior written permission of the copyright holder.

Reproduction of this publication for educational or other non-commercial purposes is authorised without prior written permission from the copyright holder provided the source is fully acknowledged.

Recommended citation: IUCN (2025). ***IUCN ROWA annual report 2024***. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.

Photos by: IUCN Photo Library, IUCN ROWA and collaborators as they appear next to the photo.

Design and layout: Razan Baqain, IUCN ROWA.

Printed by: Haroun Printing Services (A4/ inside paper 160g with cover 300g)



A Word from the Regional Director

As we present the 2024 Annual Report of IUCN's Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA), I reflect on a year of remarkable progress and steadfast commitment to conserving the natural heritage of West Asia. This past year has been both a challenge and an opportunity to demonstrate how collaboration, innovation, and determination can turn environmental crises into transformative solutions.

A key milestone of the year was the successful convening of the 2024 Regional Conservation Forum (RCF), which brought together governments, NGOs, experts, and community leaders from across the region. As a platform for dialogue and collective action, the forum underscored IUCN's commitment to fostering regional cooperation. Through knowledge exchange, policy discussions, and the promotion of Nature-based Solutions, the RCF advanced shared goals in conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable development, further strengthening partnerships and inspiring future initiatives.

West Asia, with its unparalleled ecological diversity and rich cultural heritage, stands at the forefront of global conservation efforts. However, our region also faces pressing challenges: climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, land degradation, and political instability. These issues require interlinked strategies and unified action. Through the collective strength of our partners, Commission Members, Members, and staff, ROWA has led initiatives to restore ecosystems, empower communities, and foster resilience in the face of these challenges.

The achievements highlighted in this report are a testament to our region's potential for sustainable development. We are setting new benchmarks for the integration of nature and humanity, transforming environmental challenges into opportunities for better conservation and resilience.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to our partners, Commissions Members, Members and donors who make this work possible. Together, we are building a legacy of conservation that not only safeguards our environment but also enriches the lives of people across West Asia.

As we look ahead, IUCN ROWA remains steadfast in its mission to unite diverse voices and expertise to address our shared challenges. I am confident that with continued collaboration, we will achieve even greater milestones in the years to come.

Dr. Hany El Shaer
Regional Director, IUCN ROWA

©Shutterstock

Contents



01 About IUCN

02 Membership & Commissions

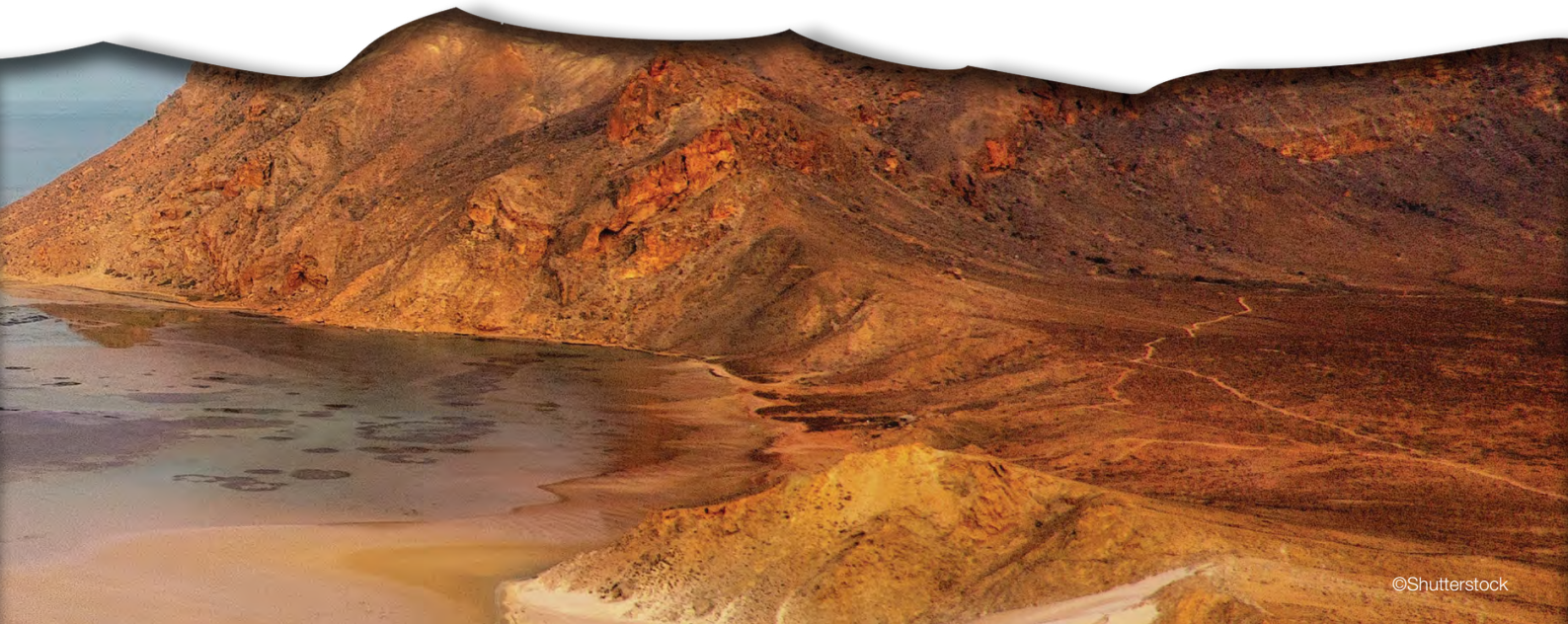
03 Programmes & Achievements

04 Financial Overview

05 Key Facts & Figures

06 Regional Presence

07 Highlights of 2024



©Shutterstock

About IUCN

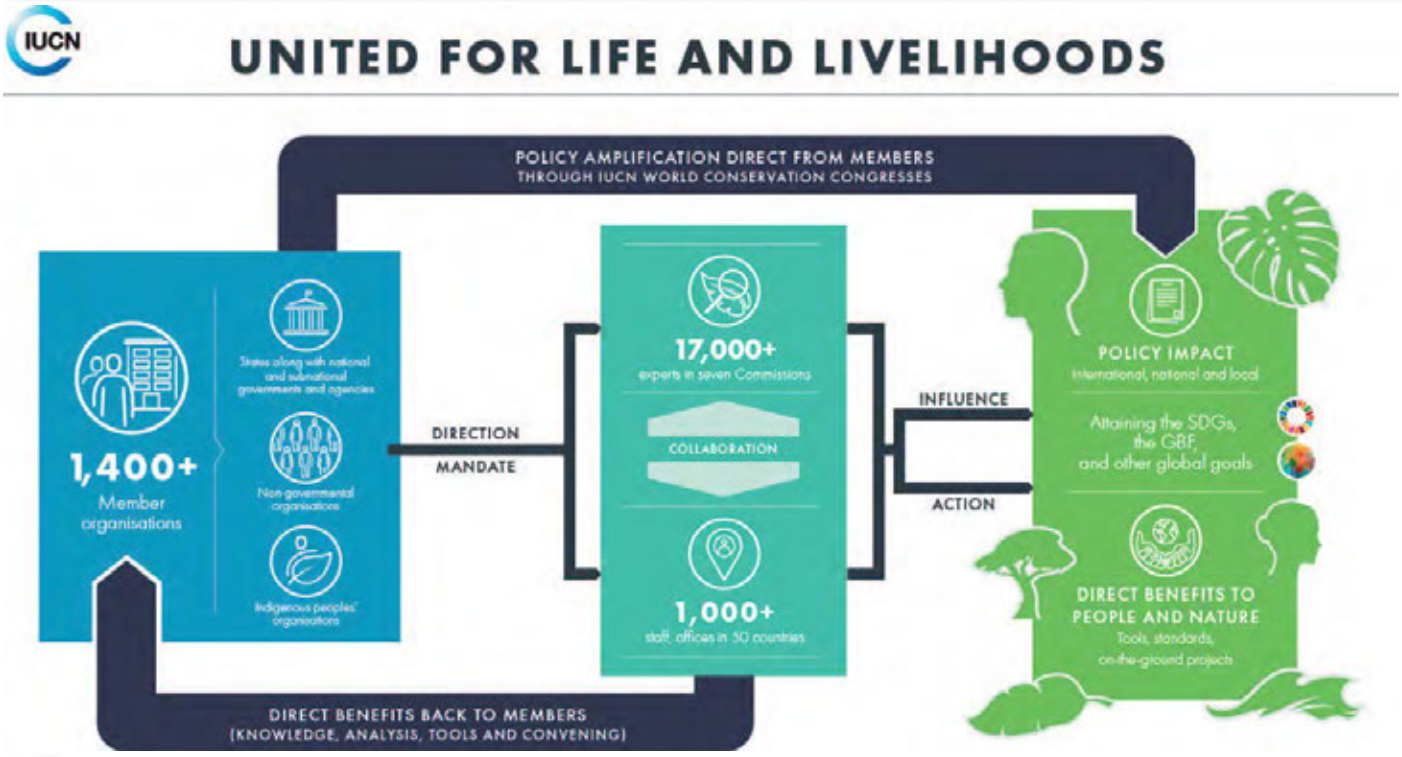


IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,400 Member organisations and around 17,000 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.





©Shutterstock

IUCN ROWA

Established in 2004 in the vibrant city of Amman, Jordan, the IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) serves as a pivotal hub for advancing conservation and sustainable development initiatives. The extensive purview of the IUCN West Asia region encompasses 13 countries, each contributing to the rich tapestry of its ecological diversity. These countries include Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, and Iran, alongside the Gulf nations of Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. ROWA is dedicated to fostering positive change.



Within this dynamic landscape, the region faces multifaceted challenges that require strategic intervention:

1. Land degradation, aridity and desertification – The arid expanses of the region experience severe land degradation, desertification and drought, necessitating coordinated efforts to mitigate and reverse these environmental threats.

2. Unsustainable water extraction and use – With water scarcity posing a significant challenge, the region must address the unsustainable extraction and use of water resources through a comprehensive approach to water management.

3. Biodiversity loss, habitat degradation and species extinction – The ecosystems of West Asia are under increasing pressure due to biodiversity loss, habitat degradation and the risk of species extinction.

4. Threats to sensitive marine ecosystems – The region's coastal areas are at risk from pollution, habitat destruction, invasive alien species and the rapid expansion of coastal developments.

ROWA's Team

38
Total Staff

17
Females

21
Males

3 Female Managers

4 Male Managers

89.74%
Retention Rate

10.1%
Turnover Ratio



©IUCN ROWA

ROWA's Office

Opened in January 2024, the IUCN ROWA office in Abdoun, Amman serves as a regional hub for conservation and sustainable development efforts. Designed to foster collaboration, the office integrates all programmes and departments within a dynamic and sustainable workspace. Emphasizing green architecture, the facility incorporates solar panels, energy-efficient materials and abundant greenery, creating an environment that reflects IUCN's commitment to nature and sustainability. Surrounded by trees and native plants, the office provides an inspiring setting for advancing regional conservation initiatives while minimizing its ecological footprint.



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA

Management Team
Dr. Hany El Shaer – Regional Director, West Asia
Ola Mallah – Regional Director Office & Membership Manager
Ali Hayajneh – Programme Manager, Water and Climate Change
Natalia Boulad – Programme Manager, Biodiversity & Protected Areas
Dr. Laith Al Rahahleh – Programme Manager, Drylands, Livelihoods & Gender
Omar Hamdan – Regional Finance Manager
Dalia Hijjawi – Regional Human Resources Manager

Finance Department
Muatsem Al Sawa'i – Deputy Finance Manager
Hashem Fraij – Finance Coordinator
Emad Subah – Operation Officer
Rand Naim – Finance Assistant

Membership & Communications Department
Roaa Muhaisen – Membership & Liaison Associate
Razan Baqain – Communication & Documentation Assistant
Leen Nabulsi – Support Assistant

Administration Department
Diab Suliman – Public Relations & General Services Assistant
Sanaa Mahadeen – Administrative Assistant
Rand Suleiman – Operations Assistant
Hala Jumah – Office Assistant
Lubna Mosleh – Office Helper

Protected Areas, Biodiversity & World Heritage Programme
Filippo Maria Carli – Senior Projects Coordinator
Olivier Chassot, Senior Project Coordinator
Atef AlRabee – Project Coordinator
Cheikh Mohamedou – Ecologist
Eshak Al Guzaa – Project Coordinator
Najam Saqib – Project Field Coordinator
Ola Dababneh – Gender Officer
Hanna Haddad – Programme Assistant
Savinaz Baghdadi – Project Technical and Admin Assistant
Shahad Zuhair – Project Technical and Admin Assistant

Water & Climate Change Programme
Mohamad Abu Safi – Water & Agricultural Manager
Faizah Slehat – Nature-based Solutions Manager
Hakam Mandouri – Climate Change and Resilience Officer
Amjed Abedalqader – Project Field Assistant
Musab Hyassat – Project Field Technical Assistant
Ruba Assaf – Project Technical Assistant
Ghassan Majali – Field Administrative Assistant
Malek Al Hunity – Project Technical Assistant

Drylands, Livelihoods & Gender Programme
Emad Hlayel – Project Coordinator
Ahmad Atmeh – Project Technical Assistant
Ammar AlMikhi – Project Admin Assistant

GEF/GCF - Monitoring & Evaluation
Hui Ren – GEF Task Manager
Mousa Al Manaseer – Regional Procurement Officer
Liliane Nasrallah – Regional Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Manager



embership & Commissions



The strength of IUCN ROWA lies in the collective impact of its Members. Over the past decade, membership in the region has grown significantly, increasing from 32 Members in 2010 to 87 by the end of 2024. This expansion reflects the growing recognition of a shared vision and underscores the development of a strong network dedicated to environmental stewardship.

Members benefit from access to technical expertise on environmental matters, opportunities for knowledge exchange and participation in consultancies facilitated by IUCN ROWA.

Additionally, collaboration with Members spans a wide range of events and initiatives, providing platforms for meaningful engagement, partnership and the advancement of shared goals in conservation and sustainability.

06
State Members

14
Government Agencies

67
National Non-Governmental Organisations

01
Regional Committee

05
National Committees

03
Regional Councillors

545
Commission Members



©Shutterstock

West Asia Members

Global effort to advance sustainable development and conservation. It comprises 13 countries, including Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Iran, alongside the Gulf countries: Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

ROWA serves as a regional hub, facilitating collaboration among governments, NGOs, academic institutions and local communities to address critical environmental challenges such as biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and sustainable natural resource management. The office plays a pivotal role in promoting region-specific solutions and integrating global conservation priorities into local contexts.



New Members of 2024:

- Al Matn Organisation for Environment and Sustainable Development
- Engineering Association for Development and Environment
- Institute of The Environment-University Of Balamand
- Nature Care Association
- Qatar Foundation - Earthna
- The Friends of the Cedar Forest Committee

©Shutterstock

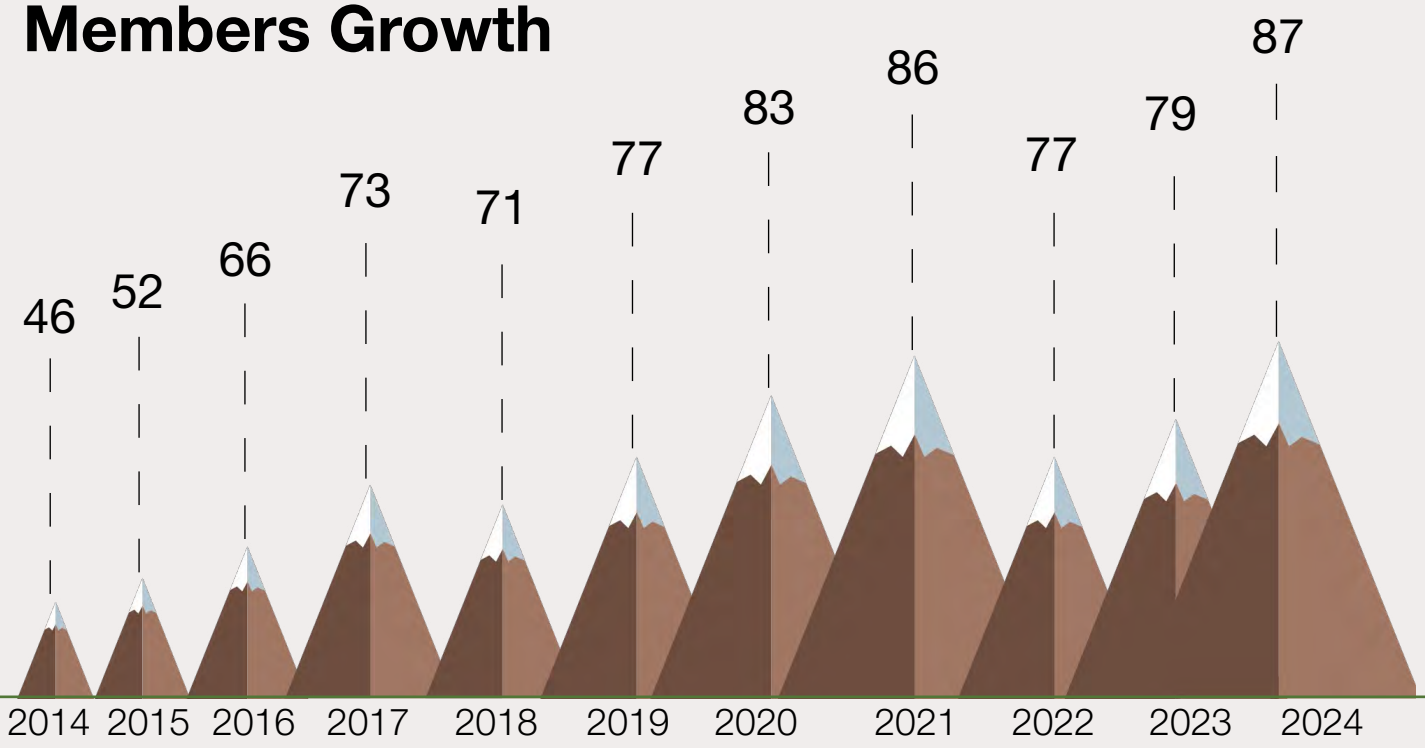
Members List

- Al Shouf Cedar Society
- Arab Group for the Protection of Nature
- Arab Women Organisation of Jordan
- Arab Women Water Energy Environment Network Association
- Association for Forests, Development and Conservation
- Association for the Development of Rural Capacities
- Bahrain Women Association - for Human Development
- Basmet Elkhair Women Charity Association
- Biodiversity and Environmental Research Center
- Center for Conservation and Development of Sustainable Ecosystems
- Dibeen Association for Environmental Development
- Emirates Nature in association with WWF
- Engineering Association for Development and Environment
- Environment Society of Oman
- Friends of Nature Association
- Future Pioneers for Empowering Communities' Members in the Environmental and Educational Fields
- GHADI
- Green Hand
- Hashemite Fund for Development of Jordan Badia
- International Research Center for Water, Environment, and Energy
- Institute of The Environment-University Of Balamand
- Iranian Cheetah Society
- Jordan BirdWatch Association
- Jordan Environment Society
- Jordan Environmental Union
- Jordan Outdoor Sports Association
- Jordan Society for the Conservation of Turtles & Tortoises
- Jordanian Beekeeper´s Union
- Jordanian Society for Desertification Control and Badia Development
- Jordanian Society for Organic Farming
- Kuwait Environment Protection Society
- Kuwait Water Association
- Land Research Center
- Lebanon Reforestation Initiative
- Mada Association
- Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund
- Operation Big Blue Association
- Palestine Wildlife Society
- Plan for the Land Society
- Princess Alia Foundation
- Royal Botanic Garden
- Royal Scientific Society / National Energy Research Center
- Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature
- Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon
- Sustainability Foundation for Nature Conservation
- The Environmental Education Center of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land
- The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development
- The Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan
- The Syrian Society for the Conservation of Wildlife
- University of Jordan
- Wadi for Sustainable Ecosystem Development NGO
- West Asia - North Africa (WANA) Institute
- Window to Environment Association
- Environment Authority of Oman
- Environment Public Authority Kuwait
- Ministry of Climate Change and Environment
- Ministry of Environment of Jordan
- The Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture
- The Supreme Council for Environment
- The Friends of the Cedar Forest Committee
- Al Ain Zoo
- Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority
- Centre for Restoration of the Iraqi Marshlands and Wetlands
- Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve
- Environment Agency Abu Dhabi
- International Fund For Houbara Conservation
- King Abdulaziz Royal Reserve Development Authority
- Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research
- National Center for Research and Development
- Royal Commission for AlUla
- National Council for Scientific Research - Lebanon
- Vegetation Cover Development Foundation
- King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Royal Reserve Development Authority
- Qatar Foundation - Earthna
- Al Matn Organisation for Environment and Sustainable Development
- Nature Care Association
- Horizon for a Green Environment
- Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation
- Echo of Persia Wildlife
- Environmental Sciences Department
- Nature Iraq Organisation
- Petra Development Tourism Regional Authority
- Friends of Horsch Ehden
- Association for the Protection of Jabal Moussa
- Mada Association
- Union of Agricultural Work Committee
- Biodiversity and Environmental Research Center



- **Lebanon:** 19 National non-governmental organisations /1 Government agency
- **Syria:** 1 National non-governmental organisations
- **Iraq:** 3 National non-governmental organisations / 1 Government agency
- **Iran:** 5 National non-governmental organisations
- **Jordan:** 26 National non-governmental organisations / 3 Government agency / 1 State
- **Palestine:** 6 National non-governmental organisations
- **Saudi Arabia:** 4 Government agency / 1 State
- **Kuwait:** 2 National non-governmental organisations / 1 Government agency / 1 State
- **Bahrain:** 1 National non-governmental organisations/ 1 State
- **UAE:** 2 National non-governmental organisations / 4 Government agency/ 1 State
- **Oman:** 1 National non-governmental organisations / 1 State
- **Yemen:** 1 National Non-Governmental Organisations

Members Growth



IUCN Commissions

IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)
62 members

IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)
151 members

IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)
50 members

IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL)
15 members

IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)
87 members

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)
97 members

IUCN Climate Crisis Commission (CCC)
22 members

The West Asia Arabian Plant Specialist Group (WAAPSG), established in 1996 as the successor to the Arabian Plant Species Specialist Group, works to conserve plant diversity across West Asia. Covering countries such as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen and the Gulf states, WAAPSG develops standards and protocols to support national conservation targets. By fostering regional consistency and promoting data sharing, the group ensures a collaborative approach to preserving the region's unique plant life.

IUCN Councilors

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has a governance structure that includes the IUCN Council, which oversees the organisation's overall direction, management, policies and programmatic activities.

IUCN Councillors are elected or appointed individuals who serve on the Council, which is composed of representatives from IUCN Member organisations, government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Councillors play a crucial role in decision-making, providing guidance on strategic priorities, policies and initiatives related to conservation and sustainable development.

The IUCN Council typically meets at least once a year to discuss and make decisions on key issues facing the organisation. Councillors represent a diverse range of stakeholders and expertise within the field of conservation.



Dr Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri
Secretary General, Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi



Prof Dr Said Damhoureyeh
Plant Ecologist, Grazing Ecology, Grassland Ecology, General Biology, University of Jordan, Biology Department



Dr Ayman Rabi
Executive Director, Palestinian Hydrology Group, Palestine

Membership Knowledge Outputs

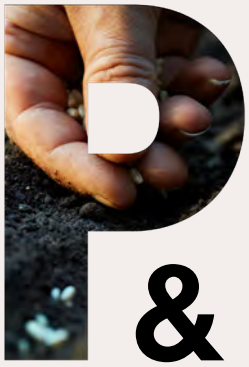
In 2024, IUCN ROWA released two key publications showcasing Member contributions. The ***Members Activity Report*** highlighted initiatives such as Palestine's Million Tree Campaign, Jordan's Green Caravan and climate adaptation strategies, reflecting efforts in afforestation, biodiversity restoration and policy advocacy across West Asia.

The ***Jordan's Members Profile*** detailed the growth of IUCN membership in Jordan, featuring organisations such as the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature and the Ministry of Environment. It underscored Members' roles in biodiversity conservation, sustainable resource management and environmental resilience, while benefiting from IUCN's technical support and knowledge-sharing opportunities.





©Arabstock



rogrammes & Achievements



IUCN is dedicated to protecting ecosystems, promoting the sustainable use of landscapes and advancing justice and equity in conservation efforts. It prioritizes the preservation of coastal, marine and polar ecosystems, recognizing their vital benefits to humanity while also striving to ensure universal access to clean water and safeguard freshwater ecosystems essential for human well-being.

IUCN recognizes that equality and equity are fundamental to sustainable development and actively empowers marginalized communities to participate in environmental decision-making. By monitoring the impacts of climate change on nature, IUCN provides critical guidance for conserving and restoring ecosystems, helping to mitigate and adapt to climate challenges while fostering a sustainable future for all.

IUCN ROWA has adopted a pragmatic approach, focusing on key priorities that unite the region's countries. In line with this vision, IUCN ROWA works within three thematic areas:

1. Protected Areas, Biodiversity & World Heritage Programme
2. Water & Climate Change Programme
3. Drylands, Livelihood & Gender Programme



©Arabstock

Protected Areas, Biodiversity & World Heritage Programme



Rising climate impacts and accelerating biodiversity loss are undermining ecosystem stability and their vital role in sustaining life on Earth. Protected areas serve as essential strongholds for biodiversity, providing safe havens for species and supporting the well-being of communities that depend on their resources. These areas are critical not only for conservation but also for maintaining balance within natural systems, ensuring sustainable livelihoods and advancing gender equality and inclusive governance.

In 2024, the IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) reinforced its commitment to conservation through its Protected Areas, Biodiversity & World Heritage Programme, focusing on three key areas:

- Strengthening protected areas management – Enhancing management practices in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other countries in the region. The programme fosters community engagement, aligns with international standards and integrates principles of gender equality and inclusive governance.
- Integrating climate impacts into protected areas and biodiversity planning – Initiatives such as TAZIZ empower communities, particularly women and youth, to address climate-related challenges.
- Supporting natural heritage conservation – Collaborative efforts in Egypt and Saudi Arabia have improved site management at Wadi El-Rayan and Qarun, aligning with IUCN Green List standards.

Through these initiatives, IUCN ROWA collaborates with partners and communities to protect natural heritage, strengthen resilience and promote sustainability.

Enhancing Climate Resilience for Biodiversity Hotspots in Jordan



- **Project funded by:** Global Affairs Canada (GAC)
- **Project implemented by:** The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Enhancing Climate Resilience for Biodiversity Hotspots in Jordan project strengthens the resilience of ecosystems and communities vulnerable to climate change. By recognizing the interdependence of natural resources and local livelihoods, the project integrates climate-responsive management within Jordan's protected areas, addressing the urgent need for sustainable conservation practices.

At national and sub-national levels, the project enhances Jordan's National Protected Areas Network by embedding climate change metrics into site design and management. Pilot interventions in Shoubak and Petra prioritize Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to restore forests, mitigate soil erosion and support climate-resilient livelihoods.

A gender-responsive approach empowers women, youth and marginalized groups through tailored training, entrepreneurship support and eco-tourism and agroforestry initiatives. By fostering sustainable income opportunities, the project reduces pressure on ecosystems while promoting equitable community development.

Project Achievements:

1. Application of the ROAM Methodology for Guiding the Restoration of 750 Hectares in Petra and Shoubak

For the first time in Jordan, the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) was applied, resulting in a comprehensive Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) Plan. The process identified priority areas, assessed feasibility, and developed actionable restoration strategies. Guided by IUCN's Gender-Responsive Restoration Guidelines, 340 local initiators—including women and men—were trained and mobilised in Shoubak and Petra, ensuring equitable participation and local ownership.



2. JO-METT Launched: Jordan's First Gender and Climate-Sensitive PA Tool

The Jordan-specific Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (JO-METT) was developed to support the self-assessment of protected area management. The tool incorporates gender and climate resilience dimensions and will be published in Arabic for the first time, allowing broader adaptation across the region.



3. Climate Change Integrated in Six Protected Areas' Management Programmes

Climate change impacts on biodiversity were assessed across six protected areas, providing a framework for integrating climate considerations into site-level management. This marks a significant shift towards resilience-based conservation, offering clear guidance on mitigation and adaptation strategies.



4. Shoubak Nursery's Capacity Scaled Up to 300,000 Seedlings

The rehabilitation of Shoubak Plant Nursery expanded its capacity from 150,000–100,000 to 300,000–200,000 native seedlings. This enhancement supports national reforestation efforts and the 10 Million Trees Initiative. The nursery is being transformed into a community learning and social hub to promote local engagement in restoration and conservation.



5. Practical Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Guidelines Piloted

Locally tailored NbS guidelines and best practices were piloted through a participatory, multi-stakeholder process. Workshops engaged local communities in identifying societal challenges and co-designing Nature-based Solutions that enhance climate adaptation and ecosystem services.



6. Jordan's Protected Area Network Revised to Meet Global Biodiversity Targets

The project supported the revision of Jordan's Protected Areas Network, exploring options for expansion in alignment with national priorities and global biodiversity obligations. The proposed design enhances ecological connectivity, representativeness, and resilience, directly contributing to international biodiversity targets.



7. Targeted Capacity-Building Programme for Advancing Conservation and Integrating Gender Equality

More than 400 community members, practitioners, and regulators—particularly women—received training on key tools and concepts including Nature-based Solutions (NbS), ROAM, Management Effectiveness, Systematic Conservation Planning, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Species Distribution Modelling (SDMs), and Environmental Threat Reduction Assessment. The trainings promoted women's leadership, challenged restrictive norms, and aligned with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, IUCN's Gender Policy, and national gender and climate frameworks.



8. Podcast Series Elevates Local Voices for Climate Action

The "Highly Environmental!" podcast featured community members from Shoubak and Petra, sharing perspectives on biodiversity, sustainability, and the roles of women and youth in environmental stewardship. The series amplified local knowledge and supported inclusive dialogue on climate resilience.

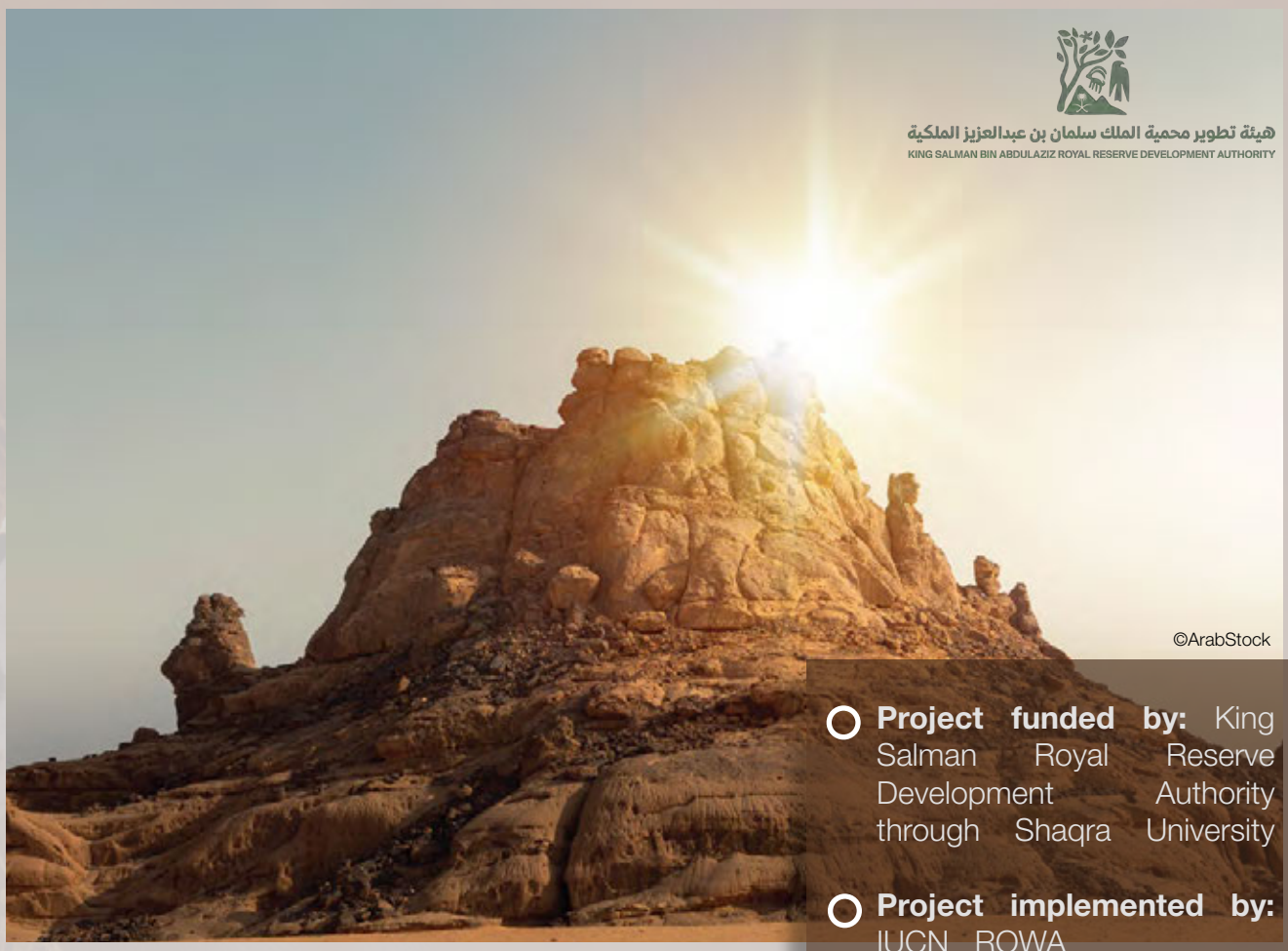


9. Strategic Partnership with ILO on Decent Work in Conservation

In partnership with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), a training series was conducted for protected area managers, staff, and community members. The sessions strengthened understanding of decent work principles, workplace equity, and labour rights within the conservation sector.



Effective Management of King Salman Royal Nature Reserve (KSRNR)



- **Project funded by:** King Salman Royal Reserve Development Authority through Shaqra University
- **Project implemented by:** IUCN ROWA

The King Salman Royal Nature Reserve (KSRNR) in Saudi Arabia exemplifies conservation excellence, advancing toward IUCN Green List certification. Covering over 130,000 square kilometres, KSRNR safeguards biodiversity and promotes sustainable resource use. The reserve supports more than 260 plant species and over 250 species of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, including endangered species such as the sand gazelle and Arabian gazelle. Recent efforts have reintroduced species such as the Arabian oryx and Nubian ibex, which were once locally extinct.

KSRNR also preserves a rich cultural heritage, with over 420 archaeological assets, including rare ancient rock art carvings and Islamic centres such as Dumat Al-Jandal. Collaborative initiatives with local communities integrate cultural practices into conservation while fostering sustainable development and resilience to environmental challenges.

The partnership between KSRNR and IUCN ROWA focuses on enhancing governance, ecological management and conservation outcomes by aligning with IUCN Green List standards. The ultimate goal is to establish a well-governed, operational and effective management system for KSRNR, contributing to biodiversity conservation and the sustainable development of local communities.

Project Achievements:

1. Conducted the Improvement Benchmarking Evaluation Index (IBEX) assessment
Facilitated the use of the IBEX tool to enable KSRNR site managers to assess, benchmark and enhance performance through structured evaluation and evidence-based improvements.

2. **Major site values identification and validation**
Successfully identified and validated the natural, cultural and ecosystem values essential for effective management. These values serve as the foundation for conservation strategies and sustainable development while ensuring alignment with the Green List standard.

3. **Completed a climate change mitigation study**
Updated KSRNR's climate report to support informed decision-making, enhance resilience and sustain ecological and cultural values for future generations.

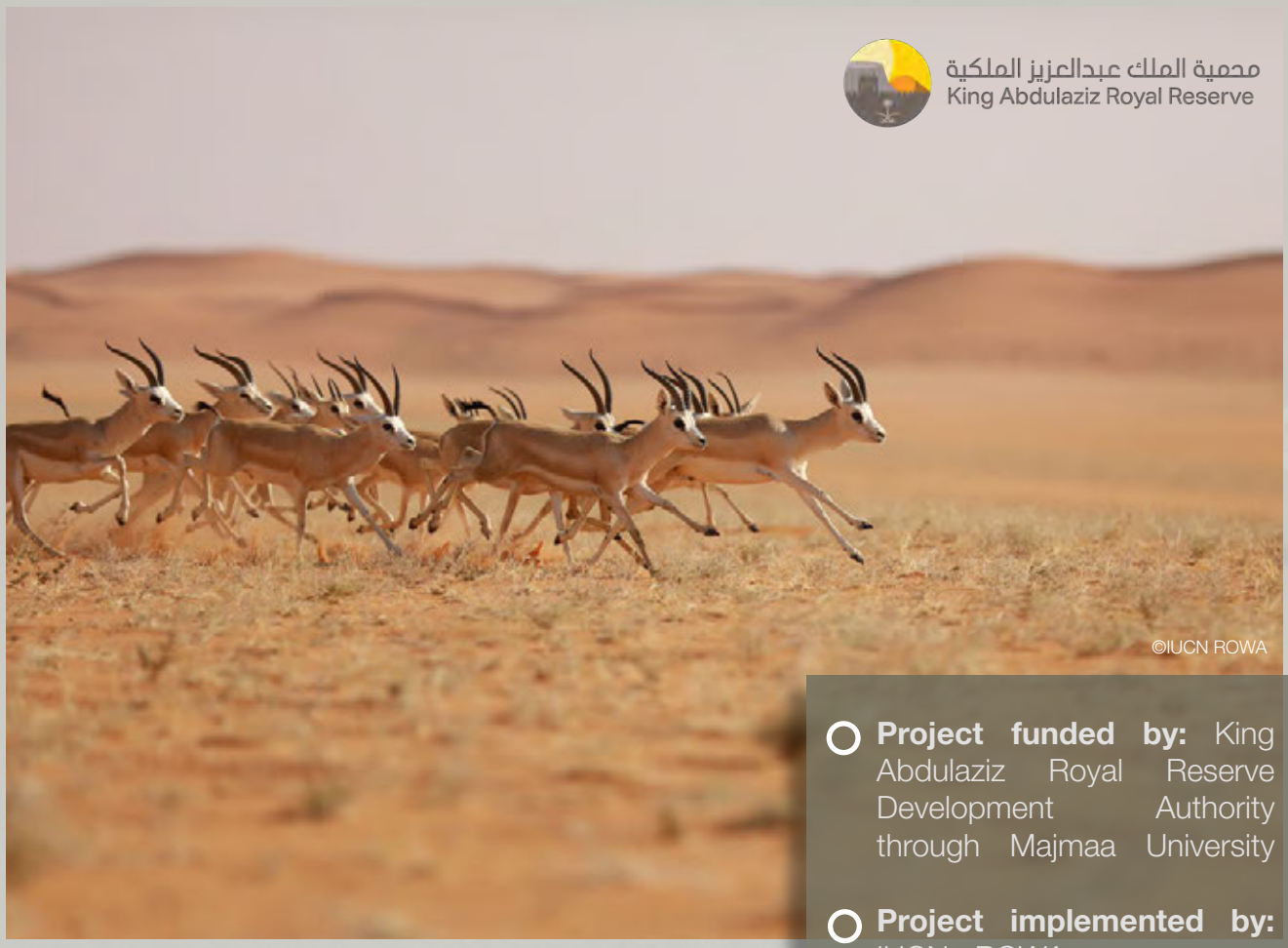
4. **Completed gender gap analysis and developed a Gender Equality Action Plan**

5. **Conducted the first Red List of Ecosystems (RLE) workshop**
Advanced ecosystem assessment and conservation planning through the inaugural RLE workshop.



©IUCN ROWA

Effective Management of King Abdulaziz Royal Nature Reserve (KARNR)



- **Project funded by:** King Abdulaziz Royal Reserve Development Authority through Majmaa University
- **Project implemented by:** IUCN ROWA

The Effective Management of King Abdulaziz Royal Nature Reserve project aims to establish a sustainable, well-governed management system for KARNR. By aligning with IUCN standards, The project focuses on supporting the alignment of KARNR management programmes with the Green List Standard, which enhances global recognition, resource mobilization and partnerships.

Capacity-building is a cornerstone of the project, delivered through tailored training programmes that strengthen staff expertise in management, biodiversity monitoring and governance. Tools such as the IBEX tool and participatory 3D mapping support evidence-based decision-making and stakeholder integration.

Project Achievements:

- Implemented IBEX tool for performance evaluation.
- Identified and validated key natural and cultural values.
- Completed gender gap analysis and prepared a Gender Equality Action Plan.
- Delivered training on IUCN Green List standards.
- Revised management plans to align with global standards.
- Delivered several training programmes and study tours for technical and operational staff on integrated management of protected areas.









Effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas in Egypt



©Shutterstock

- **Project funded by:** The Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- **Project implemented by:** UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
- **Project executed by:** IUCN ROWA in collaboration with The Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA)

The Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas management has been successfully strengthened to protect biodiversity against various threats. The project effectively encouraged community involvement, capacity-building, and gender equality, resulting in improved effectiveness. The project successfully achieved its objective of enhancing the management effectiveness of the Wadi El-Rayan and Qarun Protected Areas in Egypt by strengthening their management capacities to protect threatened and important species and their habitats. This was achieved through two components: the management capacities were strengthened, and effective community participation was established in the management and conservation of natural resources in the protected areas.

This objective was achieved through the following components:

Component 1: Strengthen management capacities of targeted PAs for the conservation of threatened and important species and their habitats.

Component 2: Establish effective community participation in PA management and conservation management of natural resources.

Project Achievements:

1. Governance and institutional strengthening

• Establishment of advisory committees – Formed the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) and the Local Community Advisory Committee, endorsed by the CEO of EEAA, to provide expert recommendations on protected area management, biodiversity monitoring and community engagement.

• Creation of the Engineering Committee – Officially established to oversee the renovation of the Lake Qarun protected area management building and the development of an environmental and community centre.

• Steering committee meeting – Conducted a high-level meeting under the patronage of the EEAA CEO to discuss achievements, sustainability strategies and emphasize Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and ecosystem restoration.

2. Management effectiveness and biodiversity conservation

• Management effectiveness assessments – Enhanced management practices demonstrated through METT score improvements for Wadi El-Rayan (67 to 72) and Lake Qarun (53 to 62).

• Species conservation planning – Developed targeted plans for the Fennec fox and Dorcas gazelle to address their ecological needs.

• Rapid biodiversity surveys – Conducted field assessments of flora, fauna and avifauna, completing gap analysis for future conservation planning.



©IUCN ROWA

3. Capacity-building and knowledge sharing

- National and regional engagement – Protected area managers presented case studies at a conference on natural and mixed World Heritage sites, organized by IUCN ROWA and ARC-WH.
- Green List standards training – Delivered training on the Green List gap assessment (IBEX tool) to measure alignment with Green List standards for the protected areas.
- CEPA training – Enhanced ranger and staff capacity through workshops on Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) planning.
- Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) training – Conducted a national workshop on identifying and assessing KBAs using global standards, in collaboration with BirdLife International and Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE).



©IUCN ROWA

4. Infrastructure development and community engagement

- Renovation and operationalization – Completed renovation of the Lake Qarun protected area management building, now operational and supporting staff and operations.
- Environmental and educational centre – Established and furnished a centre adjacent to the management building for environmental activities.
- Advancing the KBA framework – Finalized KBA assessments for Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun, submitted for validation, and initiated KBA National Coordination Groups for future biodiversity assessments.



©IUCN ROWA

AlUla Protected Areas Network Project



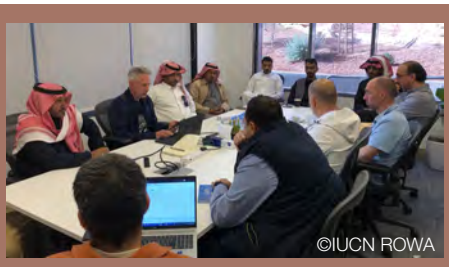
- **Project funded by:** Royal Commission for AlUla
- **Project executed by:** IUCN ROWA

AlUla Protected Areas Network (APAN) project is the result of a strategic collaboration between IUCN and the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU). The project aims to establish a well-connected, fairly governed and effectively managed network of protected and conserved areas (AlUla PAN) in line with IUCN international standards and best practices.
Its overarching goal is to create an operational network that meets international governance and management standards, delivers tangible benefits for people and nature, and contributes to AlUla's strategic development and Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

The project encompasses over 80 activities and sub-activities under six key components:
1. Legal framework: Establishing diverse governance and management structures for protected and conserved areas.
2. Strategic design of AlUla Protected Areas Network: Developing a well-connected and ecologically representative network.
3. Ecosystem rehabilitation and species reintroductions: Restoring ecosystems and supporting the reintroduction of key species.
4. Technology solutions: Implementing innovative technologies for monitoring and managing protected and conserved areas.
5. Capacity development: Strengthening skills and knowledge to enhance conservation efforts.
6. Effective management: Ensuring high standards of governance and operational efficiency in protected and conserved areas.

Project Achievements:

• **Conducted a comprehensive workshop on zoning:** Organized a zoning workshop for AlUla's protected areas, producing a zoning exercise report that includes biodiversity and threat sensitivity maps.


©IUCN ROWA

• **Delivered ranger training sessions:** Provided three training sessions for AlUla's protected areas rangers, focusing on essential skills for protected area management. Training sessions took place in Aqaba and Wadi Rum, Jordan, and in AlUla.


©IUCN ROWA

• **Provided IUCN Green List process training:** Trained RCU staff on the IUCN Green List process, leading to nomination files for Sharaan and Harrat Uwayrid Nature Reserves.


©IUCN ROWA

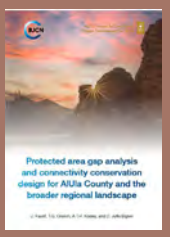
• **The project finalized four studies in preparation for publication:**

1. Species distribution modeling (SDM).
2. Community participatory 3D mapping (P3DM) report.
3. Protected area gap analysis.
4. Standard operating procedures.










©Arabstock

- **Hosted the Tech4Nature Summit:** Organized the summit during the IUCN ROWA Regional Conservation Forum, featuring a 3D model and virtual reality experience of Sharaan Nature Reserve, technical sessions on digital transformation and AI, and youth-led discussions on conservation technology.

- **Enhanced geodatabase management:** Improved geodatabase structure, mechanisms and operations to support conservation efforts in AlUla.

- **Updated management plans:** Submitted, revised and updated management plans for six protected areas within AlUla Protected Areas Network (AlUla PAN).

- **Conducted an organisational needs assessment:** Assessed the Nature Reserve Department of RCU to identify capacity-building priorities.



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA

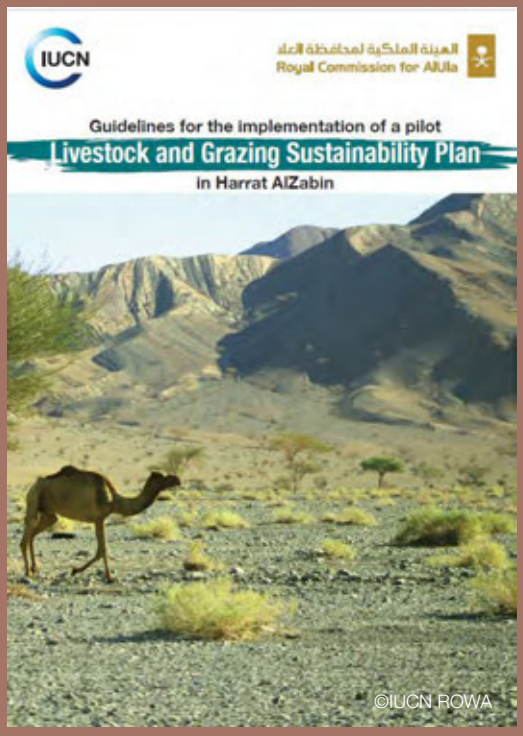

©Arabstock

- **Held online training workshops:** Delivered workshops for RCU staff on data management, remote sensing and biodiversity hotspot identification.

- **Developed a roadmap for data collection:** Created a comprehensive roadmap to improve data collection for the Wildlife and Natural Heritage Division.

- **Finalized a competence model:** Developed a Competence Model for the Nature Reserve Department of RCU to enhance operational capacity.

- **Prepared guidelines for livestock and grazing sustainability:** Developed a Pilot Livestock and Grazing Sustainability Plan (LGSP) for Harrat AlZabin Nature Reserve and a policy approach for Livestock and Grazing Sustainability Plans in AlUla's nature reserves.





Water & Climate Change Programme



©Shutterstock

In response to the pronounced impacts of climate change and alarming water scarcity in West Asia, the Water & Climate Change Programme focuses on three central themes: Nature-based Solutions (NbS), Climate Change & Resilience, and Water & Agriculture. The interdisciplinary nature of these themes is reflected in several national and regional initiatives and projects across West Asia.

A wide range of interventions is currently being implemented in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq, with a focus on the following concepts:

1. Integrated landscape and water management
2. Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus in agriculture
3. Improving resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change impacts
4. Resilient nature-based water solutions

Jordan Integrated Landscape Management Initiative (JILMI)



- **Project funded by:** Green Climate Fund (GCF)
- **Project executed by:** IUCN ROWA & The Ministry of Environment, Government of Jordan

Jordan faces severe water scarcity due to its arid climate and high summer temperatures exceeding °40C. With only 125 cubic meters of water per capita annually, it ranks as the world's fifth most water-stressed country. Climate change worsens this crisis through reduced rainfall, higher evaporation, prolonged droughts, and shorter rainy seasons. Non-climatic factors like overgrazing and unregulated fuelwood harvesting further degrade ecosystems, accelerating water runoff and reducing infiltration.

The Jordan Integrated Landscape Management Initiative (JILMI), with a USD 44.9 million budget, begins in 2025 to address water scarcity in the northern Jordan Valley. It focuses on integrated land and water management for small-scale farming communities in Yarmouk, King Talal Dam, and Kafrain watersheds.

The project is expected to directly benefit 246,942 people by improving climate resilience, agriculture, and water management, with indirect benefits for 756,000 more through better water resources, governance, and climate awareness.

Expected Outcomes:

- **1 million** Individuals will benefit from enhanced water security and improved climate resilience.
- **12,000 hectares** of watershed ecosystems in the northern Jordan Valley will be protected and restored.
- **12 rockfill dams** will be constructed to enable managed aquifer recharge.
- **9 million cubic metres** of additional annual water resources are expected after eight years, with a potential cumulative increase of approximately 163 MCM over 25 years.
- **3,000 rooftop rainwater harvesting tanks** will be installed to support local water supply.
- **1 MW of floating solar panels** will be deployed, supplying renewable energy to the local grid.
- **1 water fund** will be established and operational to support the scaling up of Integrated Land and Water Resources Management (ILWRM) across the Jordan Valley.

Al Murunah: Building Climate Resilience through Enhanced Water Security in MENA



- **Project funded by:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office
- **Project executed by:** IUCN ROWA, International Water Management Institute, Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation and Lebanese Ministry of Energy and Wate, Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon & Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, CEDARE, Environment Quality Authority; Palestinian Hydrology Group

Jordan faces extreme water scarcity, exacerbated by its arid climate and high summer temperatures, often exceeding °40C. With only 125 cubic metres per capita per year of available water, Jordan ranks as the fifth most water-stressed country in the world. Climate projections indicate worsening conditions, with reduced rainfall, increased evaporation rates, extended droughts and shorter rainy seasons. These trends further intensify the already severe water deficit, threatening agricultural production and food security. Non-climatic factors such as overgrazing, unregulated fuelwood harvesting and cultivation on steep slopes degrade ecosystems, accelerating water runoff and hindering infiltration.

The central premise of Al Murunah ("flexibility" in Arabic) is that appropriately designed Resilient Nature-Based Water Solutions (RNBWS) can enhance water and food security in agricultural areas of the MENA region, increasing the resilience of rural households and communities. RNBWS integrates nature-based and agricultural water management solutions.

The primary goals of Al Murunah are to:

1. Demonstrate the effectiveness of RNBWS.

2. Strengthen, empower and catalyse national capacities for the implementation of RNBWS.

Al Murunah will achieve these goals by piloting RNBWS projects in four countries: Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The participatory implementation process will be supported by capacity-building, awareness raising and training to improve understanding of RNBWS, as well as the development of technical tools and support for national-level planning and scaling-up efforts.

Project Achievements:

- **Flood modelling in the Ba'albik basin – Conducted as part of flood management planning.**
- **Jordan – Wadi Seer pilot site**
  - Rehabilitation of springs and irrigation canals
  - Establishment of Wadi Seer Springs Cooperative (WSSC)
  - Adoption of smart agricultural techniques and water management
  - Empowerment of women and youth – Conducted awareness sessions and provided support initiatives.
  - National training workshop on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) – Organized capacity-building sessions to enhance understanding and implementation of NbS.



Project Highlights:

- **Progress in participatory implementation – Through the third fiscal year, IUCN advanced participatory implementation in Jordan and Lebanon.**
- **Lebanon interventions – In Ras Ba'albik and Qa'a, the project focuses on flood management and sustainable agricultural practices, guided by participatory planning.**
- **Jordan interventions – In Wadi Seer, key interventions include:**

1. Completion of establishing and operating the Wadi Seer Springs Cooperative (WSSC).
2. Rehabilitation of Spring sources for AlDeir and AlTarabil springs.
3. Maintenance and rehabilitation of irrigation canals for more than 700m.
4. Adoption of smart agricultural techniques.
5. Empowerment of women and youth in agriculture.

Deploying Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Nexus Approach for Eco-friendly Agriculture in King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Royal Natural Reserve



- **Project funded by:** King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Royal Natural Reserve
- **Project executed by:** IUCN ROWA

The pronounced impacts of climate change are negatively affecting agriculture worldwide. Prolonged droughts, irregular rainfall and other climate-related disruptions are expected to intensify, posing severe threats to food security and ecosystems. Water-scarce regions such as the MENA region are particularly vulnerable to these adverse effects. Sustainable agricultural planning requires careful consideration of natural ecosystems, and the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus approach can optimize agricultural production, minimize resource consumption and conserve ecosystems.

The project titled Deploying Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus Approach for Eco-friendly Agriculture in King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Royal Natural Reserve aims to test these systems within the reserve through several implementation phases.

Project Highlights:

IUCN will initiate the scoping phase of the project with a situational analysis covering hydrology, climate change, agriculture, socio-economics, and stakeholder mapping.

The baseline analyses will precede the technical design of sustainable agricultural systems. These analyses will also support decision-making and strategic planning in Kind Salman Bin Abdulaziz Royal Natural Reserve, considering the interlinkages between water resources, climate change, and agricultural management.



Boosting Nexus Framework Implementation in the Mediterranean (BONEX)



©IUCN ROWA

- **Project funded by:** Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area Programme (PRIMA)
- **Project executed by:** IUCN ROWA Including 15 partners from Jordan, Lebanon, Spain, Tunisia, Italy, Morocco, Germany, and Portugal, led by BIOAZAL with the German Jordanian University (GJU) as a partner

The BONEX project aims to provide practical tools, assess context-adapted technological innovations, enhance policies and governance, and facilitate the practical implementation of the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus approach. Within BONEX, WEFE is tested and validated across seven Demonstration Projects (DPs) in the Mediterranean, involving local actors in participatory planning. The project offers policymakers and practitioners an interactive decision-making tool for evaluating trade-offs and synergies in WEFE solutions.

In Jordan, a field research farm, in partnership with the German Jordanian University, serves as a demonstration project to compare soilless and traditional agriculture systems, analyzing water consumption and yield productivity. The project focuses on the Mujeb Basin.

Project Achievments:

- **Established a demonstration site**: Developed a research site to test and compare agricultural systems.

- **Recorded water consumption and yield productivity:** Harvested multiple cycles from both traditional and soilless agriculture systems to collect performance data.

- **Developed a context-specific Nexus Bridging Plan:** Summarized insights from different WEFE methods to inform decision-making.

- **Conducted participatory workshops in the Wadi Mujib Basin:** Delivered training on smart agricultural techniques and presented key findings from the BONEX project.



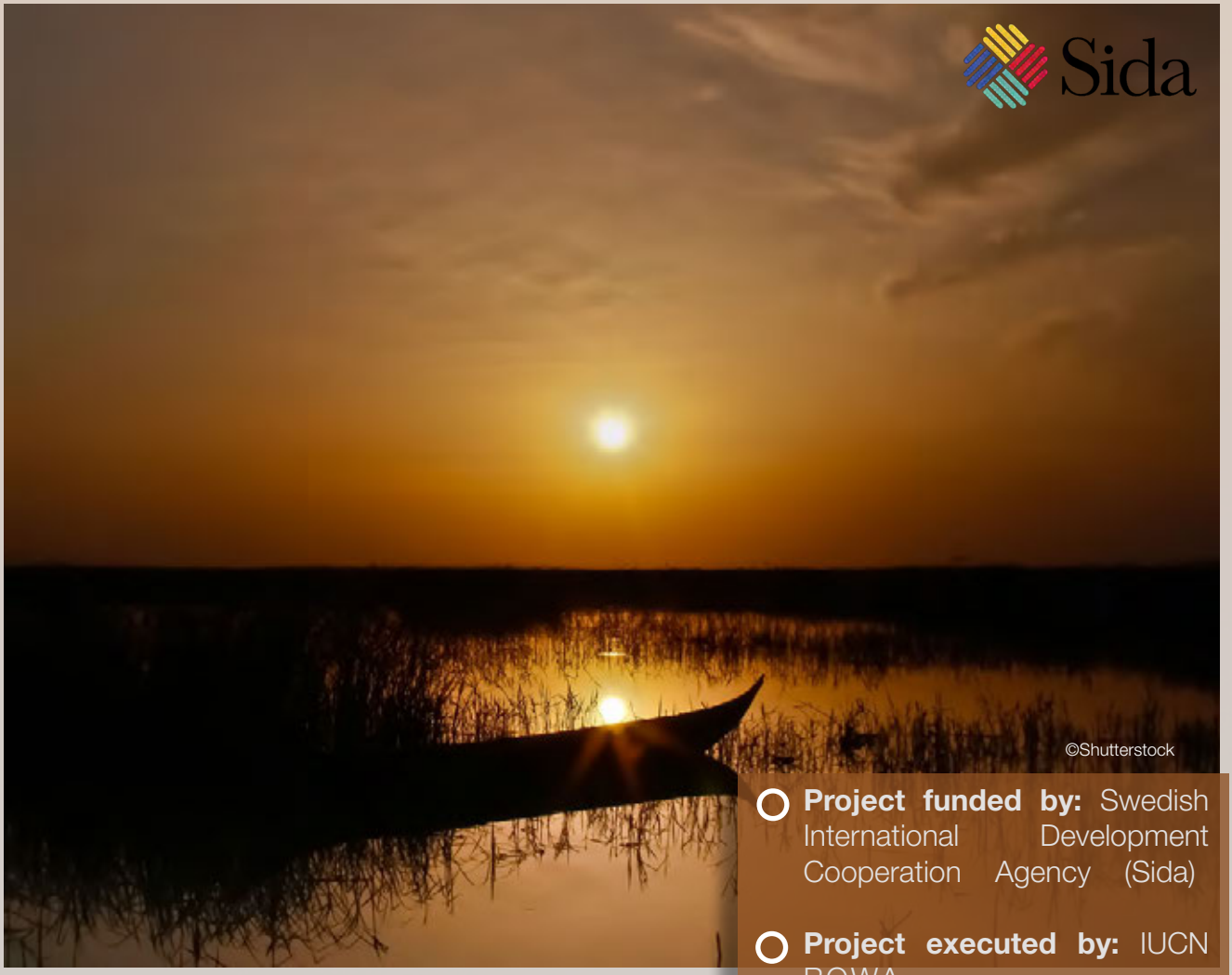
Project Highlights:

1
Demonstration project established

1
Nexus Bridging Plan developed

2
workshops held

Delivering a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Programme for Southern Iraq – Basra Marshes



- **Project funded by:** Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
- **Project executed by:** IUCN ROWA

Iraq, the fifth most vulnerable country to climate change, faces severe impacts such as rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, frequent droughts, desertification, water and soil salinity and dust storms. By 2050, average temperatures are projected to increase by °2C, potentially reaching °5C by the end of the century. Precipitation is expected to decrease by %9, and water availability will significantly decline. Southern regions are particularly at risk of extreme weather, including flash floods and rising sea levels that threaten coastal areas such as Basra. The Mesopotamian Marshes, a UNESCO World Heritage site, are suffering due to upstream damming, agricultural strain and water shortages.

This project, deploying Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus approach, targets the marshlands in Basra. It aims to improve local resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-induced water-related challenges while conserving ecosystems. The initiative includes capacity-building programmes on NbS and the WEFE Nexus, enhancing knowledge of climate resilience, resource management and marsh conservation.

Project Achievments:

• **Conducted a technical session at UNCCD COP 16 in Riyadh**:

The «Conservation of Iraqi Marshlands: Challenges and Opportunities», technical session highlighted conservation efforts and the immense benefits of marshland ecosystem services.



©IUCN ROWA


©Shutterstock

Agricultural Management to Enable Resilience Project (AMER)



- **Project funded by:** DGCS of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)
- **Project executed by:** IUCN ROWA
- **Project implemented by:** The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

The AMER project is a two-year initiative funded by the Directorate General of Development Cooperation (DGCS) of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI). Implemented by IUCN and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), AMER aims to enhance sustainable economic mechanisms in agriculture and food security, empowering both Jordanian host communities and Syrian refugees in Karak and Madaba governorates.

Specific objectives:

- **SO1:** Improve living conditions – Promote income-generating practices related to sustainable agriculture.
- **SO2:** Strengthen capacity and awareness – Support local communities, authorities, academic institutions and schools in adopting sustainable agricultural practices.
- **SO3:** Enhance climate resilience – Improve the ability of small farmers and breeders in the targeted governorates to cope with climate change challenges.

Project Achievments:

- **Conducted assessment studies:** Analysed socioeconomic features, agricultural patterns and resource availability.
- **Established demonstration sites:** Developed knowledge hubs in Karak and Madaba to support sustainable agriculture.
- **Provided training:** Delivered capacity-building sessions on soilless agriculture techniques and water harvesting.
- **Developed draft natural resource strategic plans:** Used participatory approaches to guide sustainable resource management.



©IUCN ROWA

Project Highlights:

2
Demonstration sites established

4
Assessment studies conducted

2
Training sessions on soilless agriculture conducted

4
Training sessions on water harvesting conducted

Drylands, Livelihood & Gender Programme



©Shutterstock

The Drylands, Livelihood & Gender Programme aims to rehabilitate and restore drylands in West Asia, with a primary focus on rangeland ecosystems. It employs Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to enhance livelihoods, biodiversity and the sustained production of ecosystem services, including fodder, food, medicinal plants, water purification and carbon sequestration. Key components include improved participatory management, gender equality and the integration of local communities. Over the past 13 years, the programme has successfully implemented several projects in collaboration with key donors, partners and stakeholders.

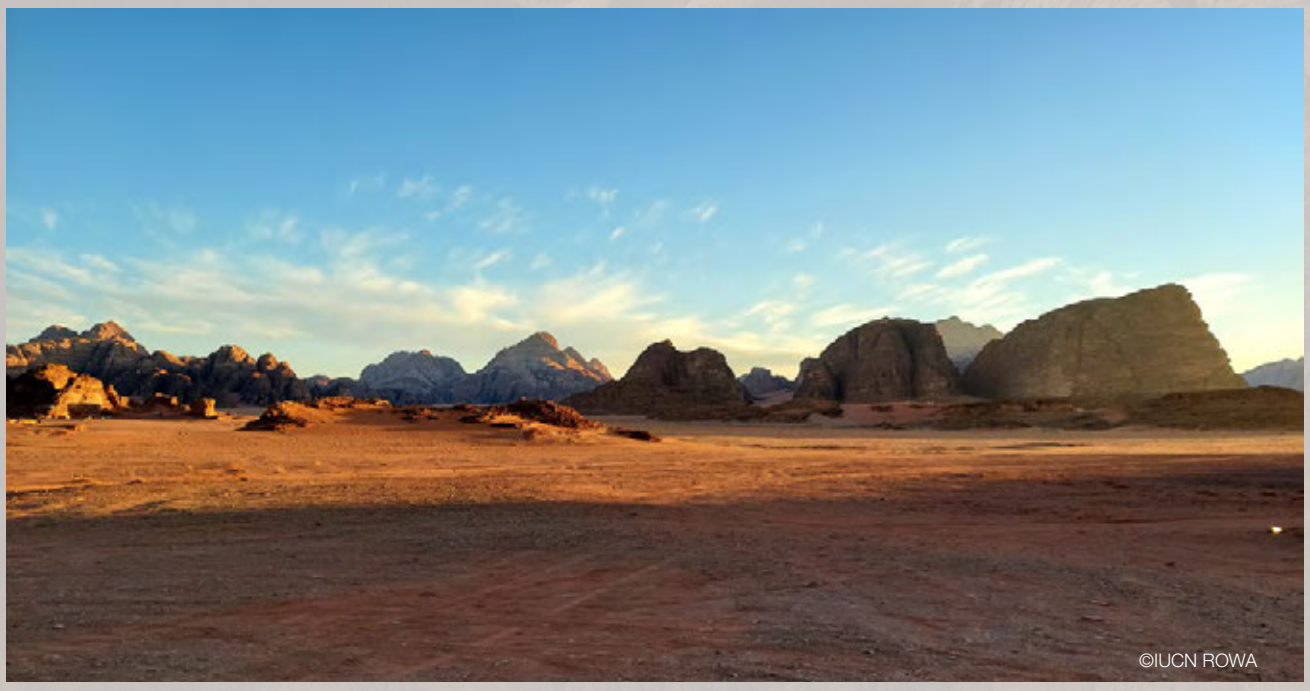
A central theme of the programme is the promotion of the Al Hima approach, a community-based management method inspired by ancient tribal practices. Al Hima facilitates sustainable, community-led management of rangelands.

Key approaches of the Drylands Programme:

1. Sustainable rangeland management (SRM): The sustainable use of rangeland resources, including soil, water, animals and plants, for the production of goods and services. SRM ensures the long-term productive potential of these resources while maintaining their environmental functions.

2. Nature-based Solutions (NbS): Actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems. These solutions address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, providing benefits for human well-being and biodiversity.

3. Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA): A nature-based solution that leverages biodiversity and ecosystem services to reduce vulnerability and build resilience to climate change.



Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



- **SDG 1: No poverty**

Enhancing resilience in drylands reduces poverty by improving agricultural productivity and livelihood security.



- **SDG 2: Zero hunger**

Climate-resilient practices in drylands ensure sustainable food production and food security.



- **SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation**

Effective water resource management combats desertification and ensures clean water availability.



- **SDG 13: Climate action**

Building resilience in drylands involves actions to mitigate climate change impacts and integrate climate measures into policies and strategies.



- **SDG 15: Life on land**

Sustainable dryland management protects, restores and sustains terrestrial ecosystems, combating desertification and biodiversity loss.

Strategy and Execution Plan of Ecosystem Restoration for AlUla



- **Project funded by:** Royal Commission for AlUla
- **Project executed by:** IUCN ROWA

This strategy represents a comprehensive, long-term effort that integrates extensive data, international best practices, and locally tailored approaches to ensure a sustainable and effective restoration of AlUla County's ecosystem. It aims to develop a detailed strategy and execution plan that aligns with the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU)'s vision, mission, and strategic objectives, fostering environmental resilience, biodiversity conservation, and the revitalization of natural landscapes. By incorporating scientific research, community engagement, and innovative restoration techniques, this approach seeks to create lasting ecological benefits while supporting the region's cultural and economic development.

Key elements

- **Baseline assessment:** Conducted across six nature reserves.
- **Ecosystem services assessment:** Includes cost estimation of degradation.
- **Community engagement:** Organised meetings to incorporate local input.
- **Strategic alignment:** Vision, mission, pillars and objectives aligned with RCU strategies and commitments.
- **Scaling up restoration:** Expanded plans for six nature reserves.
- **Governance model:** Ensures holistic approaches and local community participation.



Project Components:

1. Analysis of the current situation

- o Literature reviews, benchmarking and application of the Drivers-Pressures-State-Impact-Response (DPSIR) framework to evaluate challenges.
- o Preliminary habitat mapping to identify critical areas.

2. Baseline assessment

- o Field surveys to analyse soil conditions, vegetation types, habitat diversity and land degradation.
- o Soil microbial assessments and analyses to inform restoration strategies across six nature reserves.

3. Valuation of ecosystem services and costs

- o Categorisation, mapping and valuation of ecosystem services.
- o Social benefits evaluation and economic cost estimation for degradation and restoration.
- o Community and stakeholder engagement to align objectives with restoration goals.

4. Strategy and execution plan development

- o Strategic guidelines based on IUCN and Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) principles.
- o Governance frameworks, sustainable funding models and risk assessments with mitigation strategies.
- o Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress.

Additional Activities

Aug 2024

Learning workshop on ecosystem restoration (August 2024)

- Presentations on restoration efforts by IUCN ROWA and RCU, followed by a site visit to King Abdulaziz Royal Reserve.





Local community field mission to AlUla County (August 2024)

- Collaborative discussions with local stakeholders, emphasizing traditional knowledge integration and fostering partnerships for successful outcomes.



Oct 2024

Benchmark visit to Tunisia

- A week-long visit exploring best practices in community-led restoration and rangeland management with ICRDA Tunis.





Partnership between IUCN and RCU

Membership and objectives

- RCU as a governmental Member of IUCN – Focuses on the sustainable development of cultural and natural heritage.
- Commitment – Conservation, ecosystem restoration and native species reintroduction.

Cooperation agreement

- Development of governance principles for restored areas.
- Action plans for ecological restoration.
- Promotion of economic and social development.
- Protection of cultural and natural heritage.

Benefits

- Access to IUCN's expertise.
- Effective governance and equitable resource use.



Determining the Grazing Capacity of Selected Areas in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



©IUCN ROWA

- **Project funded by:** National Center for Vegetation Development and Combat Desertification General Directorate of Rangeland Development
- **Project executed by:** IUCN ROWA & Tilad Environmental Company

In alignment with the objectives of the National Rangeland Strategy to develop and implement sustainable grazing plans across the majority of the Kingdom›s regions, the project “Determining the Grazing Capacity of Selected Areas in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia” was launched, targeting 10 rangeland sites across the Kingdom.

The objective of the project is to determine the grazing capacity and develop sustainable grazing plans for 10 selected rangeland sites in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The main activities of the project:

- Implement seasonal field studies of vegetation properties, analyse data, and estimate the grazing capacity.
- Determine the grazing systems and grazing cycles in each site.
- Implement workshops, training courses, and field days to assess the characteristics of vegetation cover and the grazing capacity at the sites.
- Prepare maps and databases of grazing capacity and appropriate grazing systems.
- Determine the number of animal units appropriate for each site.

Project Achievments:

1. Generated data bases for the targeted sites (10 sites), for instance:

- Topographic maps (DEM, Slope, aspect and drainage system maps).
- Climatic maps (temperature and precipitation)
- Soil types maps
- Land use and Land change maps
- Vegetation indices maps (NDVI AND MSAVI)

2. Carried-out vegetation surveys in 10 grazing sites during Spring 2024 and Autum 2024 and conducted key measurements (e.g. plant checklists and composition, plant density, species frequency)

3. Determine the available grazable biomass of annuals, biennials and perennials species, stocking rate, and grazing capacity for the targeted sites (10 sites).

4. Carried-out livestock surveys for the 10 targeted sites during Spring 2024 and Autum 2024.

5. Analysis of the nutritional components of key annual and perennial of the grazable plants across the targeted sites.

6. Developing grazing management plans for the targeted sites.



©IUCN ROWA

Stakeholders Engagement and Natural Resources Assessment for Nebras Power Jordan in East Amman-Phase 3



- **Project funded by:** Nebras Power Jordan
- **Project executed by:** IUCN ROWA

The collaboration between IUCN and Nebras Power Jordan reflects IUCN›s commitment to addressing global challenges through innovative partnerships. Implemented in collaboration with local authorities and communities, the project successfully advanced biodiversity conservation while promoting harmonious coexistence with local communities.

This project was initiated to address local and environmental challenges in the eastern part of Amman, specifically targeting the areas of Al Manakher and Al Khashafiyah. It aims to actively engage stakeholders in developing sustainable solutions to these challenges within the two target areas.

IUCN designed the project to develop a strategic community and environmental action plan for sustainable investment in the area through community involvement to overcome environmental pollution, strengthen biodiversity resilience, and empower local communities. The strategy assessed the natural, social and economic resources and identified the feasible long-term solutions appropriate to the local context.

Project Achievments:

1. The construction of the multi-purpose building in Al-Manakher village has been successfully completed on a 408.53 m² site. The building is now ready to serve as a gathering space for social, cultural, educational and national events for the local community.

2. The design prioritises sustainability and energy efficiency. Key features include the strategic use of insulation materials and double-glazed windows to maximise energy conservation and minimise environmental impact.

3. The newly established multi-purpose building fosters community engagement and growth, providing a supportive environment that strengthens social networks and promotes interconnectedness.











Our Partners and Donors:
Driving Impact Together

The success of IUCN ROWA's projects is a testament to the dedication and support of our Members, donors and partners. Their commitment to conservation, sustainability and community resilience has been instrumental in advancing impactful initiatives across West Asia. Through their contributions, we have strengthened biodiversity protection, climate adaptation and sustainable resource management, ensuring lasting benefits for both people and nature. We extend our deepest appreciation to our network of supporters, whose collaboration continues to drive meaningful change in the region.



©Shutterstock



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



In 2024, IUCN ROWA managed a USD 61.76 million portfolio, advancing conservation and sustainability across the region. The Water & Climate Change Programme received the largest investment at USD 37.6 million, followed by Protected Areas and Drylands & Gender, reinforcing ROWA's commitment to climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and gender-inclusive development.

Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ROWA's financial strategy has demonstrated steady growth over the past five years, enabling greater impact in ecosystem restoration, water management and community-driven conservation efforts across West Asia.



©Shutterstock

Programmes and Budgets

Total Budget per Programme (for C list):

Protected Areas, Biodiversity & World Heritage

CHF 12.3M

Water and Climate Change

CHF 2.5M

Dryland, Livelihood & Gender

CHF 2.6M

Programmes Project Portfolio (for C & B list):



IUCN ROWA Profile

ROWA's Total Portfolio: CHF 61.7M



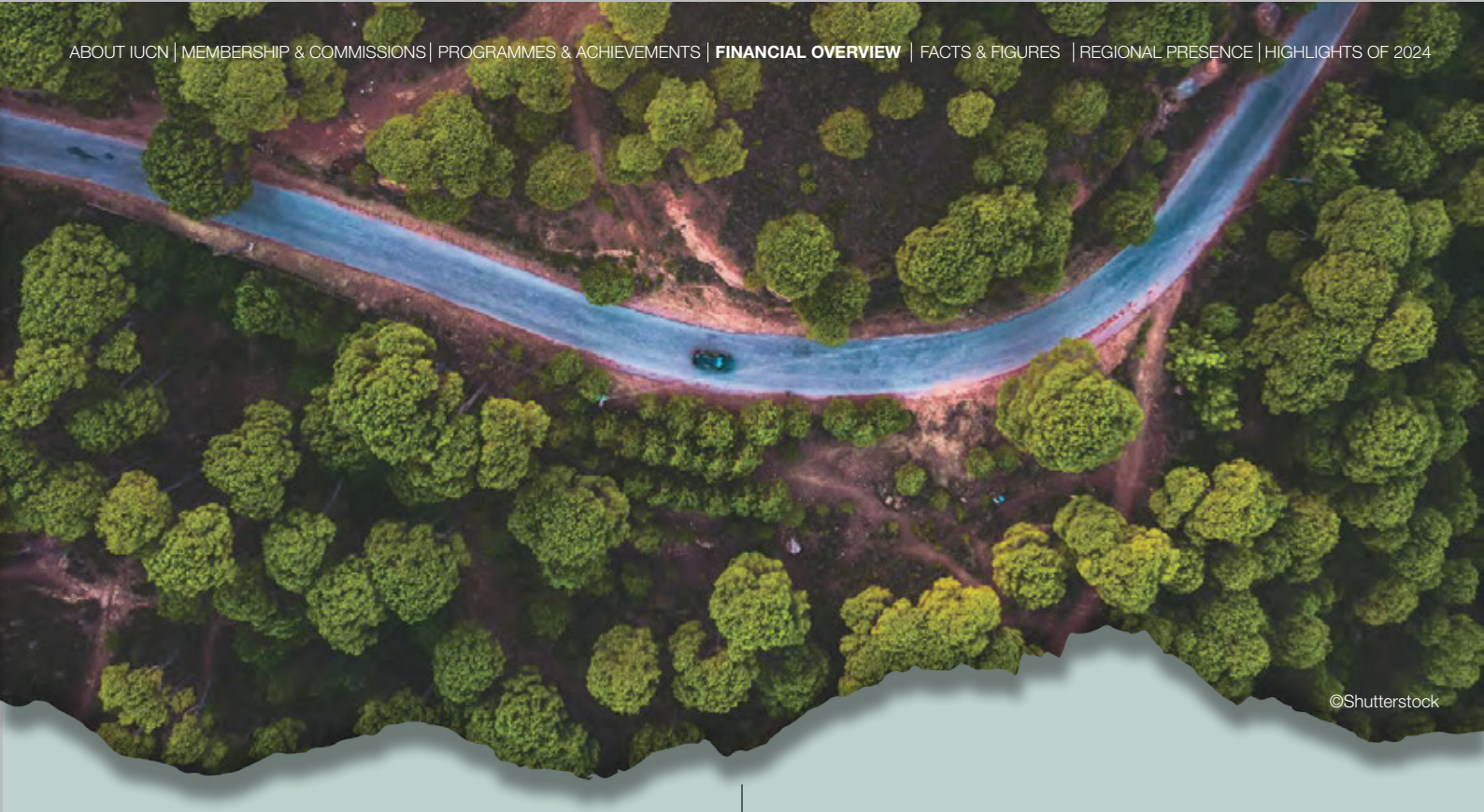
2024 Continued growth to CHF 11.5M

2023 Major increase to CHF 11.4M

2022 Slight decline to CHF 5M

2021 Significant growth to CHF 5.3M

2020 Project initiation with CHF 1.2M



©Shutterstock

Project Themes

5 Projects
Addressing land degradation, desertification, and ecosystem restoration

4 Projects
Centered on water resource management, sustainable agriculture, and the WEFE Nexus

7 Projects
Emphasizing community engagement, gender equality, and sustainable livelihoods

6 Projects
Focusing on climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation strategies

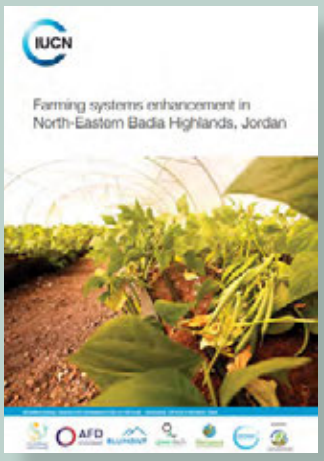
Contributions to the SDGs

Policy Mechanisms	9
Science Products	29
Strategies Plans	19
Ecosystems Management	9
Nature Solutions	19
Capacity Strengthening	33
Youth Empowerment	8
Traditional Knowledge	3
Total Count	129

Knowledge Outputs











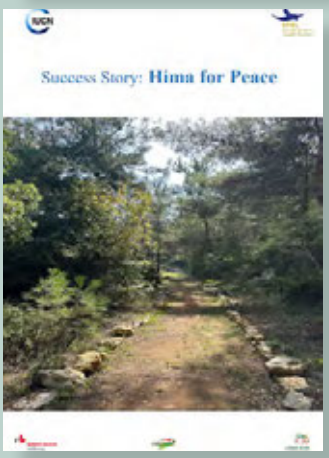


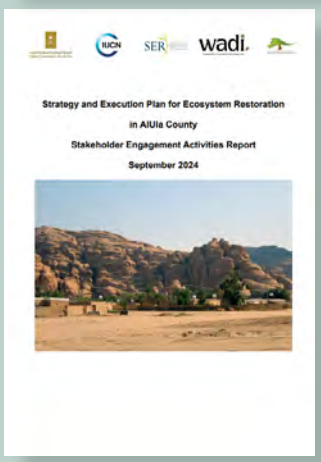


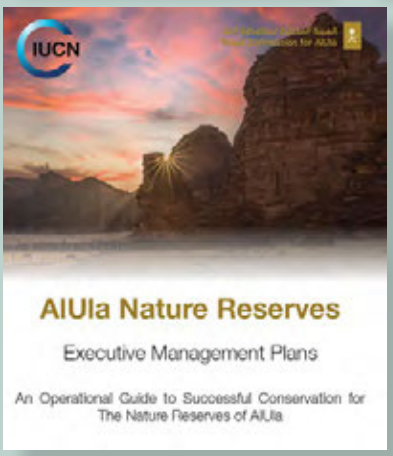
















KEY FACTS & FIGURES



The Facts and Figures section highlights the key achievements of IUCN ROWA in 2024, showcasing the collective impact of our initiatives across West Asia. From the number of workshops and training sessions conducted to the growth of our membership network and the expansion of our media reach, these numbers reflect our commitment to advancing conservation, community engagement, and sustainable development.

Each figure represents a step forward in our mission to protect nature and support the people who depend on it.



©Shutterstock



150+

Workshops and training sessions held

150K

Trees and plants planted

12K

Hectares of land restored

4

New employees hired in 2024

7

Sites have been accepted on the IUCN Green List

7

New Members joined IUCN ROWA



©Shutterstock

7,000+

People engaged in community projects

4

Countries introduced to Smart agriculture techniques

9,000+

Women and youth empowered through training and leadership programmes

35%

Increase in social media presence

32

Knowledge outputs produced

67

Contributions for Nature submitted



REGIONAL PRESENCE



In 2024, IUCN ROWA reinforced its role as a regional leader in conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable development. Through strategic partnerships, policy engagement, and community-driven initiatives, the office worked to address key environmental challenges across West Asia. IUCN ROWA actively contributed to regional events, bringing together governments, NGOs, and experts to drive impactful discussions and solutions.

In addition to participation, the office played a key role in organizing and facilitating events, strengthening regional cooperation, promoting Nature-based Solutions, and advancing efforts toward a more sustainable and resilient future.



©Shutterstock

IUCN West Asia 10th Regional Conservation Forum (RCF)



The 10th IUCN West Asia Regional Conservation Forum (RCF) took place from 11-9 September 2024 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Hosted by the National Center for Wildlife (NVW), this event brought together key stakeholders, including government representatives, conservationists, NGOs, and researchers, to discuss regional conservation challenges, share best practices, and strengthen cooperation. The forum also served as a preparatory step for the upcoming IUCN Congress in 2025.









Objectives and Key Themes:

The forum focused on enhancing biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable development. Key objectives included engaging IUCN West Asia Members in the new conservation programme, promoting regional cooperation, addressing climate change impacts, and strengthening policy frameworks.

Major themes included:

- **Climate Resilience and Biodiversity:** Exploring climate change effects on ecosystems and strategies for adaptation.
- **Community-Led Conservation:** Showcasing grassroots initiatives that empower local communities.
- **Sustainable Development:** Aligning economic growth with conservation efforts.
- **Transboundary Cooperation:** Encouraging collaboration between nations to protect shared resources.
- **Innovative Technology:** Utilizing cutting-edge tools for data collection, monitoring, and public awareness.

Pre-Forum Training Sessions:

Several pre-forum training sessions were conducted to enhance participants' expertise in conservation strategies:

1. **Nature-based Solutions Workshop**
2. **Protected Areas Green List Training**
3. **Land Restoration Workshop**







Notable Discussions and Sessions:

The forum featured high-level discussions on conservation priorities, climate action, and regional cooperation. Highlights included:

- **IUCN Strategic Vision Dialogue:** Focused on long-term conservation goals and funding strategies.
- **30x30 Conservation Initiative:** Saudi Arabia's commitment to protecting %30 of its land and marine areas by 2030.
- **Food Security and Climate Resilience:** Examined the Water-Energy-Food Nexus for sustainable agriculture.
- **Land Degradation and Desertification:** Addressed challenges in combating land degradation and promoting sustainable land management.
- **Youth & Technology Pavilion:** Showcased innovative conservation technologies and youth-led initiatives.







Key Outcomes and Recommendations:

The forum concluded with actionable recommendations, including:

- **Regional Biodiversity Action Plan:** Addressing biodiversity loss through country-specific conservation actions.
- **Community Engagement Framework:** Enhancing local participation in conservation initiatives.
- **Strengthening Legal Frameworks:** Improving environmental policies and enforcement mechanisms.
- **Capacity-building Programmes:** Providing training and resources to support conservation practitioners.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Educating communities on biodiversity conservation.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation Mechanisms:** Establishing systems to track conservation progress.



















Challenges and Future Directions

Key challenges identified included political and economic instability, habitat destruction, and climate change. Participants emphasized the need for continued dialogue, financial support for conservation projects, and integrating traditional knowledge into modern conservation strategies.

The forum reinforced the commitment of regional stakeholders to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. The discussions and partnerships formed during this event will shape the future of conservation efforts in West Asia, ensuring a more resilient and sustainable environment for future generations.



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA


©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA

IUCN ROWA at **UNCCD COP 16 in Riyadh**



©IUCN ROWA

The 16th session of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 16) took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2024. The event gathered international stakeholders, policymakers, environmental experts, and organisations to address land degradation, desertification, and climate resilience. IUCN's Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) actively participated in discussions, workshops, and initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable land management and restoring degraded ecosystems.

Objectives and Key Themes:
The primary focus of COP 16 revolved around achieving land degradation neutrality, strengthening climate adaptation, and promoting Nature-based Solutions (NbS).

Key themes included:
- **Land Restoration and Climate Resilience:** Strategies to combat desertification and enhance ecosystem sustainability.
- **Nature-based Solutions (NbS):** Implementing sustainable practices to restore landscapes and mitigate environmental risks.
- **Sustainable Agriculture and Water Management:** Addressing the Water-Energy-Food Nexus to ensure food security.
- **Community and Youth Engagement: Empowering** local communities and youth in conservation efforts.



©IUCN ROWA


©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA

Notable Discussions and Sessions:

IUCN ROWA led several discussions and initiatives, including:

- **Policy Dialogues on Sustainable Land Management:** Engaging stakeholders to develop effective policies for combating desertification.
- **Capacity-Building Workshops:** Training programmes on NbS and ecosystem restoration.
- **Regional Collaboration Efforts:** Encouraging cross-border partnerships for environmental conservation.
- **Private Sector Involvement:** Highlighting the role of businesses in land restoration and sustainability efforts.



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA


©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA


©IUCN ROWA

Key Outcomes and Recommendations:

The forum resulted in a set of actionable recommendations, such as:

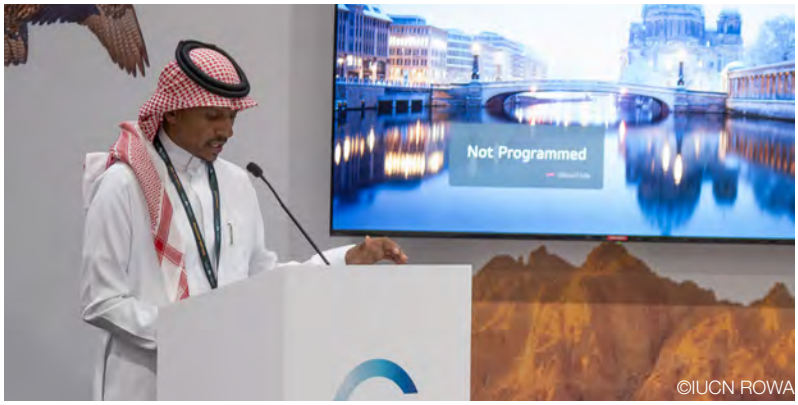
- Strengthening policy frameworks for land degradation neutrality.
- Enhancing investment in sustainable land and water management projects.
- Promoting community-led conservation initiatives.
- Increasing collaboration among governments, NGOs, and the private sector.
- Implementing monitoring systems to track progress in land restoration efforts.



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA

Challenges and Future Directions

Despite progress, challenges such as climate change impacts, water scarcity, and political barriers remain. Participants emphasized the need for continuous collaboration, increased funding, and innovative approaches to land restoration.

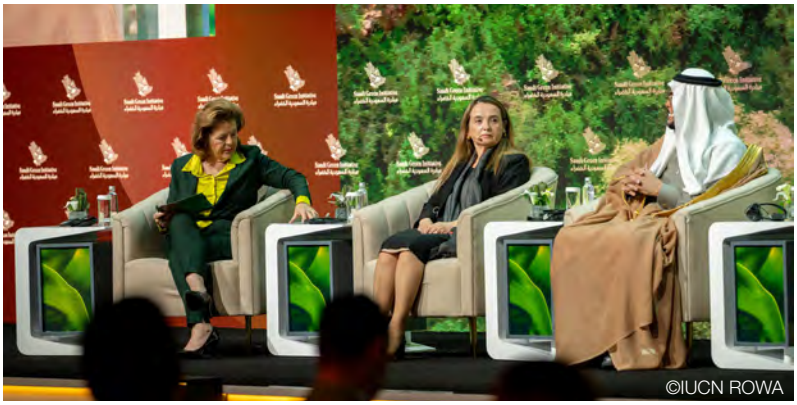
COP 16 reinforced global commitment to combating desertification and promoting sustainable land management. The discussions and initiatives launched during the event are expected to shape future conservation strategies, ensuring a more resilient and sustainable environment in the West Asia region and beyond.



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA

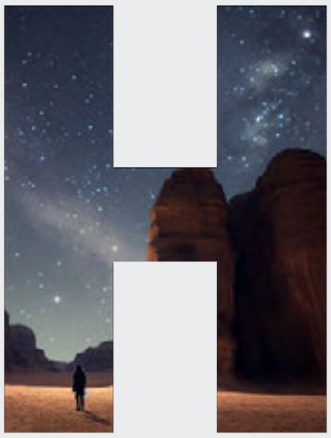

©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA



©IUCN ROWA



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024



In 2024, IUCN ROWA reinforced its role as a regional leader in conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable development. Through strategic partnerships, policy engagement, and community-driven initiatives, the office worked to address key environmental challenges across West Asia. IUCN ROWA actively contributed to regional events, bringing together governments, NGOs, and experts to drive impactful discussions and solutions.

In addition to participation, the office played a key role in organizing and facilitating events, strengthening regional cooperation, promoting Nature-based Solutions, and advancing efforts toward a more sustainable and resilient future.



©Shutterstock

Contributions for Nature & Regional Impact

- Through the Contributions for Nature platform, we successfully mobilized and documented impactful conservation actions.
- ROWA's Members achieved the set targets for contributions, demonstrating strong commitment to biodiversity goals.

19
Members submitted their contributions

67
Contributions submitted

Youth and Gender Empowerment

In 2024, IUCN's Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) promoted for inclusive conservation by empowering women and youth to lead on climate resilience and ecosystem restoration. From Shoubak's forests to Basra's marshes, women played a fundamental role in protecting nature and strengthening community resilience. This inclusivity manifests through using tools like the IUCN Green List Standard, the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), and the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM), ROWA promoted gender-responsive governance, equitable access to natural resources, and youth-led environmental action.



Media Presence and Outreach

- Highly Environmental Podcast: Launched new episodes featuring discussions on biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and community-led environmental efforts. The podcast provided a platform for experts, youth leaders, and policymakers to share insights on pressing environmental challenges.
- Strengthened online presence through targeted campaigns, social media engagement, and multimedia storytelling to amplify conservation messages.



Community Engagement and Capacity-Building

- Developed Jordan's first Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) plan, involving 340 local stakeholders in climate adaptation.
- Conducted gender-responsive training to empower women in agriculture, conservation, and climate resilience initiatives.
- Established local Advisory Committees in Egypt, ensuring community participation in protected area management.
- Trained protected area rangers in Saudi Arabia and Jordan on sustainable conservation practices.



Innovation in Conservation

- Hosted the Tech4Nature Summit, showcasing AI-powered conservation technologies and digital transformation projects.
- Strengthened data collection and monitoring through GIS and remote sensing tools.



Governance, Policy, and Regional Cooperation

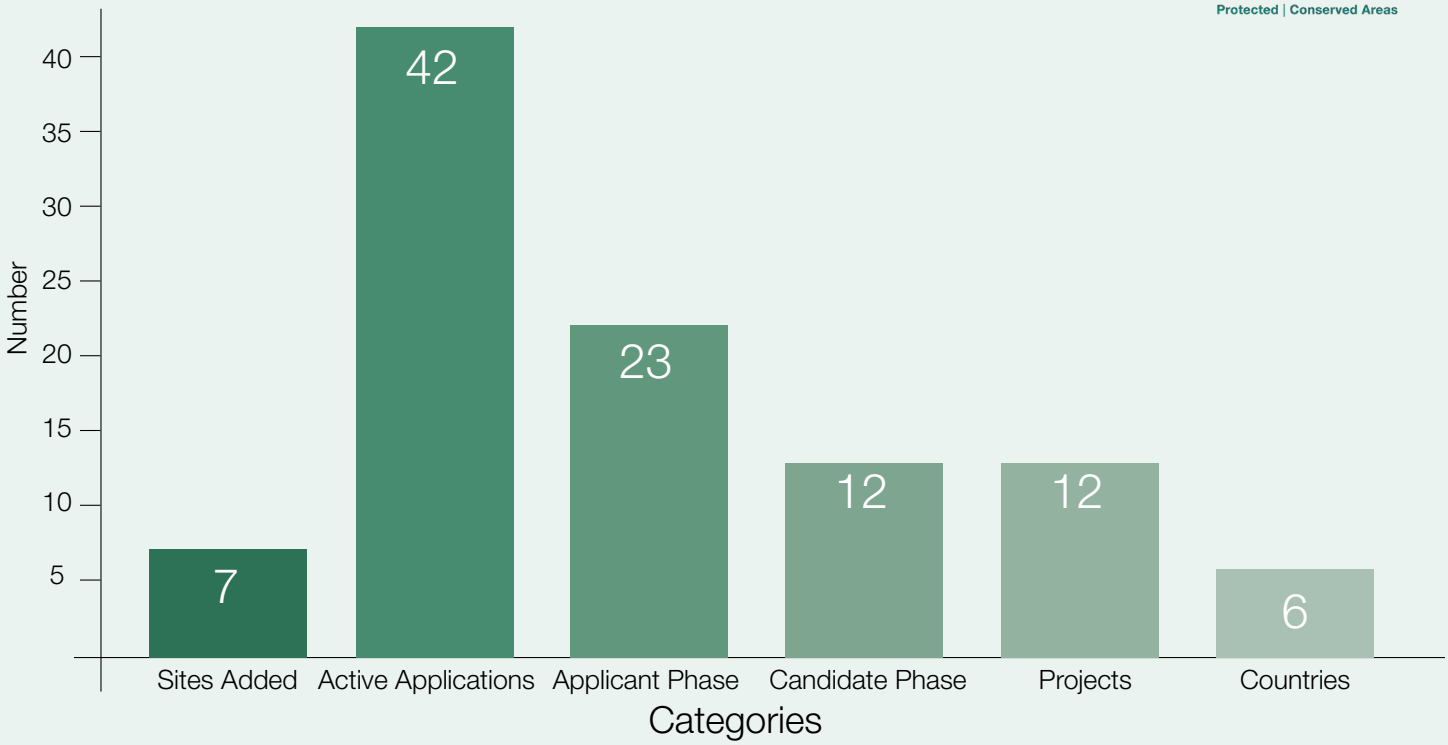
- Developed ecosystem restoration strategies for AlUla County, aligning with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.
- Designed livestock and grazing sustainability policies for AlUla's protected areas, integrating ecological best practices.
- Strengthened land degradation neutrality (LDN) efforts, participating in global initiatives at COP16 and the Saudi Green Initiative.
- Created Improvement Benchmarking Evaluation Index (IBEX) assessments for Saudi nature reserves, improving management practices.
- Facilitated the first Red List of Ecosystems (RLE) workshop, advancing regional ecosystem assessment standards.





IUCN Green List Achievements

In 2024, the West Asia region celebrated significant milestones and impact through the IUCN Green List



Advancing Conservation Excellence: MEWA's Green List Success

- Over the past few years, the region has demonstrated a growing commitment to excellence in conservation, which is evident in the increasing number of Green List applications.
- At present, we have over 40 sites across the region that have applied for the IUCN Green List certificate.
- 12 new applications came through in 2024.
- Seven sites have been accepted on the IUCN Green List sites, 6 new listings and 1 re-listing.
- MEWA region now hosts 12 Green List sites, accounting for over %10 of global sites.

Green Listed Sites in MEWA Region

Saudi Arabia:

1. King Salman bin Abdulaziz Royal Reserve: Largest protected area in region(130,000 km^2).
2. King Abdulaziz Royal Reserve: Rich biodiversity and iconic landscapes.
3. Sharaan Nature Reserve: Ecosystem restoration and native species protection.
4. Ibex Nature Reserve: Sanctuary for Arabian ibex and desert wildlife.

Jordan

- Aqaba Marine Reserve: Vital coral reef ecosystem with global significance.

Lebanon

- Shouf Biosphere Reserve: Biodiversity hotspot and cultural heritage site.

UAE

- Sir Bu Nair Island: Critical sea turtle nesting site with diverse marine life.

Green List
Protected | Conserved Areas



























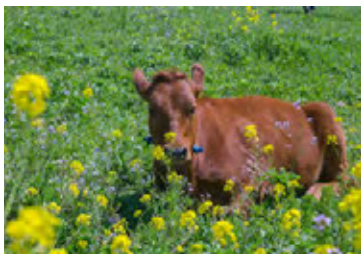







Working for a just World that values and conserves nature





INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA)
Nayef Al Kharayshah, Abdoun,
Bldg 16, Amman, Jordan
Tel : 6912 554 (6) 962+
Fax: 5546915 (6) 962+
www.iucn.org
www.iucn.org/resources/publications