

IUCN in Asia

Growing Together - Ecosystems and Livelihoods



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Growing Together

By Yolanda Kakabadse
IUCN, President

The South Asian monsoon brings large quantities of water to some areas of the sub-continent while leaving other areas parched. For example, annual rainfall in India ranges from 100 centimetres in some areas in the east to just two centimetres in some western regions. As population and demand for freshwater continues to grow, the integrated management of the Himalayan rivers in South Asia is becoming an issue of growing - and vital - importance.

Asian ecosystems support more than half the world's population and biodiversity, but they are far from being managed in a sustainable or equitable manner everywhere in the region. The diversity, integrity and productivity of many key ecosystems have been eroded significantly, and serious environmental problems persist.

Ensuring ecosystem health and conserving natural resources is a fundamental necessity for economic development if Asia is to prosper into the 21st century. The continent has seen unprecedented rates of economic growth over recent years, up to 7.5% annually, yet the economic disparity within the region is breathtaking. Japan and Singapore, for example, have relatively high scores both on the Human Development Index and the Wellbeing of Nations index that measures human development and environmental conservation, while some of the Asian States - for instance Nepal, Cambodia and Bangladesh - are among the poorest and least developed countries in the world. The continent also has the highest proportion of people suffering from extreme poverty. Against this backdrop, IUCN and other conservation organizations are fighting to alleviate poverty through conservation whilst ensuring the sound management of ecosystems.

“Growing Together: Ecosystems & Livelihoods in Asia” is therefore best suited to be the central theme

of the upcoming Regional Conservation Forum in Colombo, Sri Lanka (10-13 December 2003). The Forum, which represents the Voices of Asia on conservation issues, is a premier event to address sustainable development in this dynamic and biodiversity-rich continent. It will bring together the IUCN Constituency of members, Commission members and partner organizations from a vast region extending from Pakistan in the west to the Philippines in the east. Members include eleven States and 100 member organizations - 136 members in all - comprising almost all major conservation NGOs.

China and India have made and continue to make a significant ecological footprint on the region. This is because of both their emerging economic powers, and the fact that many of the natural resources within the country form part of a larger, regional landscape, with ecosystems straddling borders and natural resources being shared by neighbouring countries.

Sustainable management of natural resources in these two countries would therefore have a domino effect in other parts of the continent. Conversely, environmental problems in China and India often have a direct impact on what is going on in the rest of Asia. However, with a combined population of more than two billion people, the scale and severity of the environmental challenge is formidable; and the quest to stop the expansion of the desert, to control erosion of soil, and to manage floods in the large river basins is anything but effortless.

The timing of the Forum is equally significant. Coming just twelve months ahead of the Third IUCN World Conservation Congress, to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, the Regional Conservation Forum will catalyze Asia's contribution to the broader IUCN Programme. The Programme will be presented to the Congress - the highest governing body of IUCN - where governments and NGOs will sit together and discuss on equal terms the future of conservation and sustainable development. By convening these two consecutive events, IUCN is committed to ensure that deliberations in Colombo and Bangkok will make a difference both in Asia and worldwide.



A Voice for Sustainability in Asia

By Achim Steiner
IUCN, Director General

This report provides an exceptional window on the work of IUCN - The World Conservation Union in the region. From species assessments and protected areas, ecosystems and livelihoods, to knowledge management and communications, IUCN in Asia provides the region with some of the best thinking and practical initiatives for sustainability today.

Asia - A Source of Inspiration

Asia is one of the richest regions in the world in terms of its species and ecosystems and one of the most vibrant in terms of the diversity of cultural groups. It is also a region where nature and natural resources are contested domains, where geopolitical tensions threaten to damage the potential for economic development, and where millions of poor struggle to survive in degrading environments. Yet, Asia has long been one of the world's most dynamic regions in terms of its evolving institutions for biodiversity conservation and equitable natural resource management. IUCN is playing an active role in this evolution, from guiding policy reform and legislation in support of community participation, to fostering partnerships between different stakeholders. Through its progressive initiatives IUCN in Asia has much to teach the rest of the world about integrating biodiversity conservation and social equity.

Bringing Ecosystems to Development

The Asian region has a golden opportunity not only to pioneer new ecosystem approaches to biodiversity conservation, but to demonstrate their relevance to poverty reduction. IUCN supports the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and promoting social equalities, and considers these goals as ethical imperatives in their own right. However, as a conservation organisation we recognise that the Union has a special role in addressing these challenges. IUCN's ecosystem approach - from mountains to coral reefs - indicates that effective ecological management and restoration is not only good for biodiversity but can improve livelihoods and help lift

people out of poverty too. IUCN in Asia has the chance to become a world leader in articulating landscape benefits to nature and people, and in helping to get this message across to national economic planners, the private sector and the wider civil society worldwide.

Working Together as a Global Community

IUCN in Asia is playing a key role in the creative development of some of the world's major environmental conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and in helping establish synergies between the global biodiversity agenda, climate change and trade. IUCN in the region has made key inputs in to global thinking about access and benefit sharing as they relate to genetic resources, invasive species and biosafety from which other regions can benefit. The Union is also playing a vital role in helping governments implement Conventions through assistance with regional and national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Such regional support for global Conventions is not only a benefit to individual countries, but enriches the global Conventions themselves.

In short, 'IUCN in Asia' provides an impressive voice for sustainability in the region. Its achievements are testimony to the vision and hard work of the IUCN staff, Commissions and Members on the continent, and proof that by acting together we can create the power needed to bring conservation and sustainability issues to regional - and world - attention.



Changing Focus: Ecosystems and Livelihoods in Asia

By Aban Marker Kabraji
IUCN, Regional Director, Asia

Each time I am asked to write a foreword to the Asia Programme document between sessions of the World Conservation Congress, I realize what a challenge it is to gather one's thoughts on the past three years as well as look to the future. Thinking back to the last time we had a Regional Conservation Forum in Delhi in March 2000, and reflecting on the events of 9/11, it is evident that global changes have been far more momentous than one could ever have anticipated. The theme of our last Regional Conservation Forum, the security of our future in Asia's changing environment, continues to remain a matter of central concern although now there is a new dimension to the word security. This new security concern, the growing threat of terrorism, is having an effect on the geopolitical changes, the trade regimes, and globalization in general. Such changes will have long term impacts, the shapes of which we are only beginning to vaguely discern. As we look back at the effects of a shifting global regime in economics, trade, and politics, we also look forward to how the IUCN Asia Programme can most effectively adapt and evolve to best serve its members and the needs of Asia's changing environment.

In the last three years, the programme has expanded considerably into new areas such as managing ecosystems and the livelihoods dependent upon their health, most notably in the Himalayan and the Mekong regions. This is a trend which we expect to continue as the regional networks become stronger and more complex.

We have also begun to establish new country presences, most notably in Cambodia and China, and the programme has become truly pan Asian. We are beginning to work with India, Bhutan, Japan and North Korea, and expect these aspects of our programme to grow throughout the new quadrennium. The roots in

the established country programmes grow deeper as our relationships with governments and members are strengthened and the programmes mature. Some countries have faced considerable internal security issues; times of difficulty have led IUCN members and the secretariat to forge even closer relationships. Strong country presences remain the foundation of IUCN's programme in Asia, the base upon which the regional networks and emerging initiatives are built. Together, country programmes, regional networks, and emerging initiatives provide the diversity of Asia's voice at regional and global fora.

As we strengthen our national presence, we are also working towards stronger relationships with regional institutions. The establishment of strong regional programmes together with our partnerships with regional institutions has led IUCN to emerge as a significant regional player in Asia that provides the convening fora for disparate interests in groups from IUCN's diverse constituency. Consequently, the importance of IUCN's Regional Committee and the Regional Conservation Forum has become even more central to our governance structure.

In the last three years, we have welcomed 22 new institutions as members; it is our hope that this trend will continue and the membership base in Asia will become more representative of the world's most populous continent.

IUCN now has a fully fledged Asia Regional Office in Bangkok and a partnership with the Royal Thai Government, and therefore a solid presence in Thailand, which sits at the cusp of the three great sub-regions of Asia: South Asia, Southeast Asia, and North Asia. Our position here gives us the great advantage of being able to assist with the preparations for the next global meeting of IUCN members, which is the World Conservation Congress in Bangkok in November, 2004. This programme document, and the Regional Conservation Forum for which it is written, will be integral components of the many messages of the Voices of Asia, which we hope to articulate at the Bangkok Congress.

We look forward to working with the IUCN constituency to articulate those voices and messages at the Regional Conservation Forum in Sri Lanka and then at the World Conservation Congress in Bangkok.



IUCN IN ASIA

**Organisational Structure
IUCN Constituency in Asia
Regional Human Resources
Strategic Planning Team
Regional Programme Structure**

IUCN IN ASIA



The Organisational Structure of IUCN in Asia

The IUCN Asia Region, established by IUCN in 1999, is one of nine regions of the global Union and covers 23 countries stretching from Pakistan in the west to Japan in the east, from Mongolia in the north to Indonesia in the south.

The Secretariat of IUCN in Asia comprises several programme and management components which serve to play an integrated role. The Asia Regional Office (ARO), which includes the Regional Director's Office, corporate services and core central functions, provides a co-ordinating, integrating, and support structure for the region. ARO, in close collaboration with the Membership Unit at HQ, also coordinates membership and constituency related matters, many of which are directly handled at the country level. A number of regional level initiatives in emerging thematic areas are developed and co-ordinated in ARO by the Emerging and Emergency Programmes (EEP) or a focal point person at regional or country level.

Thematic technical responsibilities at the regional level are the domain of the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group (ELG), which encompasses the thematic programmes (biodiversity, environmental economics, environmental law, forests, marine and coastal areas, parks and protected areas, water and wetlands). Secretariat interactions with Commissions in the region are also mainly managed by designated focal points in ELG. The ELG is managed as two sub-groups, one based in Bangkok and the other in Colombo, each one led by an ELG Head.

At the country level the Country Offices implement IUCN activities and strategy in collaboration with state and NGO members. Presently, there are Country Offices in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Lao PDR. Some large country offices also have sub-national and project offices within several locations in the countries. A Country Representative, supported by country management and technical staff, leads each Country Office. The themes and issues covered by country offices follow the overall strategic direction of the regional programme but are prioritised in consultation with national membership. The responsibility of country offices is to serve their membership and represent the global and regional secretariat at national and sub-national offices.

In several countries where the presence of the IUCN Secretariat is still in the process of consolidation, liaison/co-ordination or project offices signal IUCN's presence. China, Thailand and Cambodia are currently managed in these ways.

As IUCN Asia operates in a decentralised way, ELG and Country Offices have autonomous, but complementary programmes that together with emerging programmes are coordinated regionally at ARO.

Additionally, IUCN Asia undertakes several programme and project responsibilities on behalf of the entire IUCN, both at the country level (Afghanistan) and global thematic level (Environmental Economics, Protected Areas).

The IUCN Asia Programme is decentralised and has great diversity but each of its sub-components contributes to achieving the objectives of the overall Intersessional Programme of IUCN and so directly to IUCN's Key Results.

IUCN Constituency in the Asia Region

Introduction

This region, which includes all the countries of IUCN's statutory region four and Pakistan from region five, is home to about 60% of the world's population and comprises 14% of the world's land mass. It is not only rich in natural resources but culturally, politically and economically diverse as well, and includes some of the richest as well as poorest countries of the world.

The IUCN constituency in the region is comprised of IUCN members, commission members, secretariat staff and other partners who, despite being non members, are active participants in implementing IUCN's mission and programme in Asia.

The Membership

There are 23 countries currently included in IUCN's Asia region. IUCN has members in 17 of these countries. IUCN membership in the region includes states, government agencies, non-governmental organisations, educational and research institutions and regional and global organisations, with headquarters in the region. At present, IUCN has a total of 136 members in the region including eleven States, 20 Government Agencies, two affiliated agencies and 103 NGOs.

Since 2000, 22 new institutions have joined IUCN as members, including three Government agencies and 19 NGOs. In December 2003, five new members from the region are expected to be admitted to the Union. One of these potential new members is an NGO from Cambodia. IUCN currently has no member from Cambodia. Admitting this NGO will increase the number of countries where IUCN has members from 17 to 18. A number of other membership applications are currently under review. There is a strong possibility that two other states and

one government agency, from a country where the state is not currently a member, may join IUCN as members in 2004. Since 2000, only nine organisations have withdrawn from IUCN membership, mostly due to their inability to pay IUCN dues.

IUCN members from the region include states, generally represented either by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the ministry responsible for the environment and/or natural resource related activities. In some cases, the representation is devolved to the government agency which is most relevant to IUCN's activities. Government agencies dealing with forests, wildlife, parks, science and technology, environment and research and training in natural resource related disciplines, form the bulk of the government agency members. The Ministries of Environment in Japan and South Korea have joined IUCN as Government agency members. The Department of Botanical and Zoological Gardens in Hong Kong is also a Government agency member.

NGO members in the region include a wide range of institutions ranging from small grass roots local organisations to large national, regional, and international organisations that operate regionally and globally. These institutions are involved in a variety of issues including nature and environmental conservation, sustainable development, research, training, awareness raising, environmental law, management of zoos, gender and women's welfare, and environmental journalism.

Committees of IUCN Members

Since 2000, National Committees comprised of IUCN members have been established in Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Japan and South Korea. These committees have already obtained the approval of the IUCN Council and are functioning as national committees. These committees represent about 80% of the IUCN members in the region. These committees meet regularly and play an active role, as a group, in shaping IUCN's programme of activities and the conservation of natural resources in their respective countries.

The establishment of the National Committee of members in China is making progress. An agreement has been reached on the contents of bylaws, which will

govern its functioning. The committee is expected to seek the approval of the IUCN Council in 2004.

An initiative for the establishment of the Regional Committee of IUCN members has also been undertaken. Draft bylaws have been formulated and the members are expected to review and finalize it and request the approval of the IUCN Council at the Regional Conservation Forum in December 2003.

IUCN Commissions

All six IUCN commissions are active in the region. Each of the commissions has appointed regional or sub-regional chairs who coordinate the activities of the respective commissions. These commissions are primarily involved in capacity building and scientific information generation and dissemination. Commissions work both independently as well as in collaboration with the IUCN secretariat and other institutions. The commissions periodically hold regional and sub-regional consultations as well as meetings of their respective members.

A total of 1,764 members of IUCN's six commissions are from the IUCN Asia Region. These include 16 members of the Commission on Environmental Law; 42 of the Commission on Ecosystem Management; 185 of the Commission on Communication and Education; 1,244 of the Species Survival Commission; 63 of the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy and 214 of the World Commission on Protected Areas.

IUCN's Partners

In addition to its members, IUCN also collaborates with a number of partners in different activities. Some of the important partner institutions include UN agencies like the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO); United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), multilateral institutions like the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank (WB), regional institutions like the Mekong

River Commission (MRC), South Asia Co-operative Environmental Programme (SACEP) and the secretariats of the Ramsar Convention, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and the World Heritage Convention.

IUCN Asia's Constituency Programme

The Asia Regional office established a constituency programme headed by a senior member of the Asia Regional Directorate in 2000 for the coordination and development of the IUCN constituency in the region. The main focus for the programme was to establish a unit entirely dedicated to engaging and servicing the IUCN Constituency in the region. The main responsibilities of the programme are to:

- Take responsibility, as regional Focal Point, for the management of all membership matters at a regional level, including the establishment of country agreements for secretariat offices.
- Facilitate the activities of IUCN Commissions and Councillors in the region.
- Facilitate interaction between IUCN and its partner organisations.
- Service the constituency with a view to improving the synergy amongst IUCN members, the Commissions, secretariat and its partners in the region.
- Organise the Regional Conservation Forum and other regional fora and help prepare and provide support for the World Conservation Congress.

The Constituency Programme involves senior level secretariat staff as focal points for the different country offices in the region. The programme is devoted to proactively engaging the constituency, recruiting new members, organising consultations among the constituents, forging partnership with non-member organisations and an improved servicing of the IUCN constituency in the region.

The programme has also been very active in the formulation of the IUCN Membership Strategy, which is currently being finalized by the

Membership Unit at IUCN Headquarters. The IUCN Membership Strategy will lay down the parameters for improved servicing of the IUCN membership through building knowledge and understanding, improving recruitment and strengthening the engagement and retention of existing members. The general objectives of the strategy are to facilitate and enable members to:

- Bring conservation concerns onto the world stage collectively thereby contributing to global sustainable development.
- Share conservation knowledge and experience.
- Build bridges among stakeholders and between conservation practitioners and policy makers.
- Mobilize and forge alliances and partnerships for conservation.

The Constituency Programme has been involved in servicing the existing membership and commissions, recruitment of new members, organizing regional fora for the members and commissions, ensuring participation from the region in different global fora, facilitating the formation and functioning of national committees, supporting the councillors from the region, forging partnerships and establishing collaborative arrangements with different governments and non member partners, and the dissemination of information generated by IUCN to different constituents. The Programme also acts as the focal point for contacts from outside the constituency.

Regional Human Resources

In its early days, HR in the IUCN Asia Region was seen as a mere personnel function, which focussed mainly on contract management and recruitment. With the rapid growth of the Asia programme coupled with the diversity of staff and operations, a strategy to treat staff as its key asset emerged. The scope of HR was enhanced to include careful management and development of staff.

In August 2001, the senior management of IUCN Asia acknowledged the need for HR to play a strategic role in a knowledge-based organisation such as IUCN. At this stage, a dedicated Regional Human Resources Unit was set up.

Major Roles of Regional HR

It is a service provider carrying out the following routine tasks: HR Policy and Procedures, Recruitment and Selection, Performance Management, Training and Development, Compensation and Benefits etc.

In its advisory role, the Unit through its HR focal points in the region, advises country offices and regional programmes on HR issues such as input into policy and procedure development at the country level, counselling, grievance handling etc.

It supports line managers by providing the tools, guidance and counselling to enhance their effectiveness in managing IUCN's human resources.

As a strategic partner together with other core functions (Finance, Programme Coordination, Constituency Co-ordination and Organisational Development) and the Regional Director, HR seeks to assist the region to effectively utilise its resources whilst providing a value added service.

In assuming this role, Regional HR has proactively aligned itself with IUCN Asia's Programme and participates in the formulation of strategic plans in order to assess and provide the required services as aforementioned. This involves understanding the work of IUCN, thinking and hiring strategically, and building networks and alliances within and outside the organisation.

These roles are expected to be played, and indeed are being played, throughout Asia, through linkages with the Regional HR Unit, HR Units or focal points in Country Offices.

Moving Forward: Regional HR Mission

Regional HR, in its efforts to assist IUCN Asia implement the strategies that have been formulated, contributes to the organisational goal of becoming a more dynamic, effective and sustainable organisation, efficiently managed to pursue the global vision and mission of IUCN in Asia.

Our HR Mission is to deliver a competent HR service utilising the best practices, and well-managed systems and procedures to enable IUCN Asia reach its desired goals and objectives.

Consequently, our future direction will be geared towards building and consolidating a Human Resources Management Team across the region, one that is professionally competent and able to provide a pro-active service to meet the ever-increasing demands of the region, while respecting the diverse needs of each constituent country or unit.

We aim not only to improve and refine systems and procedures, but also workplace competence and organisational capabilities so that IUCN Asia Region can transform its formulated strategy into reality.

Financial Operations for the Period 2000-2003

The financial results for the period under review reflect the structural and operational changes resulting from the consolidation of all programmes in Asia. The stronger portfolio base and the recruitment of professional staff for the regional office, country and thematic programmes provided the opportunities for

improving the systems and procedures in programme development and delivery, as well as the basis for investments in strengthening capabilities in the region as it continued to expand to other areas. This has manifested itself in a steady growth which is reflected in the financial indicators of performance.

From the year 2000 to the estimates for 2003, total active portfolio increased from \$42 million to \$44 million. **Table 1** shows the active portfolio distribution by countries and thematic programmes in the region.

Annual turnover from active projects had significantly increased by 43% from a \$10.8 million level in 2000 to the 2003 target of \$15.5 million. The increasing rate of turnover over total active portfolio of projects from 25% in 2000 to 35% in 2003 indicates the improvement in efficiency of project delivery.

To replenish active projects that are being completed, the region continues to develop projects for donor funding. Projects in this category increased from the \$84 million level in 2000 to its current 2003 level of \$88 million.

The table below summarises the financial highlights for the four year period.

Financial Highlights

(in \$ '000)

	2000	2001	2002	2003*
Annual Turnover of Funds ^a	10,858	8,996	11,162	15,489
Active Projects (Table 1 and 2) ^b	41,948	34,462	40,767	44,199
Rate of Turnover from Total Active Projects	25%	26%	28%	35%

* based on 2003 mid year budget

a total expenditures from projects and other activities

b current projects under implementation based on signed contracts

Table 1: Active Project Portfolio Managed by Countries and Programmes

(in \$ '000)

Country / Programme

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Pakistan	23,141	18,272	19,346	21,879
Nepal	1,935	1,572	2,708	3,006
Sri Lanka	1,852	1,970	2,043	2,160
Vietnam	3,315	4,515	8,339	8,527
Bangladesh	4,591	4,616	4,751	4,845
Laos	4,995	679	298	301
China	-	-	19	29
Thailand	-	-	0	10
Thematic programmes	2,120	2,838	3,264	3,441
	41,949	34,462	40,767	44,199

The region continues to enjoy and build upon established donor relationships and also create new ones. **Table 2** below reflects Asia Programme's continuing partnerships with donors.

Table 2: Donor Profile for Active Portfolio

(in \$ '000)

Donor

	2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
ADB / WB	2,609	6.2	4,444	12.9	3,988	9.8	3,872	8.8
Germany	12	0	540	1.6	540	1.3	540	1.2
Canada	2,908	6.9	3,404	9.9	1,612	4	1,842	4.2
Denmark	1,189	2.8	1,929	5.6	1,108	2.7	1,162	2.6
U.K.	-	-	-	-	250	0.6	238	0.5
EC / EU	6,997	16.7	-	-	1,747	4.3	2,110	4.8
Internal	238	0.6	105	0.3	369	0.9	631	1.4
Netherlands	4,897	11.7	2,005	5.8	8,755	21.5	8,941	20.2
Norway	2,259	5.4	571	1.7	283	0.7	1,305	3
RAMSAR	26	0.1	24	0.1	-	-	25	0.1
Switzerland	3,489	8.3	5,007	14.5	4,910	12	6,206	14
Sweden	2,376	5.7	346	1	230	0.6	-	-
UN	14,281	34	14,690	42.6	15,461	37.9	15,224	34.4
United States	-	-	52	0.2	254	0.6	554	1.3
Other Government	344	0.8	755	2.2	1,072	2.6	270	0.6
Other NGO	324	0.8	590	1.7	188	0.5	1,279	2.9
	41,949	100	34,462	100	40,767	100	44,199	100

With a strengthened structure and systems in place, the region looks at an Asia Programme that is robust and sustainable in the coming years.

Strategic Planning Team

Background

The Strategic Planning Team (SPT) is one of the new structures that emerged from the reorganization of the IUCN Asia Region, which was completed during 2002.

The *raison d'être* of the SPT is to provide stimulus, analysis, and planning support for strategic issues to the Regional Director and Asia Regional Directorate. SPT is a team construct, comprising four functions: organisational development; programme coordination; project development; and emerging and emergency programmes.

Role and Functions

The role of SPT is to assist the Asia Regional Director and the Asia Regional Directorate to develop and maintain the IUCN Asia Region as a coherent and integrated component of the global Union, identify issues for debate, and help in maintaining focus and remaining forward looking as the external environment changes and new ideas emerge.

SPT's role can be conceived as two intertwined activities: as a quick consulting body for urgent decisions for the RD and ARD in general, and as a strategic reflection group that exchanges information and discusses issues before presenting them to other components of the region. SPT has an integrated overview of the whole Asia programme and a broad perspective, and can thus assist the ARD to look at the larger picture.

The main functions of the SPT are to:

- support a strategic focus of the Asia Region through the development of an integrated, cutting-edge, programme;
- act as the hub for all tasks related to Asia Region re-organization;
- collate and synthesise “external intelligence” to facilitate informed decision making;
- facilitate assessment and building of strategic capabilities of the region;
- support the formulation of medium and long term strategic plans for the region and a Business Plan for the region;

- monitor performance of the region and provide guidance for improvement;
- assist in implementing decisions of the Asia Regional Directorate (ARD).

SPT Operations

As a team, SPT has functions over and above those of individual members. Any SPT member can be consulted in her/his own individual capacity.

SPT itself operates in two parallel and simultaneous ways: flexible and formal.

The flexible way allows SPT members individually to provide quick reactions and comments to questions, issues, and the drafting of papers which do not require extensive and formal treatment.

The formal process is reserved for issues that require specific attention and discussion by SPT, and the generation of an identifiable output (paper, document, etc.) that presents the position of the Team. This formal output is submitted to the Regional Director and/or ARD, depending on the particular issue.

Regional Programme Structure: Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group

IUCN's regional programme in Asia is composed of seven technical programmes - biodiversity, environmental economics, environmental law, forests, marine and coastal, protected areas, and water and wetlands.

Since January 2003, these technical programmes have started to work together as a regional Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group (ELG). This group is organised in two clusters, each with the same pan-Asian mandate, and consisting of a combination of ecosystem-based, socio-economic, and cross-cutting components. One cluster is located in Colombo, Sri Lanka (biodiversity and species, environmental economics, marine and coastal), the other is based in Bangkok, Thailand (environmental law, forests, protected areas, water and wetlands).

The aim of this new way of organising IUCN's regional technical programmes in Asia is to better reflect, and deliver, an ecosystems and livelihoods approach to nature conservation - one that is based on simultaneously improving both socio-economic and environmental status, with a special focus on the poorest groups. This approach, and the organisation of ELG, is founded on the fact that IUCN's core business, as reflected in its vision, mission and goals, is to influence and build capacity to strengthen both people's livelihoods and the diversity and integrity of the region's ecosystems. This requires a two-pronged strategy which deals simultaneously with both human and environmental needs, and focuses on neither one to the exclusion of the other.

There is a clear rationale to this. On the one hand, people rely on ecosystems for their livelihoods, and on the other hand human activities in turn impact on ecosystems (and thus on socio-economic welfare). At the same time, ecosystem conservation cannot be considered to be either equitable or sustainable unless it makes a tangible contribution to livelihood development and security in Asia - at local, national, and regional levels. The essence of the way in which the ELG works is thus to maximise the positive influences of people's livelihoods on ecosystems, and ecosystems on people's livelihoods. A concern with the poorest groups in society, especially on minimising the negative impacts of conservation on the poor and on reducing the incidence of poverty through sustainable and equitable ecosystem conservation and use, lies at the heart of this approach.

The following reports from the Regional Thematic Programmes reveal the extent to which IUCN's work on knowledge, capacity and governance for ecosystem management and species conservation is being:

- more closely tied to livelihoods,
- increasingly directed towards the economic development sectors,
- undertaken more comprehensively at all levels, from global to local, and
- carried out in collaboration with a wide range of new partners.



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REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

Biodiversity
Environmental Economics
Environmental Law
Forests
Marine and Coastal
Protected Areas
Water and Wetlands



BIODIVERSITY

The IUCN Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia (RBP), was launched in 1996, with the objective of facilitating effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Asia. Support for the initiation and development of the programme has been provided by BMZ, SDC, the World Bank/Netherlands Partnership Programme, and more recently by UNDP/UNEP.

In the seven years since its inception, RBP has made significant progress and activities are now underway in 12 countries in the region. This broad-based involvement has enabled the programme to utilize a wide variety of approaches, define a clear set of regional priorities, and identify a range of effective intervention strategies. RBP is currently working on mainstreaming biodiversity into Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and development planning, with the intention of enhancing ecosystem based approaches to sustainable livelihoods.

Structure of the Programme

The RBP is based in Colombo with activities in 12 countries of Asia. It is comprised of a Programme Head, Senior Biodiversity Officer, two Junior Professional Officers, two Programme Assistants and an Executive Secretary. The activities of RBP are guided by a steering committee consisting of a Regional Director-IUCN in

Asia as the Chair, the Chief Scientist of IUCN, and several senior managers of IUCN as members. The Biodiversity Programme Officers of respective country offices serve as RBP's Focal Points.

Key Programme Components

The programme components of the RBP include implementing key areas of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) such as:

- National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) (Article 6)
- Identifying and monitoring important components of biodiversity (Article 7)
- Protected areas planning and management (Article 8)
- Awareness of, and support for, biodiversity in general and the CBD in particular (Article 13)
- National and regional level action on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing (Article 15)
- Biosafety issues (Article 19)
- Raising the “voice” of S&SEA countries at key CBD events, including the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the Conferences of Parties (CoP)

More recently, RBP began working on MEA synergies, specifically focussing on biodiversity and climate change issues and commencing activities aimed at mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into development planning and poverty alleviation.

Key Activities Under Implementation and Major Achievements 2000-2003

The RBP firmly believes in building partnerships to achieve its mission of implementing the CBD in the Asia region. With this principle as its bottom line, RBP has been working with its partners at national, regional, and global levels. Within this framework, priority themes have been identified on the basis of regional needs as a follow up to Phase I of the Programme (1997-2000). The key priority themes

include the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, Species Monitoring and Assessment, Legal and Regulatory Issues, and Environmental Governance and Synergies between MEAs. Under these themes, the RBP has undertaken the following activities.

Implementing NBSAP's

The RBP supported many initiatives across Asia that focused on the development and implementation of NBSAPs including support to Bangladesh and Lao PDR on the development of NBSAPs, popularising NBSAPs and MEAs in Lao PDR, addressing economics and biodiversity issues in NBSAPs, and the development of Global Guidelines on Sub-national Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs).

Identification and Monitoring of Biodiversity

Continued support was provided to the region on red listing and their development and use for conservation plans, identification and monitoring of invasive species in Nepal, enhancing local capacities on taxonomy, and forest restoration and rehabilitation studies in South Asia.

Development of Communication Tools and Awareness Raising Material for Implementing the CBD

The RBP produced a set of communication and awareness raising materials, including production of a ‘Resource Kit’ on mountain biodiversity, biosafety, and climate change. The kits were distributed widely in the region during important events such as the CoP and the SBSTTA of the CBD, and the CoP of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Also, in an attempt to promote the use of red lists for national policy making, RBP is supporting the translation of red lists into Bangla in Bangladesh.

Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)

The RBP produced a ‘Resource Book’ on ABS for policy makers and practitioners of ABS in the region. It is anticipated that the book will provide needed guidance on issues and practical ways of addressing these at the national level. The RBP also provided technical assistance to the IUCN Nepal office in the final stages of the project dealing with traditional

knowledge and biodiversity. Technical assistance was also provided to Sri Lanka, Nepal, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Pakistan on ABS issues.

Capacity Building for Implementing Biosafety Protocol

The RBP is currently implementing an Asia regional capacity building initiative on biosafety in partnership with several regional and international organizations. As part of the capacity strengthening activities two regional workshops were supported by RBP to enhance the technical understanding of issues relating to biosafety. A CD on biosafety was developed that includes several recent publications on risk assessment and management as well as issues with legal implications.

Strengthening the Voice of Asia

One of the key areas of focus for the RBP has been enhancing the negotiating skills of the region on key international environmental issues. To facilitate this, the RBP, in association with country offices in the region, has held several national consultations and preparatory meetings prior to the CBD and UNFCCC, COP's and SBSTTA's.

Fostering Synergies Between Conventions

RBP has initiated a Regional Capacity Building Programme on mainstreaming climate change and biodiversity in Asia. RBP's interest in climate change focuses on specific issues such as the impacts of climate change on biodiversity as well as biodiversity responses to climate impacts (including vulnerability, adaptation and mitigation). A resource kit on climate change has been developed that attempts to provide comprehensive information on issues dealing with climate change and biodiversity.

Besides these activities, the RBP also continued to develop key resource material and published several relevant information documents. All the publications of the programme can now be accessed through the following website. <http://www.biodiversityasia.org>.

Under the identified priority thematic areas, the RBP has so far achieved 92% of the activities included in the quadrennial plan 2000-2004. The remaining initiatives are expected to be achieved during 2004.

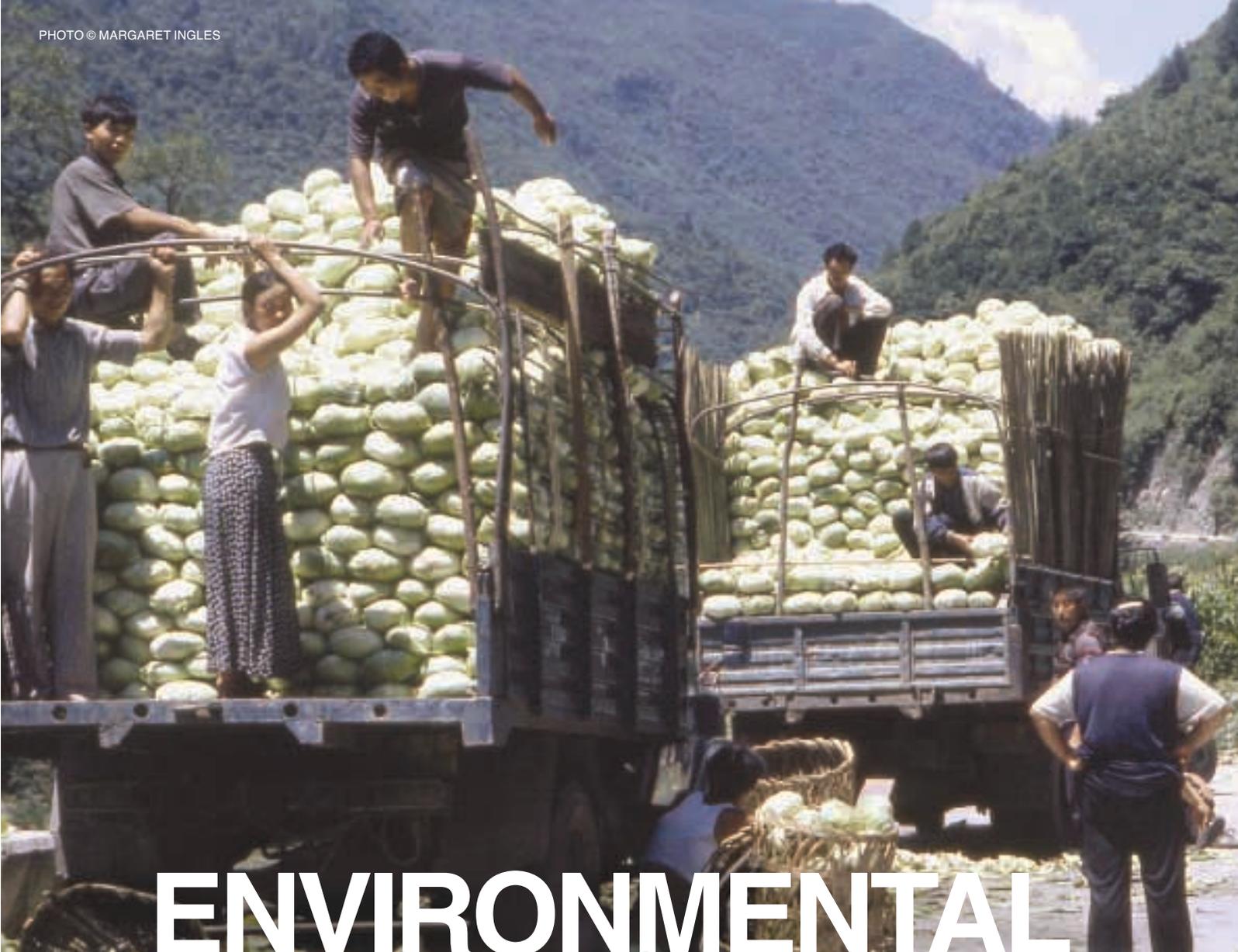
New Programme Components in the Pipeline

After long and intensive consultations within IUCN, its membership, and the CBD focal points in the region, the RBP produced its programme strategy for the period 2002-2005. This document provides a conceptual framework for the RBP's activities and rolls over into IUCN's next quadrennial planning period as well. The RBP will continue to work on initiatives relating to the themes mentioned above. In addition, the RBP intends to focus on the following issues in the future:

- Synergies between Multilateral Environmental Agreements
- Ecosystems and sustainable livelihood issues
- Policy issues and linkages to address conservation and sustainable development

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ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS

IUCN Asia established a Regional Environmental Economics Programme (REEP) in May 2001. This was based on the realization that some of the most pervasive threats to the environment in the region, and thus some of the most urgent issues that need to be addressed, are linked to economic forces and conditions.

One of the most important of these linkages is that environmental goods and services have an extremely high economic value because they form the basis of much human production and consumption - and are particularly important to the livelihoods of the poorest sectors of the population. The impacts of environmental degradation and loss are potentially devastating in economic terms. Yet, there is generally a very poor recognition among

decision-makers and planners of the high economic value of the environment, or of the costs of the economic policies and activities that lead to its degradation. At the same time environmental and conservation sectors have often failed to take action to address these concerns and to ensure that on-the-ground conservation activities are carried out in ways that are financially and economically efficient, equitable and sustainable. Quite simply, for many people (and firms, and governments) it remains more profitable to degrade the environment than to conserve it despite the huge social, economic, and long-term costs this may cause to others.

REEP's focus is on building regional capacity and information to deal with these issues, and on identifying and promoting economic measures that can address them at the regional and national policy levels, and also through their integration into field-based projects and conservation activities.

Structure of the Programme

Consultations with a wide range of government and non-government agencies in Asia highlighted a number of priority issues for REEP. The priorities of REEP include the need to articulate the economic value of the environment and to justify its conservation in economic and development terms to governments, to industries and the private sector, and to the local communities who live beside and manage natural resources. Another important issue is the need to find new and innovative ways of raising funds for the environment, and investigate mechanisms for ensuring that financial resources are distributed to all of the groups and sectors that support and bear the costs of conservation. A critical area is also to identify and demonstrate concrete mechanisms which can act as positive and enabling economic incentives for conservation, at all levels and in all sectors, and help to overcome some of the distortions and perverse incentives which are currently contributing to environmental degradation. Finally, underpinning the use of all these tools, REEP is working to communicate

information and build the capacity of development and conservation policy-makers, on-the-ground planners, decision-makers who are responsible for administering ecosystems and resources, and for civil society groups who are actively engaged in using and managing environmental goods and services.

Key Activities Under Implementation and Major Achievements 2000-2003

One of REEP's key guiding principles has been to work closely with IUCN country programmes and national members and partners in the region. Over the period 2001-2003 REEP has formed a wide range of partnerships with governments, NGOs, and research institutions working on environmental economics in Asia. Providing cross-cutting economic technical support to IUCN's other regional thematic programmes (forests, wetlands and water resources, protected areas, law, biodiversity, marine and coastal) has also been an important component of REEP activities.

Initially based in Karachi, REEP participated closely in the development of a Pakistan Environmental Economics Programme. In August 2002, the Sri Lanka Environmental Economics Programme was established and REEP shifted its base to Colombo. Other national and sub-regional level environmental economics programmes and staff were also established during the 2001-2003 period, including the Bangladesh Environment, Economy and Poverty Programme, the Vietnam Environmental Economics Programme, and the Lower Mekong Environmental Economics Programme. At the same time, REEP has worked closely with the South Asian Network for Development and Environmental Economics (SANDEE), located in the country office of IUCN Nepal. Between 2001 and 2003 REEP has also played a major role in coordinating, guiding and supporting IUCN's environmental activities at the global level and in other regions of the world, including Eastern, Southern, and West Africa and Meso and South America.

Developing the Financial and Economic Components of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans

REEP acted as the global coordinator of the economics component *Use of Economic Incentives in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans* of the UNEP-GEF Biodiversity Planning Support Programme. REEP carried out a global review of experiences and lessons learned in the use of economics in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), as well as conducted detailed case studies for South Asia, South East Asia, Pakistan, Vietnam, Eastern Africa and South America. A number of training and awareness workshops for economic and biodiversity decision-makers were held in Asia and an annotated bibliography of biodiversity economics and guidelines in using economics for NBSAPs were produced.

In collaboration with the Regional Biodiversity Programme and Pakistan Environmental Economics Programme, REEP also assisted in the production of the document *Financing NBSAPs in Asia: A Reference Guide*, which outlined funding resources available for NBSAPs in the region. REEP is currently working with Lao PDR's Science, Technology and Environment Agency to produce Lao's first economic assessment of biodiversity, develop a financial and economic strategy for the NBSAP, and conduct training on biodiversity economics for government staff.

Integrating Ecosystem Economic Values in to Water and River Basin Management

REEP provides the global and Asia coordination for the DFID-funded project entitled Integrating Wetland Economic Values into River Basin Management. From 2002 to 2005, this project will be working to increase the awareness and the capacity for planners, policy-makers, and managers to identify and use economic measures for wetland conservation. As well as working at demonstration sites in Africa and Latin America, the project has field activities in Ruhuna and Kala Oya river basins in Sri Lanka, Attapeu Province in Lao PDR and Stoeng Treng wetlands in Cambodia. In addition to carrying out training in wetland valuation and developing economic and financial

components of wetland management plans in these sites and countries, the project includes the production of a series of cross-regional and national policy briefs and technical papers and state of the art toolkits on wetlands and water valuation and ecosystem financing mechanisms.

Additional activities that are being carried out under this theme include the development of economic and financial components of conservation activities in Koshi Tappu and Ghodagodi wetlands in Nepal, economic valuation and assessment in Cox's Bazaar and Hakaluki wetlands in Bangladesh, and the valuation of environmental goods and services associated with That Luang Marsh in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

Using Economic Tools to Address Forest-livelihood-poverty Linkages

REEP has undertaken the economic component of the project entitled Lower Mekong Protected Area Review, in collaboration with IUCN's Regional Protected Areas Programme. As part of this project, IUCN produced a document detailing lessons learned and experiences in the use of economic valuation for protected area management in the Lower Mekong Region (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam). Detailed case studies on the links between protected area goods and services, local socio-economic development processes, and poverty alleviation were carried out for Nam Et and Phou Loei National Biodiversity Conservation Areas in Lao PDR and Ream, Kirirom, Bokor and Kep National Parks in Cambodia.

With WWF, REEP is also engaged in carrying out a series of case studies and producing a series of documents that aim to communicate the economic value of biodiversity to decision-makers and planners in Lao PDR. Focusing on forest-livelihood-poverty linkages, the first of these field studies recently took place in the natural forests of Sekong Province.

Identifying Sustainable Financing Strategies for Protected Areas

REEP was responsible for implementing the financing component of the UNDP-GEF project entitled Creating Protected Areas for Resource

Conservation Using Landscape Ecology in collaboration with IUCN Vietnam. In addition to producing a report on the current status of PA financing in Vietnam, the project involved capacity building and awareness workshops for government staff, and the development of sustainable financing strategies for Na Hang Nature Reserve, Ba Be National Park and Yok Don National Park.

REEP has also provided technical assistance to the Hon Mun Marine Protected Area Project in Vietnam. This included holding an awareness seminar on economic and financial aspects of marine protected area management for provincial government staff as well as supporting the design of user fees and financing mechanisms for the marine protected area authority.

New Programme Components in the Pipeline

- REEP is currently engaged in the development phase, which will last six months, of the project entitled Valuing Protected Areas in South Asia (funded through GEF-UNEP). Covering Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, this project will focus on training and capacity building in protected area valuation, and on the development of economic valuation tools for the management of demonstration PAs in each country.
- REEP is also in the early stages of developing a project entitled Promoting Public and Private Investment in Ecosystems as Water Infrastructure. This project is part of IUCN's Water and Nature Initiative, and intends, through a consultative and participatory process, to generate and disseminate practical and policy relevant information on best practices and guidelines for investing in ecosystems as part of water infrastructure in South Asia.
- Working with the Regional Marine Programme and with relevant Country Programmes, REEP is currently engaged in designing and scoping a series of activities concerned with economic aspects of pro-poor and integrated approaches to the management of marine and coastal resources

in South Asia (India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka).

- Working with the Regional Wetlands and Water Resources Programme and with relevant Country Programmes, REEP is currently engaged in designing and scoping a series of activities concerned with financing environmental flows in Vietnam and Sri Lanka.
- REEP has prepared and submitted concepts on developing and implementing pro-poor payments for environmental services in South and South East Asia, focusing on upland forest catchments and downstream wetlands. These include work carried out in Sri Lanka and Vietnam as part of the ICRAF Rewarding the Upland Poor for Environmental Services (RUPES) consortium, as well as a proposed cross-regional learning project involving Southeast Asia and Central America.
- REEP is also in the early stages of discussing the possibility of carrying out a series of case studies demonstrating poverty-environment linkages in China, in collaboration with DFID and CCICED.
- A process of discussion and consultation with IUCN members and partners in Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines) is currently ongoing to scope out and develop environmental economics programmes in these countries.

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ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Environmental law, as practiced by IUCN since the 1960s, has always been about more than just legislation. From the beginning, IUCN has approached environmental law in the context of what today would be called “environmental governance” - with a focus on creating sound policy and legal frameworks and using information management and capacity building to empower people to use them. In the 1980s and early 1990s, IUCN Country Offices in Asia were some of the first in IUCN worldwide to bring lawyers on staff and formally integrate law and governance into their national programmes.

Within the past decade, the global community has been expanding the concept of “governance” from a focus on power and control to encompass the ways power is exercised and how control is achieved - through transparency and accountability, participatory processes, increased access to information and justice, among others.

It has been said that in most Asian countries, governance is effective only at the local level. Challenging legal questions arise for Asian institutions trying to strengthen environmental governance at the national and regional levels and will require governments and their citizens to “think outside the box”. A reorganization of its programme structure that took effect as of January 2003 will enable IUCN in Asia to more effectively address the challenges of environmental governance as it is now understood, by closing the field/policy/governance loop. The Regional Environmental Law Programme Asia (RELPA), which became a full-time programme in September 2001, was integrated into an interdisciplinary Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group (ELG). Until September 2001, the Programme Head for IUCN Pakistan’s environmental law unit had coordinated the first steps toward creating RELPA. In May 2003, RELPA was moved from the IUCN Pakistan Country Office to its current location, IUCN’s Asia Regional Office in Bangkok.

Structure of the Programme

RELPA got started by consulting with IUCN members, Commission of Environmental Law (CEL) members, lawyers in IUCN Country Offices, and other partners in Asia to scope out the parameters of the programme. From this process emerged six strategic focus areas:

- Capacity building (formal education as well as informal training)
- Information channeling
- Networking
- Exchange programmes
- Research
- Technical assistance

For the 2001-2004 Quadrennial Plan, the strategic focus areas were expressed as four basic objectives:

- facilitate compilation, analysis, synthesis and dissemination of materials and information about the theory and practice of environmental law (information channeling, research);
- facilitate exchange of expertise and experience (capacity building, exchange programmes);
- support national, subregional and regional initiatives on legal issues in sustainable use and

conservation of natural resources (technical assistance);

- catalyze interactions of constituents and partners to develop and implement the programme (networking).

The initial consultation process also identified a range of ways of working for RELPA that range from neutral - providing a platform or forum for CEL members and IUCN members and partners to come together on issues in environmental law in Asia - to active - networking, coordinating the work of multiple partners, and synergising inputs from a variety of sources.

In addition to the substantive aspects of the programme, RELPA provides IUCN’s Asia Regional Programme with an essential service - that of in-house counsel. This includes drafting and reviewing contracts and other agreements, including IUCN Country Office agreements with host country governments and Memoranda of Understanding with partner organizations. During 2000-2003, RELPA drafted or revised the agreements with governments for all but one of IUCN’s offices in Asia, along with dozens of regional and national contracts and MoUs.

During 2001-2003, RELPA relied on all three pillars of IUCN - members, commissions, and secretariat - to carry out its work. Members of IUCN’s Commission on Environmental Law have been involved in every RELPA activity, and RELPA routinely channels information of interest to Asian CEL members. With encouragement from the CEL Regional Vice Chair and support from RELPA, IUCN Country Offices in South Asia identified and recruited legal experts in their countries to become CEL members. RELPA assisted five Country Offices in convening meetings of national CEL members to acquaint them with IUCN’s programme and staff in the country and to start a process of regular collaboration between CEL members and the Country Offices. Three IUCN members in Asia specialize in environmental law and there are “Centres of Excellence” at four Asian law schools. During 2001-2003 RELPA carried out or began to plan activities with most of them.

Key Activities Under Implementation and Major Achievements 2000-2003

Legal issues cannot be addressed independently of the national or regional political context in which they arise. Working on them also requires collaboration with partners who are intimately familiar with the particular national or regional conditions involved. Therefore, RELPA's approach has been to ensure that the majority of its work is done in collaboration with a combination of two or more IUCN members, CEL members, IUCN Country Offices and IUCN Regional Programmes.

RELPA's ongoing activities include:

- preparing a handbook for national decision-makers on policy and legal issues in implementing the CBD's provisions on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing. RELPA is developing the handbook for the Regional Biodiversity Programme.
- carrying out a project on the impact of resource rights on livelihood security in South Asia. Three IUCN Country Offices – in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan – are collaborating on this project, along with an NGO partner in India, and the Environment and Security Working Group of IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP).
- developing a training programme on biodiversity and trade. The training module will initially be delivered in China and will then be adapted for use in other countries in Asia. Partners in this initiative are the IUCN China Country Programme and the International Institute for Sustainable Development, an IUCN member.
- contributing to creating and delivering a training course on environmental law for non-lawyer government officials from the ASEAN countries. The Regional Biodiversity Programme and the Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL), an IUCN member, are the partners for this initiative.
- contributing to an international workshop on the use of international mechanisms for the control and responsible use of alien species in aquatic



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ecosystems, in collaboration with the Regional Water and Wetlands Programme.

- developing an orientation course for IUCN staff lawyers in Asia, with the support of IUCN's Environmental Law Centre. This training package will be adapted for use with IUCN members and CEL members at regional and national level.

RELPA works one-on-one with individual regional and country programmes to provide input on specific projects and guidance on incorporating law into their own programmes. IUCN Country Offices in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka all received support for building or re-focusing the environmental law components of their programmes. The Regional Marine Programme received support for designing the legal and institutional element of a South Asia sub-regional project on integrated coastal zone management. RELPA also developed a programme proposal for coordinating the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in Lao PDR, and is advising a similar effort in Sri Lanka.

In addition to its work in Asia, RELPA began supporting environmental law activities in other regions, beginning with East Africa.

Other selected activities carried out during 2001-2003 with a focus on forest law included:

- coordinating the review and analysis of legal and regulatory aspects of forest fires for Project Firefight South East Asia;
- conducting a study of the regulation of the trade in timber and non-timber forest products in the Lower Mekong Basin countries;
- providing the legal input for the initiative to revise the Asian Development Bank's Forest Sector Policy.

New Programme Components in the Pipeline

Capacity building will continue to be a central part of RELPA's efforts during 2005-2008. This will include initiatives in formal legal education as well as informal training. RELPA is working with IUCN Country Offices and CEL members in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, and with CEL members in Malaysia, to develop a proposal for national level follow-up to a 1997-1998 IUCN Asia wide regional initiative that trained law teachers from developing countries in the region to teach environmental law.

Demonstrating the links between law and livelihoods will also continue to be a major focus. RELPA is working on the preliminary concept for extending its work on the links between resource rights and livelihood security to other sub-regions in Asia and to other IUCN regions outside Asia, projecting to launch the broader initiative at the World Conservation Congress in 2004.

To expand its practice-oriented work on linking resource rights with sustainable livelihoods, RELPA has developed a proposal to tackle environmental justice in the rural, natural resource context, as opposed to the original urban/pollution focus of the concept.

This work will begin in South Asia, with plans to expand it to South East Asia, and will be coordinated with the initiative on resource rights and livelihood security.

Building on work done in Pakistan, RELPA is developing a concept for demonstrating the intersection between customary law and statutory law and how to use it to make laws that enhance livelihood security and reduce the potential for conflicts over natural resources.

RELPA is in the early stages of working with additional countries in the region to develop programmes for coordinating MEA implementation at the national level, and to provide a regional platform for sharing experiences and developing guidelines for a general approach to maximizing inter-linkages among MEAs. The Convention on Biological Diversity will remain the central focus, with particular emphasis on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing, biosafety, and the relationship between MEAs and trade.

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FORESTS

About half of IUCN's portfolio of work in the region is related in some way to forest conservation. This includes the work being done in the country and regional thematic programmes. Activities undertaken by the country programmes include, or have included, the development and implementation of national conservation strategies and associated policy instruments, regulatory mechanisms, national planning procedures, protected area systems, species survival action plans, environmental impact assessment procedures and education curriculum that impact upon forests. In addition, field projects have been designed and implemented for identifying and assessing the biological diversity of forests and protecting endemic and endangered species. These field projects have included flora and fauna surveys, assessments of conservation status, updating lists of rare and threatened animals, the development of indicators for habitat conservation, developing and testing incentives and systems for the sustainable use of non-timber forest products, and the development of conservation management plans for specific forest areas of high priority.

The role of the Regional Forest Programme (RFP) has been to support these efforts by the country programmes as well as managing a portfolio of regional forest conservation projects. The programme also facilitates the learning and communication of forest conservation lessons, addresses cross-boundary issues, contributes to the work of the Global Forest Programme (GFP) and acts as the "switchboard" between the global programme, CPs, and commissions.

Structure of the Programme

The programme has been working in five thematic areas:

Sustainable and Equitable Use of Non-timber Forest Products

Activities include the provision of technical support to field projects in Vietnam, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Achievements to date have been the development and local adaptation of methods for sustainable NTFP management and domestication and for NTFP market analysis and development. The projects contributed to the capacity building of stakeholders, including local communities, NGOs and researchers, especially in the field of action research. Through the IUCN 3IC project on forests and poverty, the NTFP projects in Lao PDR and Vietnam were able to demonstrate that support to the development of sustainable NTFP management contributes to poverty reduction.

The RFP also formulated a proposal to support an NTFP Information Centre in South West China. The Information Centre aims at becoming a clearing house for all stakeholders interested in sustainable NTFP management.

A regional review of the regulation of trade in forest products was carried out to analyse how the trade in timber and non-timber forest products is controlled in the Lower Mekong Basin Countries. The study included an in-depth assessment of the situation within and across the borders of Cambodia and Thailand. The study highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the systems, including bottlenecks, gaps, and constraints, and makes recommendations for improvement through national and regional action.

Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Forest Landscapes

Achievements include the production of regional reviews of restoration experiences (Lower Mekong countries, South Asia) and contributions to the discussion about the application of the ITTO guidelines. The reviews have provided valuable opportunities for participants to exchange

experiences. Despite the differences between the various countries, a number of similar issues emerged from the reviews, such as the high priority many countries attach to reforestation along with their ambitious reforestation targets. Conflicting land use claims pose many challenges to countries trying to achieve these targets. Based on these reviews, proposals for landscape level restoration fieldwork in the Lower Mekong Countries, Southwest China and South Asia have been formulated. These projects intend to address some of the challenges identified in the reviews by facilitating stakeholder negotiation processes and by focussing on forest functions and livelihood improvements.

Collaborative Management of Forests Outside of PA Landscapes

The programme has successfully provided support to field projects in Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka, and to the Forest PACT initiative in Thailand. The field projects have been instrumental in improving community participation in forest management. Forest PACT is an initiative whereby stakeholders formulate voluntary pledges for contributions to improved forest management (See Thailand Programme description). Other initiatives include the formulation of a proposal for Southwest China for the implementation of pilot community forestry activities.



PHOTO © IUCN / LAO PDR

Forest Fire Management

The programme has provided technical support to Project Fire Fight South East Asia - Phase I, which is a joint WWF/IUCN Project. The project has collected valuable information about the forest fire situation in South East Asia and it has provided an analysis of important issues related to forest fires in the region. The Regional Forest Programme carried out an analysis of forest related legislation in the region and a review of community based fire management. Formulation of a follow up project is in progress.

National Protected Area Systems Planning and Trans-boundary Protected Area Management

Achievements include the development of a regional training programme for PA systems planning and the organization of an international workshop for ITTO on trans-boundary Protected Areas. The programme also contributed to the formulation of a proposal to develop a Protected Areas Systems Plan for Thailand.

New Programme Components in the Pipeline

Under the Livelihoods and Landscapes umbrella currently being formulated by the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group (ELG), the following themes are priorities for the coming years:

- Non Timber Forest Products
- Landscape Restoration and Livelihoods
- Community Forest Management
- Forest Fires
- Contributions to Forest Sector Planning

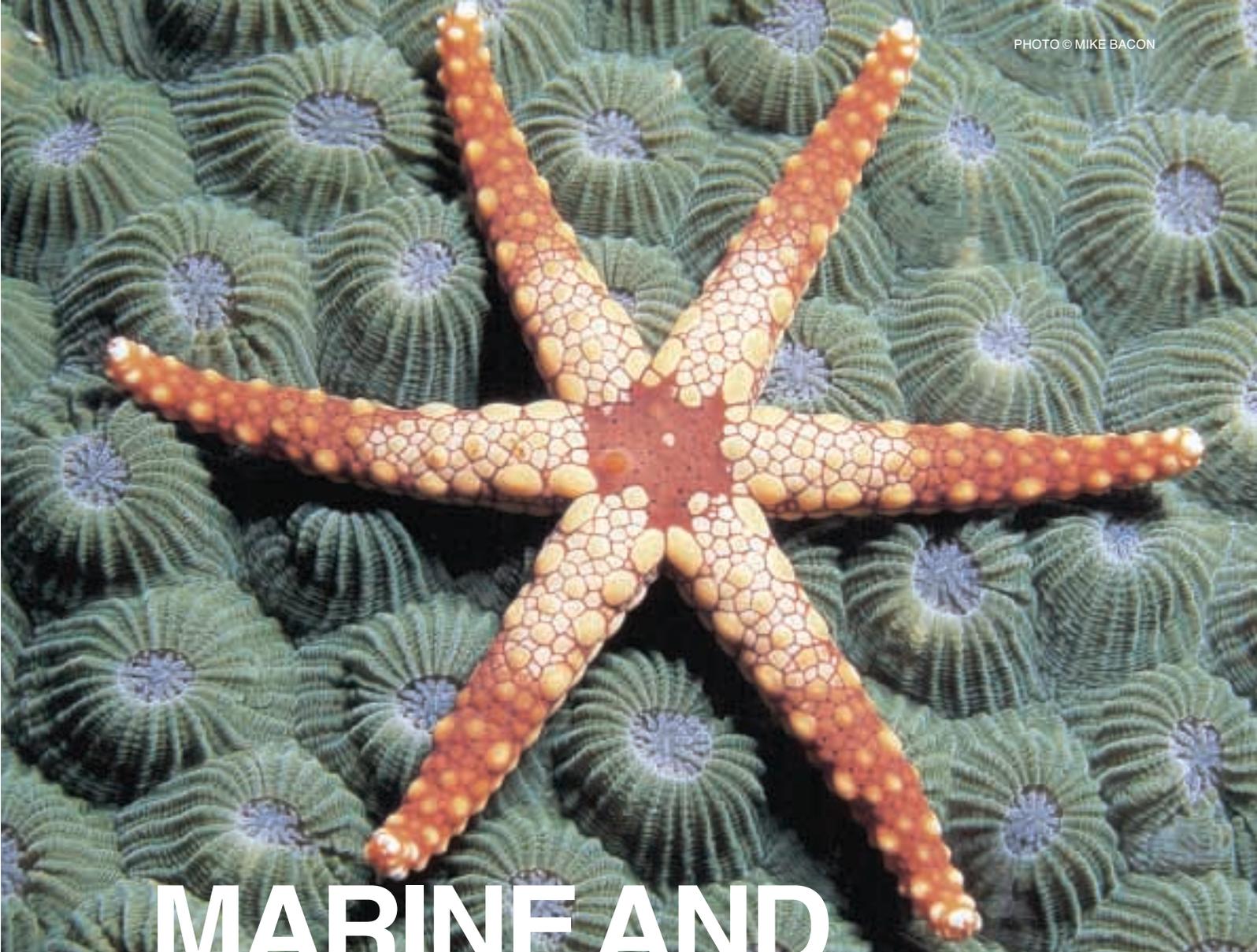
The programme will explore the possibility of developing more extensive relations with a number of regional partners, including ASEAN. Additionally, joint programming (with IUCN country, regional and global programmes) will be further developed and promoted. The success of the RFP over the next few years depends on achieving integration and coherence of the secretariat's forest related activities in the region, consulting and engaging commissions, members and partners in the development and

implementation of the programme, articulating the vision and capacity of IUCN to donors, and receiving the required support for implementing the programme.

Geographically, RFP's emphasis during the past few years has been on Southeast Asia. Increased interactions in China and South Asia are anticipated during the next intersessional period.

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MARINE AND COASTAL

The biodiversity of the sea and adjoining coastal zone, the interaction and functions of marine organisms, their behaviour and peculiarities still remain to be understood. Out of a total of 33 animal phyla, a staggering 32 are found in the sea. The South and Southeast Asian region in particular displays one of the highest levels of coastal and marine biodiversity in the world, covering a varied range of ecosystems such as coastal lagoons, mangroves, coral reefs, marshlands, and deep sea trenches.

Approximately 60% of the global population lives in coastal areas. This may rise to 80-90% in some countries inhabiting areas of high ecological and economic significance and value. In recognition of the fragility and importance of a healthy coastal and marine environment and the current rate of degradation of coastal and marine habitats and loss of biodiversity in Asia, concern has intensified among governments, international bodies, regional and national NGOs, research institutions and the private sector. On the national, regional, and international stage IUCN has been actively pursuing stronger conservation efforts in marine and coastal areas.

The downward spiral in coastal and marine environmental quality is not deflected by strict conservation measures alone, but most often requires a balanced approach that incorporates social and economic development concerns as well as sound integrated measures in which sustainability is the key concept.

A close dialogue has to be maintained between government sectors, local communities and grassroots organisations, the scientific world, the private sector, and the general public. Hence, the Regional Marine Programme (RMP) supports an integrated ecosystem planning and management approach to implementation of programme components.

Structure of the Programme

The programme's activities have been broadly divided into five core themes: Marine Protected Areas, Species, Sustainable Use, Critical Ecosystems and Integrated Coastal Zone Management. The rationale for this approach lies in the fact that many, if not most, coastal and marine resource issues, arise from unsustainable exploitation of natural resources and a lack of understanding of ecological interrelationships; unplanned or poorly located development; uncoordinated and ineffective governmental responses to coastal and marine planning and management issues; unregulated pollution discharge and waste disposal; and the loss of traditional natural resource management knowledge by indigenous peoples.

The impacts arising from such issues have resulted in the loss and degradation of critical ecosystems, a decline in species (many with economic and subsistence values), and a decline in the quality of life for the millions of people living in the coastal zones of Asia. Therefore, it is crucial that the Regional Marine Programme reinforces the concept of values of integrated assessment, planning and management.

In contrast to terrestrial conservation practices, conservation in the transition zone between oceanic and marine systems and the terrestrial systems of the

coastal zone requires different and sometimes innovative approaches. Impacts of conservation programmes may be felt, and can be catalysed across national and international borders, not only through physical and ecological improvements, but also a coherent working relationship between related activities and initiatives. The proposed programme will prove valuable, because of its ability to address coastal and marine conservation priorities at the regional level.

The vision and goal of the Regional Marine Programme is to contribute to, encourage and facilitate the conservation of coastal and marine biodiversity, while ensuring the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources in Asia.

Key Activities Under Implementation and Major Achievements 2000-2003

During this period the RMP has supported the development of community based planning in SE Asia and has provided technical support to marine and coastal programmes within IUCN Asia, including the development of national marine and coastal strategies.

A key output during this period was the production of a major South Asian integrated marine and coastal initiative which has resulted in the formulation of a Regional Strategic Plan focused on pro-poor and integrated approaches to the management of marine and coastal areas in India, Pakistan, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

The RMP's work over this period has revealed a growing awareness and increasing integration of IUCN's work in the region as a whole, but in particular in South Asia. This has resulted in an expansion of in-house capacity in the area of sustainable coastal livelihoods at both the national and regional level. In addition there has been a growing awareness and demand for IUCN expertise in marine and coastal work with partners, members, and donors (e.g. ADB) and also internally within IUCN.

New Programme Components in the Pipeline

Priority areas for development include expanding the geographical scope of the RMP's work to the biodiversity hot-spots located in Southeast Asia (e.g. East Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines) and also elsewhere in South Asia (e.g. Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the Maldives).

Key areas for further development include work on marine park management and financing, sustainable coastal livelihoods (addressing the poverty and environment link), marine biodiversity trade and capacity building in integrated coastal zone management.

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PROTECTED AREAS

Protected Areas (PAs) maintain the diversity of ecosystems, species, genetic variation, and ecological processes and services of the global environment. They safeguard many of the world’s outstanding areas of living richness, natural beauty, and cultural significance. Furthermore, they are often home to communities with long established cultures and spiritual beliefs and may contain landscapes which reflect a long interaction between people and their environment.

The Asian region accounts for countries that have rapidly growing economies and increasing developmental pressures which, in many cases, are adversely impacting upon the health and integrity of PA values and services. The resulting loss in biodiversity and impairment of ecological processes poses a considerable and mounting constraint to sustainable development and overall economic growth. This provides a compelling case for addressing ways of reconciling competition for natural resources and securing more effective PA management. Given adequate support, nation states within the region can take measures to effectively safeguard PAs and their benefits, particularly through strengthening the ecological and socio-economic linkages between PAs and surrounding landscapes and promoting and establishing effective management strategies.

Since 1999, several sessions of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas have taken place within Asia. At these sessions, Protected Area managers and professionals, government representatives, NGOs, and policy/decision makers came together to discuss and agree upon priority actions for effective conservation of protected areas. Whilst it has been recognised that significant efforts in PA conservation have been made, key issues have emerged that require immediate attention, including the need to strengthen legal, policy and institutional frameworks, improve national training programmes, ensure that management occurs in collaboration with local communities, and the need to raise general awareness and participation in international and regional conventions and agreements.

Unlike other regions such as Central America, Africa, and Europe, no regional programme existed in Asia to provide the aforementioned services, thus to fill this void the Regional Protected Area Programme (RPAP) for Asia was established. The Programme, currently co-located with the IUCN Vietnam Office, has been operational since July 2001 on a part-time basis, and full-time since July 2002. Its overall goal is to ensure that PAs in the region effectively contribute to sustainable development and poverty alleviation, while fulfilling their biodiversity conservation objectives for the benefit of local communities and society as a whole. A key strategy is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and competence of managers, planners, and decision makers.

The number of dedicated programme staff has been limited in the initial stages, but the programme operates in close collaboration and cooperation with other global, regional thematic and country programmes of IUCN. As the Programme matures the team expects to expand activities aimed at achieving significant advances in biodiversity protection, advancing sustainable development principles, and promoting best management practice that contributes greater efficiencies in human capital and resource usage, including donor assistance. The following sections provide a brief summary of achievements so far and an outline of the programme's plans that have been developed during the reporting period.

Structure of the Programme

The RPAP will maintain an initial focus on the following key objectives:

To build the capacity of various government agencies, NGOs, private institutions, and others at different levels, to manage Protected Areas: The approach for this component is to select and support capacity development efforts, including regional training in PA management, and to apply a particular focus on PA managers and on-ground technical staff. Assistance in broader law, policy, and institutional issues will also be provided through the preparation of national PA system plans. Furthermore, networking for communication and information sharing purposes in the region will also be facilitated and improved. In particular, the programme will strengthen regional capacity for implementing international and regional agreements such as the World Heritage Convention, and the ASEAN agreement on nature conservation.

Indicative projects over the coming years include:

- Developing the capacity of selected training centres for PA staff, by increasing the capability of such centres to deliver comprehensive and continuing PA management packages, to enhance institutional linkages, upgrade curriculum, and organise staff exchanges and training modules;
- Developing National PA System Plans for selected countries, allowing PAs to be integrated into national planning processes; ensuring adequate representation of ecosystems within conservation reserves, enhancing institutional coordination and partnership creation, developing management capacity and integrating legal/policy frameworks;
- Developing at least three international twinning agreements for PAs both in and outside each sub-region with similar characteristics but different levels of development;
- Supporting the development of potential World Heritage designations for at least four PAs through the provision of technical assistance and necessary management planning, financing, and institutional arrangements.

To enhance the management of selected Protected Areas, by introducing model demonstration and learning sites: The programme aims to identify,

disseminate, and promote examples of best PA management practice and planning, including practices associated with the complying with the principles of sustainable development, improving connectivity and improving corridors, managing buffer zones, and facilitating collaborative management with communities.

Indicative projects over the coming years include:

- Establishing a network of PA learning sites within the region, with up to five sites exemplified as “learning sites” based on positive examples of such things as PA management, biodiversity protection, and ecological restoration;
- Developing sustainable financing strategies and technical guidelines for at least two PAs, including undertaking site level economic studies, utilising linkages to key sectors, running workshops and producing reference papers for global dissemination;
- Documenting lessons learnt from collaborative management experience and preparing “best practice” management guidelines for the region that can be tailored to all PA management issues and responsibilities;
- Supporting the development of comprehensive PA legislation in countries where it is needed, through the provision of technical assistance to unify various disparate laws, decrees, decisions, and regulations under a common legal framework.

To assess and monitor the developments and efficacy of management in selected Protected Areas:

The programme aims to systematically and continuously monitor the effectiveness of management in PAs and to use the results to implement continual improvement practices via the development of indicators of regional management quality.

An example of a project to address this third objective in the future is the adaptation of the IUCN/WCPA framework for assessing management effectiveness so that it better suits the needs and requirements of regional PA managers, thereby enhancing their understanding and support for the use of such frameworks in the field, including their field testing and finalisation.

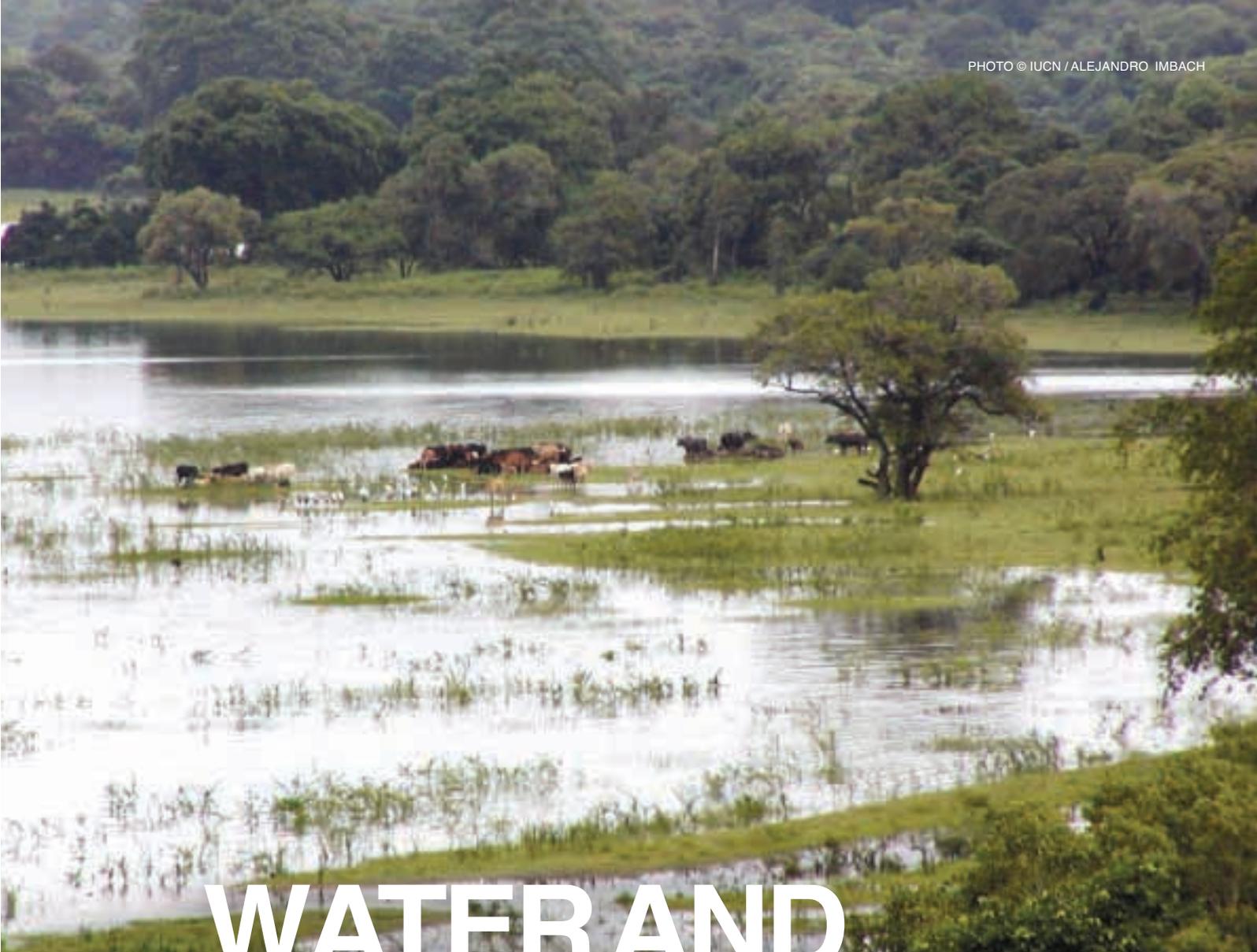
Major Achievements

RPAP undertook a wide range of activities in a number of different countries. These include the following:

- RPAP participated in an analysis of the relevance of protected area management to socio-economic development in the four lower Mekong River countries (Thailand, Vietnam, Lao PDR and Cambodia).
- The situation for financing protected areas in Vietnam was investigated and sustainable financing strategies were prepared.
- RPAP provided advice to Shell China on the potential impacts of the West-East Gas Pipeline project on Nature Reserves in the Xinjiang Province of China.
- Assistance was provided for the implementation of the natural component of the World Heritage Convention in the Asia region, which included monitoring of the state of conservation of WH sites in Nepal, preparation of the Periodic Report of WH sites in the Asia-Pacific region, and an awareness and tentative listing workshop in Lao PDR.
- RPAP designed the National Conservation Fund (Trust Fund) for protected areas in Vietnam for the World Bank - GEF.
- The programme managed the inputs from the Asia region into the planning of the World Parks Congress, including supporting the regional preparatory meetings of WCPA in South Asia (held in Bangladesh) and in Southeast Asia (held in the Philippines).
- RPAP initiated the implementation of the global UNEP-GEF project entitled “Ecosystems, Protected Areas and People (EPP)” that will generate and disseminate lessons learned and build capacity of primary PA stakeholders in Asia, Africa, and Latin America to manage protected areas in the face of global change.

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WATER AND WETLANDS

The Regional Wetlands and Water Resources Programme (RWWP) for Asia follows the global objectives by facilitating dialogues, raising awareness and building capacity, and disseminating knowledge and information. Increasingly the RWWP is adopting an ecosystems approach to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) as a means of addressing poverty and livelihoods issues. This approach is central to the IUCN global Water and Nature Initiative (WANI). In its capacity as representative of WANI in Asia, the RWWP is undertaking projects on environmental flows, climate change and environmental economics. Each of these individual projects work towards achieving WANI's general objectives to:

- demonstrate ecosystem management in selected river basins;
- empower people to participate in sustainable water and wetland management;
- support wise governance of water resources and wetlands;
- develop and apply economic tools and incentives for sustainable water management;
- improve knowledge to support decision making;
- raise awareness on wise water use, and to provide feedback mechanisms to the global discussions.

The work of RWWP has focused on the Mekong region with the development of the UNDP/GEF Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme. This is a five year US\$30 million programme in partnership with UNDP and the Mekong River Commission, as well as national governments and local NGOs, supporting work in Cambodia, Thailand, Lao PDR, and Vietnam. The full programme is due to start at the beginning of 2004.

Other key activities include support for the development of national wetlands programmes in Bangladesh, Nepal and Vietnam, and representing IUCN Asia at Ramsar events in the region and globally. IUCN has actively helped with the dissemination of the World Commission on Dams report throughout the Asia Region.

RWWP works closely with other international and regional organizations, especially the Mekong River Commission, the South Asia and Southeast Asia arms of the Global Water Partnership, Wetlands International, Birdlife International, The World Fish Centre, IWMI and others.

Structure of the Programme

The main focus of RWWP is applying an ecosystems approach to river basin management, and integrated water resources management (IWRM) as proposed under the WANI programme. Additional themes include institutional frameworks, collaborative management, human capacity building for ecosystem management, conservation and sustainable use of aquatic resources, economic incentives and valuation, ecosystem assessment (including livelihoods and institutions) and public awareness. These themes are being addressed in work on environmental flows, climate change and environmental economics, freshwater biodiversity and invasive alien species.

Increasingly, poverty alleviation and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods is coming to play an important role in the work of RWWP. This is especially significant with the commitment of the World Summit on Sustainable Development to meet targets of sanitation and drinking water as a key

strategy to address poverty. With a large proportion of the world's poor living in Asia, and growing pressure and competition on freshwater resources, it is imperative that RWWP takes a lead in addressing these poverty issues. RWWP has supported participatory poverty and livelihoods assessments in the lower Mekong River basin in collaboration with Action Aid, as well participatory assessments of the nutritional value of aquatic resources in rural livelihoods conducted in Lao PDR in collaboration with FAO.

Large-scale water infrastructure will continue to be an issue for RWWP to address. Promotion and dissemination of the World Commission on Dams (WCD) strategic framework has been undertaken by RWWP in several countries and will continue to be an important mechanism to promote environmental governance and stakeholder participation. Additionally, IUCN will need to address its own involvement in river basins where there may also be controversial dam projects. Developing a strategy to deal with these issues will be pursued by RWWP through WANI.

Key Activities Under Implementation

RWWP is supporting a range of initiatives throughout Asia. During 2002, the Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme was implemented thanks to preparatory assistance from the Government of the Netherlands. Key project staff have been recruited and the Project Management Unit has been established in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Initial work has begun in the demonstration sites particularly on livelihoods, environmental flows, climate change and environmental economics. The RWWP is also supporting local and national dialogues on World Commission on Dams in Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam.

In Bangladesh, work is focusing on community resource management and fisheries rehabilitation, as well as the protection of the Sundarbans mangrove forest reserve. Cambodia hosts the project management unit of the Mekong Wetlands Programme, which includes a field project in Stoeng

Treng Ramsar site. In China, the first intervention has been the development of a catchment management project in Lincang County in the upper Mekong River basin. In Lao PDR, RWWP is managing a field project in Attepeu Province, as part of the Mekong Wetlands Programme, and assistance has been provided to the government for discussions about ratification of the Ramsar Convention. IUCN is currently reviewing how best to get involved in the management of the water shed of the Mekong along the Annamite mountain range, including the management of the catchment of Nam Theun 2 dam. In Nepal, a full project document entitled Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands has been completed through a UNDP/GEF PDF-B grant. The project includes components for policy support and national capacity building, as well as field demonstration sites within the Ghodaghodi and Koshi Tapu areas. Linked to this effort is a proposal developed to assess high mountain wetlands in Nepal, and IUCN is collaborating with the Ramsar-WWF-ICIMOD mountain wetlands initiative.

In Pakistan, IUCN is developing a Water Programme in Baluchistan, supported by a national IWRM unit in Quetta, and is helping with the development of a national wetlands policy. Wetland biodiversity assessments have been completed in Sri Lanka and field level support has also been provided for the management of several Ramsar sites. A project for the management of Walawe Eiver basin is under development, together with IWMI. In Thailand, most of the RWWP's attention has focused on the Lower Songkhram River basin in northern Thailand, where project staff are working with local development institutions and local water resource users to assist them in undertaking natural resource monitoring and assessment activities. Support has also been provided to village led research to monitor impacts of the Upper Mekong Navigation Agreement. In Vietnam, IUCN helped the National Environment Agency to develop a wetlands policy and a proposal for the development of a national wetlands conservation and management programme, to be funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy.

New Programme Components in the Pipeline

Future projects include the application of an ecosystem approach to water resource management as a means of addressing poverty alleviation as well as wetlands biodiversity assessments throughout Asia, but especially in the Mekong River basin, the Ganges-Brahmaputra and some of the large Chinese rivers. Countries in which assessments are most likely to take place are Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Nepal. The RWWP is also set to expand in the future through the development of a national wetlands programme in China, including national policy support and the development of a number of field activities. The next Water and Nature Initiative in Asia will focus on the Himalaya high mountains, including field work in Bhutan, China, Nepal and Pakistan. The implementation of the national wetlands programme in Vietnam will lead to a number of field demonstration activities, which will be linked to similar initiatives in other countries. Work in Sri Lanka is progressing, especially in partnership with IWMI. RWWP has discussed the idea of launching a lake programme in Asia, and this idea will be pursued during the coming years.

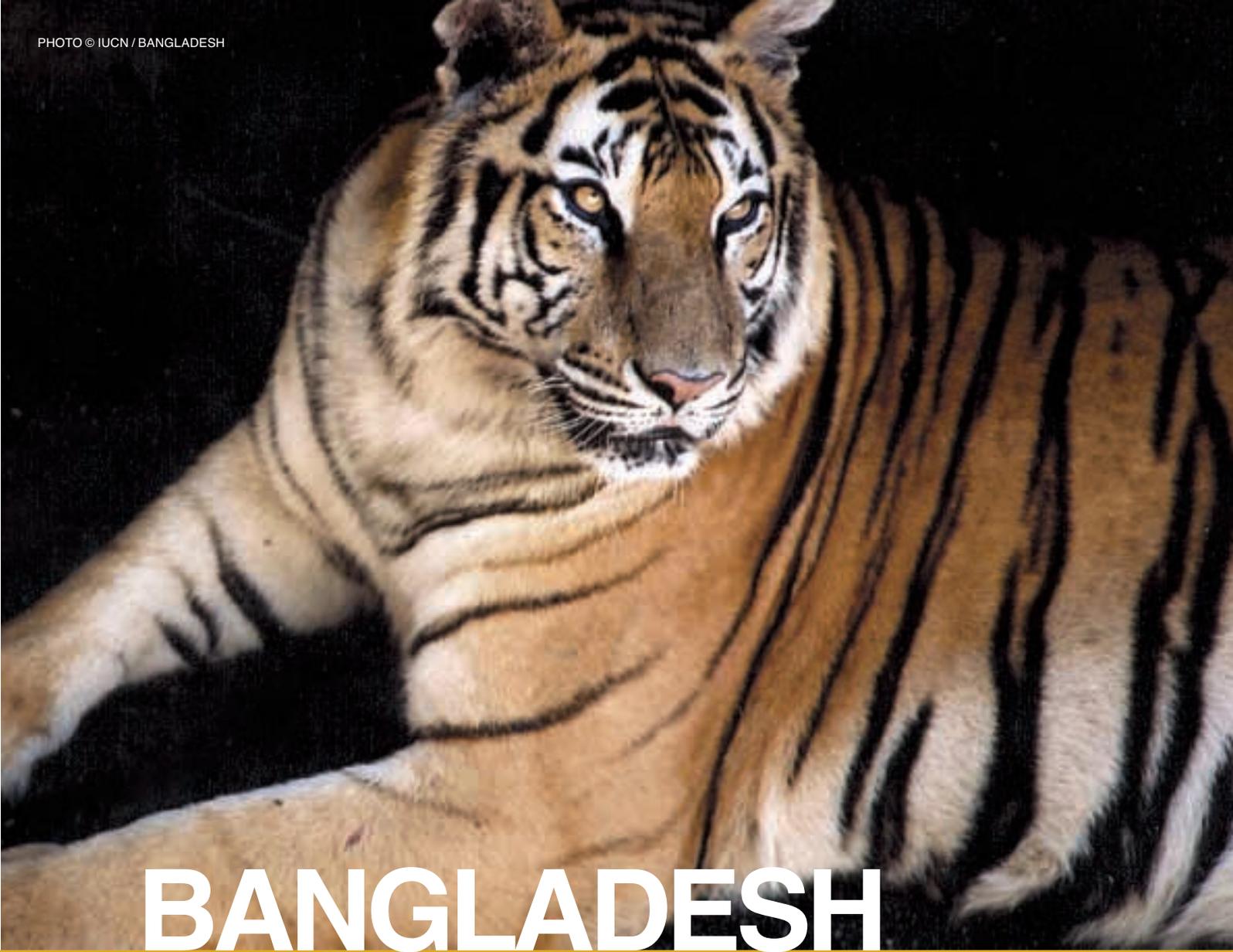
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COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

Bangladesh
Cambodia
China
Lao PDR
Nepal
Pakistan
Sri Lanka
Thailand
Vietnam



BANGLADESH

Bangladesh, sits astride one of the largest deltas of South Asia - the Padma-Meghna-Jamuna. It has an area of 1,47,570 square kilometres and a population of over 140 million. This includes a broad range of ecosystem types ranging from tropical evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests (*sal* forests) and mangrove forests, to riparian and coastal wetlands, to the littoral, sub-littoral and benthic communities of the Indian Ocean. More than 200 rivers and their tributaries criss-cross the country. Three broad physiographic regions are discernible: floodplains 80%, terraces 8%, and hills about 12% of the total land area - each region has unique geomorphological and demographic characteristics. Over 50% of the country may be classified as wetlands. In spite of population increase and low per capita income (US\$380), Bangladesh is home to a plethora of plant and animal species, many of which are now globally threatened, such as the Asian Elephant, the Royal Bengal Tiger, the Gharial, the Ganges River Dolphin and the Hoolock Gibbon. Five species of threatened marine turtles nest along Bangladesh's coastline and two globally important migratory-bird-flyways (the East Asia-Australian flyway and the Central Asia-Indian flyway) converge here. Some one million waterfowl winter in Bangladesh every year. This country supports the largest remaining mangrove forest in the world today —the Sundarbans. This sumptuous array of diversity and the ecosystems that support it are currently under serious threat. Exacerbating land scarcity, population pressure, poverty and dependence on natural resources for subsistence living are the overriding factors that have been reducing the resilience of nature. Consequently, Bangladesh remains in the forefront of conservation concerns.

Structure of the Programme

IUCN began its formal operation in Bangladesh in 1989 by establishing a liaison office. Since its inception as a country office in 1991, IUCNB (IUCN Bangladesh) has been planning and implementing its conservation programme, closely working with its member organizations, commission members and scientists from Bangladesh and abroad. IUCNB aims at raising and supporting an environmentally sensitised, educated, conscious and willing society capable of conserving and managing its natural resources judiciously and sustainably. IUCNB strives to help make Bangladesh a sustainable living place, having a society with a rational focus on nature and natural resources and the associated social issues involving livelihoods and development.

IUCNB has supported the local governmental and non-governmental institutions working in the following areas: environmental planning and assessment, sustainable management of natural resources, environmental policy formulation, habitat conservation and ecosystems management, protected area management, biodiversity



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conservation, institutional capacity strengthening, environmental education and awareness promotion, and environmental law.

IUCNB provides a neutral forum where organizations from different sectors can meet, exchange views and plan conservation actions together. IUCNB catalyzes the participation of different sectors in the aforementioned initiatives by addressing the policy, legislative, scientific, socio-economic and community involvement aspects.

The IUCN Bangladesh Programme is implemented and monitored by a core staff with national and international expertise and experience. Also, services of experts within the Asia Regional Programmes are available to IUCNB. IUCNB's programme is implemented in four broad thematic areas. These include: Species Conservation and Protected Areas (SCPA), Ecosystem and Landscape Management (ELM), Water Management (WM), and Economics, Law, Policy and Assessment (ELPA).

Key Activities Under Implementation and Major Achievements 2000-2003

The Species Conservation and Protected Areas (SCPA) unit is mainly engaged in attaining the biodiversity conservation goals in Bangladesh through focusing and implementing the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). In response to Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which entailed its signatories to “develop national strategies, plans or programs for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity”, the Government of Bangladesh commenced implementing this project in 2002. IUCNB has been assisting the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) in preparing the NBSAP document through utilizing regional and national consultations as well as IUCNB's in-house expertise.

IUCNB has successfully completed the phase-1 activities of the Habitat Restoration and Conservation of Asian Elephants project. The primary objective of

this was to determine the population status of the Asian Elephants and to identify and prioritize the associated threats. Based on the field data gathered, the quality and extent of natural habitat was assessed and the human-elephant conflicts occurring were analysed. IUCNB is currently negotiating with the US Fishery and Wildlife Services with a view to undertake the implementation of a second-phase of this action research project.

Under the aegis of SCPA, IUCNB is also contemplating shorebird reserve networking, flagship species conservation and river biodiversity inventory. The key achievements of the SCPA include publishing the first ever Bangla Red Book of Threatened Animals in Bangladesh, a Bangla handbook on the Bengal Tiger, production of the bio-ecological zones atlas, establishing two national networks on biodiversity conservation and hosting a number of national, regional and global conferences on NBSAP, GBF-Asia, Pre-SBSTTA and Species CAMP.

The Ecosystem and Landscape Management (ELM) unit aims to assess the degradation and depletion of Bangladesh's vital natural resources, arrest the baleful trends, and introduce or establish ways of using natural resources in a sustainable and equitable manner. The unit's activities include raising awareness, understanding, and support for integrated sustainable land use models in theory and practice; enhancing the community-based collaborative management of natural resources by utilizing indigenous knowledge and promoting empowerment of women and less privileged communities; exploring, developing and promoting alternative livelihood and sustainable land use practices, such as, 'nature tourism', community forestry, domestication of wild species as *ex situ* conservation (e.g. wildlife farming) etc. and developing a GIS database of ecosystems, resource bases and production systems.

A large-scale project for the conservation of biodiversity of the Sundarbans has been initiated by the MoEF with financial assistance from the GEF contributed through the ADB. The Conservation Monitoring of Sundarban Biodiversity Project of IUCNB is carrying out independent conservation monitoring with the intention of developing a set of monitoring tools using biotic indicators for the



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mangrove ecosystem of the Sundarbans. The set of biotic indicators developed will be used to monitor the health of key ecosystem components and species, which will provide IUCN with the information necessary to prepare a substantial report on the 'Biodiversity Health Status of the Sundarbans', to be submitted to the Sundarbans Stewardship Commission.

The Ecological Restoration and Sustainable Management of Natural Forest Project in the village of Hlafaikhong Mouza of Bandarban is being conducted using a participatory approach. This is an extension of the erstwhile Himal Initiative. The project integrates capacity building of the ethnic communities for sustainable management and restoration of degraded natural forests. This small-scale project is an effort to strengthen the fundamental connection between economic prosperity and environmental well being in the hill tracts areas. The project is being funded by the Netherlands IUCN Tropical Forest Program. The framework unites the Government, the private sector, public groups, and other stakeholders in a goal-driven approach based on a collaboratively developed vision of desirable future conditions, which will integrate ecological, economic, ethno-social and legal factors.

ELM is currently weighing the possibilities of undertaking Bangladesh country environment

analyses and a pilot trial towards the restoration of Chakoria Sundarbans.

The achievements of the ELM unit include the Himal Initiative in Bangladesh, which was completed successfully with financial and technical assistance from IUCN's regional Himal programme; preparation of the initial biodiversity health status report on the Sundarbans; an annotated bibliography on the Sundarbans, Bangladesh: vol. I and II; and a collection of a number of flora and fauna specimens from the Sundarbans (many of which established records of first sighting not only for the Sundarbans but also for the country).

The Water Management (WM) unit has, for years, been involved with the assessment, conservation and management of wetlands. By increasing awareness and understanding of the impacts of quality of return flow on ecosystems, IUCNB will now also work to maintain water quality, wetlands and their biodiversity. In order to be able to plan water initiatives more efficiently, IUCNB is trying to gain a better understanding of the coping mechanisms and practices used by local communities to deal with seasonal fluctuations of surface and ground water. This also involves research into the causes and effects of increasing salinity and intrusion in the coastal ecosystem.

The Community Based Haor and Floodplain Resource Management Project, the largest project of IUCNB, is one of the 26 components of the Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP Component 2.2.1), which is being implemented by IUCN with the MoEF and other partner organizations. With financial assistance from UNDP, this project focuses on two types of degraded ecosystems, *haor* and floodplain. The primary objective of the project - to involve the communities in all phases of planning and implementing project activities, such as the management and sustainable use of ecosystem resources, alternative income generation schemes and fund creation, and hands-on training for both men and women - has been successful so far. These initiatives, when fully implemented, will enable IUCN and the Ministry of Environment and Forests to achieve the overall national objectives of the Sustainable Environment Management Programme

(SEMP), to improve the management of natural resources and ensure the maintenance of biodiversity and human wellbeing.

IUCNB's WM unit is actively considering establishing a network of wetland experts involving environmental NGOs and donors. It also plans to conduct an environmental assessment of the present day water management practices, focusing specifically on fisheries and ecosystems. Under the technical leadership of its WM unit, IUCNB will strive to raise public awareness with regard to the impacts of climate change and the processes of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)/ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Important achievements of the WM unit include enhanced general awareness and capacity of wetland resource management among the resource users of the SEMP *haors* and floodplains, enhanced vegetation coverage at the five SEMP project sites through regeneration of swamp forest, reed lands and social afforestation activities, and improved aquatic habitats for fish and other aquatic life through the rehabilitation of potential water connectivity and water bodies. It also includes the completion of the Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP) - an initiative of the Ministry of Water Resources with



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financial assistance from the World Bank - aimed at implementing a pilot project to reform and/or improve the institutional aspects of the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), the Environmental Auditing Guidelines and the Environmental Management Plan. A study titled 'Water Availability and Usage Regime in Rural Bangladesh' was formulated aiming at identifying those rural communities practicing sustainable water use. An assessment of the 'Environmental Impact of the 1998 Flood on Dhaka City' has also been successfully completed with financial assistance from the UNDP, the findings of which were compiled and published as 'The 1998 Flood: An Assessment of the Environmental Impact on Dhaka City'.

The Economics, Law, Policy, and Assessment Programme (ELPA) unit aims to lay the foundations of a process for formulating an effective legal system for the conservation of natural resources and ecosystems and to pave the way for efficient environmental planning and assessment. Recently, ELPA has been contemplating using environmental economics to pursue the legal and policy regimes with a view to ensuring more efficient environmental planning and assessment.

The current activities include a regional project commissioned by RELPA entitled 'Sustainable Livelihood, Environmental Security and Conflict Mitigation'. Bangladesh is one of the four South Asian countries included in this study. The selected project site for the Bangladesh study is the Tanguar *Haor*, a renowned Ramsar site. The project aims to study the linkages between the rights of the resource users, the ensuing conflicts over various stakeholders exercising their rights or lack thereof, and the existent livelihood and environmental security.

Integrating Economic Values into Protected Area Management in South Asia - Bangladesh Country Component is being implemented in collaboration with the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group (ELG) and is completing its project design process. The objective of the project design phase is to analyze the baseline situation of one selected protected area in each of the project partner countries in South Asia and make a national output to fit into the larger project proposal for the whole region. The selected protected area in Bangladesh is again Tanguar *Haor*.

Key achievements include the provision of external monitoring and technical support to the National Conservation Strategy Implementation Project - 1 (NCSIP-1) implemented by the MoEF, with financial support from NORAD. An additional achievement has been the development of a proposal for supporting the formulation of natural resource management law. The aim of this proposal is to fill the gaps and remove constraints in implementing existing policies and legal frameworks. It will also conduct an assessment of the implementation of Agenda 21 in Bangladesh with assistance from the Earth Council of Costa Rica. The results of this were compiled and used as input from Bangladesh in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). ELPA also conducted a case study on the Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary Barriers to Trade and its Impact on the Environment of Shrimp Farming in Bangladesh with support from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Canada. The second phase of the project is expected to commence in early 2004.

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CAMBODIA

IUCN has continued to maintain its presence in Cambodia, carrying out its work through a liaison office located in Phnom Penh. The majority of IUCN's activities in Cambodia are national components of regional thematic programmes and projects. The principle focus of this and other country specific work in Cambodia has been in generating and managing knowledge on key sustainable development issues, assessing various aspects of environmental governance, planning and preparing for a major Mekong Wetland Biodiversity Programme, identifying and pursuing priority issues and opportunities for further work. The following report provides a summary of the various programmes and projects undertaken to date, and an indication of future plans.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has shown a keen interest in becoming a state member of the Global Union and a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IUCN and the Royal Government of Cambodia has been prepared for further discussion and consultation. In the meantime, the Ministry of Environment signed an MoU at the beginning of 2003, allowing for the establishment of the programme office for the Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Programme.

Key Activities Under Implementation and Major Achievements 2000-2003

Baseline information and rapid assessment of the habitats of the Stoeng Treng Ramsar Site: As an input to the preparation of a regional initiative called the 'Mekong River Basin Wetland Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme', IUCN carried out a baseline study of the Stoeng Treng Ramsar Site. The study examined the current government system used for the management and administration of the site, socio-economic data related to the site, the role and activities of the NGOs involved, and various projects which have had, or could have, an impact on the demonstration site. The baseline study was followed by another rapid assessment of inundated forest at the Stoeng Treng site. The prime focus of the study was to assess the richness of tree species of various habitats including sand islands.

Contribution to a coastal and marine strategy for Cambodia: IUCN carried out a scoping mission to collect and analyse the available information about Cambodia's coastal and marine resources. The three most important initiatives recommended in the study were the 'Protection of dugongs and their habitat', the 'Conservation of coral reefs' and 'Concerted efforts leading to a Mangrove Action Plan'. The completion of the study was a major step towards the development of a strategy to protect and conserve Cambodia's coastal and marine areas.

A review of the regulation of trade in forest products: A regional study was done as to how the trade in timber and non-timber forest products is controlled in the Lower Mekong Basin countries. The study included an in-depth assessment of the situation within and across the borders of Cambodia and Thailand. The Cambodian component of the assessment reviewed in detail the prevailing regulatory regime, including the geographical and socio-economic context for regulation, the practical realities of running the system, and the administrative and enforcement capacities of relevant government agencies. The study highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the systems, including bottlenecks,

gaps, and constraints, and makes recommendations for improvement through national and regional action.

A review of Protected Areas and development: The IUCN Cambodia office played an active role in a regional initiative entitled 'Review of Protected Areas and Development in the Four Countries of the Lower Mekong River Region' (PAD). The main purpose of the PAD was to examine approaches for integrating protected area management with socio-economic planning and development processes in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Vietnam. A set of eight reports is currently being published comprising four national reports, a regional report, field studies, and national and thematic lessons learned papers. The project website <http://www.mekong-protected-areas.org/> carries useful information about the PA related issues especially those challenging Cambodia. The review included a case study of the South West Cluster of National Parks and it documented in detail the economic role and benefits of key protected areas in Cambodia. Specifically, the study examined the economic values of national parks to local communities, tourism, and hydropower in the three provinces with protected areas. The national report documents the protected area experience in Cambodia over the past ten years, the linkages with different development sectors, the achievements and remaining challenges, and the relationship between protected areas and the national economy.

Progressing Natural World Heritage Nominations in Cambodia: Cambodia became a signatory and state party to the World Heritage (WH) Convention in 1991, and currently has one cultural site inscribed on the World Heritage List. There are many more important and significant sites in Cambodia, both natural and cultural, and a tentative Natural World Heritage list is in the works. During the workshop to compile the national list of possible sites, seven sites were proposed for consideration: five forest land and two wetland sites. IUCN and the Ministry of Environment have agreed upon a number of awareness raising and planning activities beyond formulating the list.

Towards a Biosafety Framework: Cambodia is a signatory to Cartagena Protocol on biosafety. The protocol became effective on 11 September 2003, at which point it became mandatory for the signatories, including Cambodia, to prepare a National Biosafety

Framework (NBSFW). IUCN is providing the Government of Cambodia with technical assistance and support for preparing a NBSFW. The work is still in the inception stage and is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2005.

Mekong River Basin Wetlands Biodiversity

Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme: This joint UNDP/ MRCS /IUCN programme was developed in 2002/2003 and a programme office was established in Phnom Penh at the beginning of 2003. The programme office will move to Vientiane in 2004 to be co-located in the same city as the Mekong River Committee Secretariat. The principle objective of the programme is to strengthen the capacity for wetland biodiversity conservation and sustainable use within the Lower Mekong River Basin at local, regional, and national levels. The project comprises one regional and four national components, including one for Cambodia. Full-scale implementation of the project will commence in 2004. The following initiatives are the key outputs of the Cambodian Component.

- Policy recommendations for improved wetland management
- Strengthening the Ramsar Convention in Cambodia
- Connecting Cambodian specialists with regional networks of wetland specialists and managers
- Developing and implementing the Cambodia Wetlands Action Plan
- Increasing awareness and understanding of wetland biodiversity conservation and management
- Introducing training tools for wetland conservation and management
- Strengthening the management of the Stoeng Treng demonstration site including participatory community based management, sustainable use of wetland biodiversity products, networks of resource users, and increased understanding of economic and livelihood values of wetland functions and products
- Communicating the results and lessons learned from the Stoeng Treng demonstration site

During the preparatory phase of the programme, a number of activities have already been carried out, or were in progress, at the time of writing:

- Assessment of the training needs of key stakeholders
- Assessment of rural livelihoods with an emphasis on poverty, vulnerability and the significance of wetlands

- Assessment of the economic values of wetlands and integration of economic measures into wetland management plans at demonstration sites
- A study to examine the extent to which climatic vulnerability is affecting wetland resources and local livelihoods
- An environmental assessment of the Sesan River to study the effects of flow changes on the local biology and the livelihoods of dependent rural communities

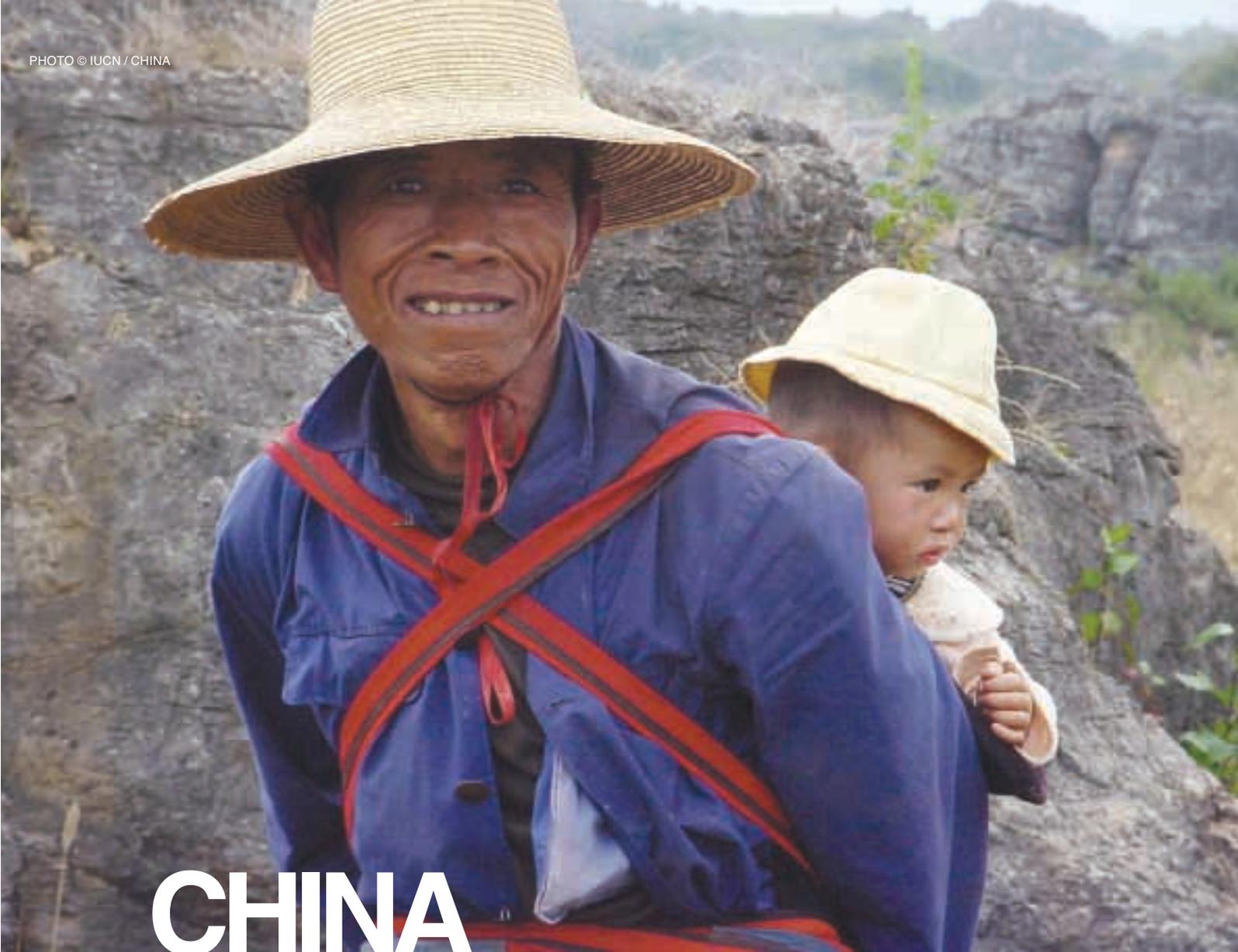
New Programme Components in the Pipeline

The Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Programme will be the dominant programme for IUCN in Cambodia during the next intersessional planning period (2005-2008). However, work is likely to continue on protected areas, world heritage, and biosafety. New initiatives are also planned for forest conservation. Rapid degradation of forest landscapes is a matter of growing concern in Cambodia and in the Lower Mekong Region generally, and many countries have ambitious forest restoration schemes and targets. IUCN has been consulting with stakeholders in Cambodia, Lao, Thailand and Vietnam to develop a regional initiative for ensuring that these schemes can restore forest functions, protect biodiversity, and safeguard local livelihoods. In addition, there is scope for supporting the sustainable use of non-timber forest products as a strategy for poverty reduction and forest conservation.

Mlup Baitong, a local NGO working for environmental awareness raising, capacity building and other conservation work, has applied for membership. If admitted at the December 2003 IUCN council meeting it will become the first organisation in Cambodia to become a member of IUCN.

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CHINA

China became a State member of IUCN in 1996, at which point the IUCN Secretariat began to discuss the development of a programme in China. Initially, IUCN HQ appointed an East Asia Programme Coordinator who was responsible for IUCN's programme in China, but in 2001, the Asia Regional Director took over the responsibility for China and in 2002 a Chinese Programme Officer was recruited.

This programme officer initially worked from the IUCN Asia Regional Office in Bangkok, and then in January 2003, the IUCN Beijing Office was established, which is temporarily located in the compound of UNDP Beijing. IUCN is in the process of developing a formal Country Agreement; this will hopefully be completed and signed by the end of 2003 or early 2004. Once this has been signed, a full time Country Representative will be recruited to manage the programme and head the Beijing office. Until such time, the IUCN Asia Regional Office in Bangkok will coordinate the China Programme.

The involvement of IUCN in China during the past years has primarily been through visits from Headquarters, and interventions of Commissions and their specialist groups. The IUCN Director General is a member of the China Council for Environment and Development and IUCN has been actively involved in the China Council Working Group on Biodiversity, which was re-created as the Task Force on Protected Areas in 2003.

IUCN Members in China

The Government of the Peoples Republic of China is a State Member of IUCN, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In reality, most of IUCN's contact is through the State Forest Administration (SFA), the State Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. There are also two Government agency members in Hong Kong and five NGO members.

In 2000, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between IUCN and SEPA, which called for the exchange of staff, development of joint projects, and an IUCN office in Beijing. The first SEPA secondment joined the Asia Regional Office in early 2003, for a period of six months. In July 2003 an agreement was signed between IUCN and SFA to define areas for collaboration and partnership, and a SFA secondment is expected to join IUCN later in the year. In November 2003, IUCN's global Environmental Law Programme (ELP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Environment and Resources Law Institute (ERLI), which is based at the Law Faculty of Shanghai Jiaotong University. ERLI is also in the process of applying for IUCN membership.

Structure of the Programme

The IUCN Programme in China will follow thematic lines, in accordance with global and regional IUCN programmes. A strategic Situation Analysis carried out by IUCN in 2001 identified nine priority provinces, mainly in the west and south of the country¹, and the focus of IUCN assistance during the first years will therefore be focused in this part of the country.

¹ The study analysed China Government priorities and IUCN strengths and weaknesses, and the combined results showed that highest priority provinces are: Qinghai, Sichuan and Tibet, closely followed by Fujian, Guangxi, Liaoning, Shaanxi, Xinjiang and Yunnan.



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During several programme design missions in 2002 and 2003, IUCN staff discussed how best to help with ecosystem management and livelihood support in China. The key programmatic areas where IUCN has been asked to get involved are: Forest Landscape Restoration and Management; Integrated Water Resources Management and Integrated Coastal Zone Management; the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements within the country and Protected Area management and World Heritage.

IUCN helped the Chinese Academy of Sciences prepare a GEF project proposal for a medicinal plants project in Guizhou Province. The GEF grant will be used to contribute to the protection of the habitat of globally significant medicinal plants in the karst area of Guizhou through community participation and environment education. The co-financing project is the Modernization of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Guizhou, which was ratified by the Ministry of Science and Technology on May 11, 2001. This exciting partnership could lead the way for IUCN to collaborate with the private sector in China. The Regional Forest Programme has also helped to prepare a number of specific funding proposals for forest landscape restoration and NTFP management in Sechuan Province.

In Yunnan, IUCN has helped to develop a project that aims at: sustainable use of land, water and wetland resources and alleviation of poverty in Lincang County, Yunnan province. The project will monitor the state of forests and wetlands in and around the Lancang Nature Reserve in Lincang County, and help to improve management capacity of the local Forest Bureau staff. Four model-sites for community based catchment management and poverty alleviation will be established to test IWRM approaches and contribute to awareness raising and capacity building of members of local communities.

IUCN has carried out several World Heritage nomination reviews during the past years, especially the Parallel Rivers WHA in Yunnan. IUCN also worked closely with the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Construction in helping to think through an approach for dealing with the various world-class karst ecosystem landscapes that exist in southern China, and how to promote World Heritage status for these. This culminated in a national conference on karst ecosystems and management. Several missions were undertaken to Shilin National Park, and Technical Assistance with regards to management practices was provided. A mission was also carried out to work with the Man and Biosphere Secretariat, and develop a partnership between the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Secretariat in Beijing and Parks Canada.

IUCN collaborated with China's SEPA, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) to hold a "Training Workshop on Trade, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development" in Beijing, October 29-31, 2003. The purpose of the workshop was to enhance awareness of issues related to trade, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, and to assist China in building its national capacity to address them at national level and in international negotiations. IUCN will continue to work with its workshop partners to deliver similar training sessions in other cities in China and to adapt the format and content for use in other countries in Asia.

IUCN's Commission on Environmental Law (CEL) launched the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law in Shanghai on 6 November 2003. RELPA is also supporting SEPA and the Environment and Resources Law Institute (ERLI) at Shanghai Jiaotong University in the development of regulations on "ecological function zones", which will provide protection for areas that provide essential ecosystem services.

A number of specific activities that will be developed during the coming years include:

- Using IUCN's international networks, research and technical expertise to help solve the challenges facing the Chinese authorities in nature conservation
- Strengthen the relationship between national and international law and help China integrate its large number of sectoral laws
- Carry out a review of the Protected Area system in China and strengthen the capacity to manage the large number of very diverse Protected Areas in the country
- Develop demonstration projects for Ecosystem Management, Integrated Water Resources Management, Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Forest Landscape Restoration
- Promote regional co-operation with China and its neighbours with regards to trans-boundary environmental and ecosystem management issues
- Help with management of biodiversity and non-timber forest products
- Enhance the capacity of Chinese partners to deal with trade, environment and sustainable development in the context of membership in the World Trade Organisation
- Assist with natural World Heritage nominations, reviews and management

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LAO PDR

The IUCN programme in Lao PDR has evolved and grown considerably since activities were first initiated in the late 1980s. Beginning with a focus on Protected Area planning, IUCN Lao PDR is now oriented to address a wide range of natural resource management and sustainable development issues at both the field and strategic planning levels. Not only has the variety of national activities broadened, but in recent years, the programme has also become increasingly involved in developing and implementing the Lao PDR components of regional programmes and initiatives. Added to this complexity is the deepening relationship between IUCN and the government of Lao PDR, which calls upon IUCN more and more often for advice and services. These gains are particularly notable in light of challenges faced by the programme when two major donors withdrew from Lao PDR during the reporting period. The result of this withdrawal was a reduction in IUCN's portfolio of national projects. However, this situation has been addressed by increasing the presence and role of regional projects in the country programme and replenishing proposals to increase and broaden the donor base in the longer term.

The opportunities for further increasing the level of IUCN activities in Lao PDR are enhanced by the fact that the Lao programme undertook a period of intensive consultation with key government partners at national and provincial levels during 2000 and 2001. These consultations revealed a remarkable degree of consensus regarding the critical importance of natural resource management in sustaining rural livelihoods and supporting national development efforts, and the preferred role for IUCN in such efforts. A strategic framework for the

Programme in Lao PDR, based on “conservation for sustainable livelihoods” and consisting of five core programme areas, emerged from the consultation process and as a result enjoys widespread support. The programme is currently halfway through the implementation of this framework, which will be revised in 2006.

Key Activities Under Implementation and Major Achievements 2000-2003

Ecosystems and People

The long-term aim of this core programme area is to improve the wellbeing of people and ecosystems, through enhanced management of forests, wetlands and water resources, and protected areas. Targeted results include: enhancing institutional capacity to promote the sustainable use and management of non-timber forest products (NTFPs); increasing the capacity for botanical surveys; providing advice on enabling legal frameworks; facilitating dialogues to develop a shared vision of integrated water resources management; enhancing the human and institutional capacity for wetland management; assisting with the design and implementation of integrated water resources management (IWRM) projects at priority field sites; and assisting the government of Lao PDR in reviewing the legal and regulatory framework for the management of wetlands and water resources and the potential role of economic incentives.

Between 2000 and 2003, several projects were completed in this core programme area, which included a study on poverty alleviation and environmental management in upland watersheds (ADB RETA); major integrated conservation and development field projects (ICDPs) in Dong Hoa Sao, Phou Xiang Thong, Nam Et and Phou Loei Protected Areas; a demonstration project on supporting the sustainable use of NTFPs; the provision of technical assistance to the Lao-Swedish Forestry Programme focusing on sustainable use of forest land and resources; and conservation and development planning for the Nakai Nam Theun Protected Area. The IUCN office in Lao PDR was also involved in a review of the Protected Areas and

Development (PAD) project. The main purpose of the PAD was to examine approaches for integrating protected area management with socio-economic planning and development processes in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam. A set of eight reports is currently being published comprising four national reports, a regional report, field studies, and national and thematic lessons learned papers. The project website <http://www.mekong-protected-areas.org/> carries useful information about PA related issues especially those challenging Lao PDR.

Currently the programme is involved in the implementation of the preparatory phase of the Mekong Wetland Biodiversity Programme; providing support to IUCN’s Water and Nature Initiative (WANI) to study the navigation agreement for the Mekong River (which calls for the removal of rapids and their habitats); and, assisting the Government with natural World Heritage.

Proposals are being developed to: continue the work of the ICDPs and the NTFP Project; pursue additional activities in wetland conservation and integrated water resources management; support forest landscape restoration, and to contribute to the National Programme for the Conservation of Elephants.

Environmental Education, Awareness and Communications

The programme seeks to increase awareness and understanding of environmental issues at all levels of society. Especially important is conveying the critical role of sound natural resource management in sustaining well-being and rural livelihoods. To this end, the Lao programme is developing and translating key reference materials on conservation and biodiversity. The programme also seeks to build capacity within the government’s line ministries and departments by regularly supplying informational material from its reference collection for use in meetings, workshops, and strategic documents.

The programme is currently implementing the following national and regional projects in this programme area: publication of a Lao version of *Wildlife in Lao PDR: A 1999 Status Report*;

translation of agro-biodiversity materials; and a regional interpretation of the findings of the World Commission on Dams.

Environmental Planning and Assessment

The long-term aim of this core programme area is to increase the use of integrated natural resource planning tools and approaches in guiding development activities, reducing land-use conflicts, and minimising environmental impacts in rural and urban areas. Particular focus is on helping to build EIA capacity within selected government ministries.

The following projects were completed in this programme area between 2000 and 2003: the development of a National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) Proposal for Lao PDR; and environmental profiles for Oudomxay, Louang Prabang and Bolikhamxay Provinces.

The programme is currently implementing a project to help build capacity for undertaking environmental assessment and monitoring of new rural access roads.

Legal and Other Enabling Frameworks

Heavily linked to the other core areas, the programme aims to strengthen or develop the necessary legal and other enabling frameworks for supporting sustainable equitable and natural resource management. Priority frameworks include those for NTFP management, national biosafety, genetic resources, and EIA.

The programme is currently engaged in a project for the popularisation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Initiatives

IUCN aims to enhance the capacity of the government to implement multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and represent Lao perspectives at global environmental forums. Specific objectives are to assist the government in reviewing the potential costs and benefits of ratifying additional MEAs, increasing institutional and human capacity in implementing MEAs already ratified, and providing preparatory support to strengthen the government's voice at international environmental meetings.

The programme is currently involved in the preparation of Lao delegates for SBSTTA-9, developing a project on the coordinated implementation of MEAs to which Lao PDR is a party, and is about to commence a project to support the implementation of the Climate Change Convention in the country.

Members, Partners, Administration, and Management

In parallel with the five technical core programme areas, the programme continually seeks to develop its network of members and partners and to improve its own efficiency, responsiveness, and technical capacity.

The programme is currently engaged in exploring the opportunities to assist the development of information and communication technology.

The major achievements in the period included:

- Reorienting the strategic direction of the programme to better match the needs and priorities of the country with IUCN's comparative advantages.
- The successful demonstration of the importance of non-timber forest products for rural livelihoods and conservation, and of the approaches and tools appropriate for supporting their sustainable use and development. The Government and its development partners have since adopted and expanded IUCN's work in many rural development programmes.
- Building capacity for Protected Area Management, especially at Provincial levels.
- Demonstrating approaches for reducing poverty and supporting sustainable development in the buffer zones of Protected Areas.
- Building the capacity of the government to assess the sustainability and effectiveness of development activities.

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NEPAL

With its diverse geographical features and endowments, Nepal presents a complex mix of opportunities and challenges in conservation and sustainable development. Although the country is classified as one of the poorest in the world there are several examples of good conservation practices. Many hill communities have successfully restored degraded forest areas and have instituted regulatory mechanisms for harvesting forest produce. Community group formation has now become a standard practice in development projects for ensuring greater beneficiary participation, transparency and accountability.

His Majesty's Government of Nepal has launched the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) which has been developed in conjunction with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The Plan's objective is poverty reduction through expansion of economic opportunities and employment based on the efficient use of available resources. Strategies include a broad-based process of economic growth, expansion of social services and infrastructure, empowerment and good governance. It further identifies areas for special attention, such as sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity conservation. IUCN Nepal's five-year programme is driven by the government's five year plan and the desire to support government and civil society in their efforts to promote sustainable development.

IUCN has been active in Nepal since 1985. Until 1994, its presence was linked to supporting the Government in preparing and implementing the National Conservation Strategy. Since 2000, IUCN Nepal has shifted its

emphasis in its programme from a policy focus to a combination of field and policy work in order to strengthen the policy-practice linkages. Main programme interventions from 2000 to 2003 included the establishment of three field projects, continued support for biodiversity conservation through capacity building and strengthening of the legal and policy framework, and continued advocacy and communication.

Despite many difficulties affecting Nepal in recent years, IUCN national and local partners have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to continue working together. Key factors contributing to IUCN's ability to continue field work include the strength of local partnerships and the major role of community and non-governmental groups in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of field activities. IUCN closely monitors the local situation, and uses a flexible management approach to enable project activities to be adapted as necessary to minimize risks to project staff, partners and participants.

Structure of the Programme and Key Activities Under Implementation

The IUCN Nepal Programme is structured around the following four thematic areas.

Managing Ecosystems and Sustainable Livelihoods

This thematic area will contribute to the following long-term results: knowledge for informed action on conservation and sustainable use; strengthened national and local capacities; established incentives for conservation; and participatory processes for more equitable distribution of costs and benefits in the access and use of natural resources.

The sub-programmes under this thematic area include high mountain ecosystems and livelihoods (including the existing rhododendron conservation project); conservation of the Siwaliks ecosystem (focus on Ilam district); sustainable use of NTFPs in Doti; wetland resource management; sustainable management of local



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water resources; and, capacity building for biodiversity conservation. These are briefly described below.

Tinjure Milke Jaljale (TMJ), Northeast Nepal

The Rhododendron Conservation Project aims at facilitating community management of this area which has the largest diversity of rhododendron species in Nepal. IUCN works with a local NGO and various community-based organisations and networks on activities such as reducing fuelwood use through the use of improved cooking stoves and reducing acute dependence on forest resources through green income generating activities like ecotourism, beekeeping, and NTFPs.

Ilam Siwaliks, Southeast Nepal

This project aims to conserve the ecosystem functions and biodiversity of the fragile Siwaliks zone. IUCN works with a network of Community Forest User Groups, the Apex Body of Women's Groups and Flood Control Committees (FCC) to halt the ecological degradation of the area. The conservation work has centred on building the capacity of local bodies to undertake better forest and watershed management and promoting green income generation and alternative energy technologies.

Medicinal Plants and Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), Far-west Nepal

This project focuses on conservation and sustainable use of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants and NTFPs through

in situ and *ex situ* conservation and plantation work in Doti District. IUCN works through NTFP user groups, women's groups and traders, and has helped establish nurseries and demonstration sites, supported income generation and strengthened the tenure rights for communities.

Wetland and Water Resources

IUCN provides technical assistance to His Majesty's Government of Nepal on various wetland management issues, including refining national policy and implementing the Ramsar Convention. IUCN will continue to demonstrate the principles of wise wetland management and use for sustainable livelihoods through field projects.

IUCN's water programme is emerging. It is currently involved in facilitating national discussions on Dams and Development in Nepal. Ideas are being explored regarding possible involvement in river basin management that would be linked with IUCN's Global Water and Nature Initiative (WANI).

Biodiversity and Traditional Knowledge

This sub-programme is related to national level support for biodiversity conservation including alien and invasive species, valuation of natural resources and documentation of traditional knowledge. The Traditional Knowledge (TK) Documentation project is aimed at building the capacity of HMG/Nepal and other local institutions to facilitate biodiversity conservation and to secure the rights to benefit from the use of traditional knowledge. This is achieved through the documentation of TK and the development, establishment, promotion and use of a registry of traditional knowledge related to biological resources.

Environmental Mainstreaming and Governance

The sub-programmes under this thematic area include strengthening the legal and policy framework; MEA compliance and participation; strengthening local environmental governance; mainstreaming conservation (trade-environmental linkages, intellectual property rights, environmental justice and security); and, education, communication and outreach.

In addition to continuing IUCN's contributions in law, policy and communications, this initiative aims to strengthen local environmental governance by



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understanding and addressing barriers. By working as a facilitator, IUCN hopes to contribute to reducing conflicts among natural resource management laws and policies and in particular with the Local Self-governance Act. In part this will be achieved through greater examination of the links between resource rights, environmental security, and livelihood security. IUCN will promote greater accountability, participation, transparency, and equity in decision-making and action through our field projects. We will examine ways to safeguard traditional knowledge related rights, and support skills for improving local planning to integrate social, economic, and environmental components.

Clean Environment Partnerships

This thematic area includes issues such as climate change, air quality changes, land and water pollution and environmental impact assessment. Work will focus on increasing knowledge and awareness of climate change, air, and water quality and impacts of hazardous substances on ecosystems and livelihoods, as well as building capacity to cope with these problems in terms of mitigation and adaptation.

Knowledge Management and Learning

This thematic area aims to strengthen the learning culture at IUCN Nepal so knowledge is used more effectively for improved action. The sub-programmes include action research on linkages between

biodiversity, poverty, equity and other ecosystem functions; results-oriented monitoring and assessment that is linked to planning; making knowledge accessible (environment and resource information centre, database, online services for sustainable development information, GIS applications); and platforms for exchange and learning.

As a cross-cutting priority, IUCN Nepal is placing greater emphasis on the issues of gender, poverty, and social equity. Action learning with organisations involved in natural resource management will strengthen our understanding of the dynamic among equity, livelihood, and environment issues and improve our ability to reduce inequities through better integration in our actions at policy, institution, and field levels.

Major Achievements 2000-2003

IUCN aims to continue to be an efficient and robust organization that is strongly connected to the IUCN constituency and regional and global networks. The sub-programmes include management and coordination; programme development and donor diversification; planning, monitoring and assessment; risk assessment and mitigation; and collaboration with IUCN National and Commission members and the IUCN Asia Office.

The 2000-2003 phase focused on the development of major field-based operations, where the participatory and integrated conservation approaches developed under the National Conservation Strategy could be applied.

The following three field demonstration projects were established to promote collaborative conservation and sustainable use of natural resources:

- Conservation and sustainable use of Medicinal Plants and other NTFPs through community participation in the Seti Zone
- Conservation of Ilam Siwaliks through Collaborative Management
- Community Conservation of Rhododendrons in Eastern Nepal

Support continued to be provided to HMG/N to fulfil MEA commitments, including a series of sensitisation programmes for government officials and judges on

MEAs, CBD and AGRBS. Policies and acts were formulated in a collaborative manner on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands and Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing (AGRBS). Additional support was provided to strengthen and promote policies and practices for biodiversity conservation, alien invasive species, forest restoration, integration of gender and equity issues, and community management of natural resources. Numerous awareness raising events, training, seminars and publications were supported to further public understanding of environmental issues.

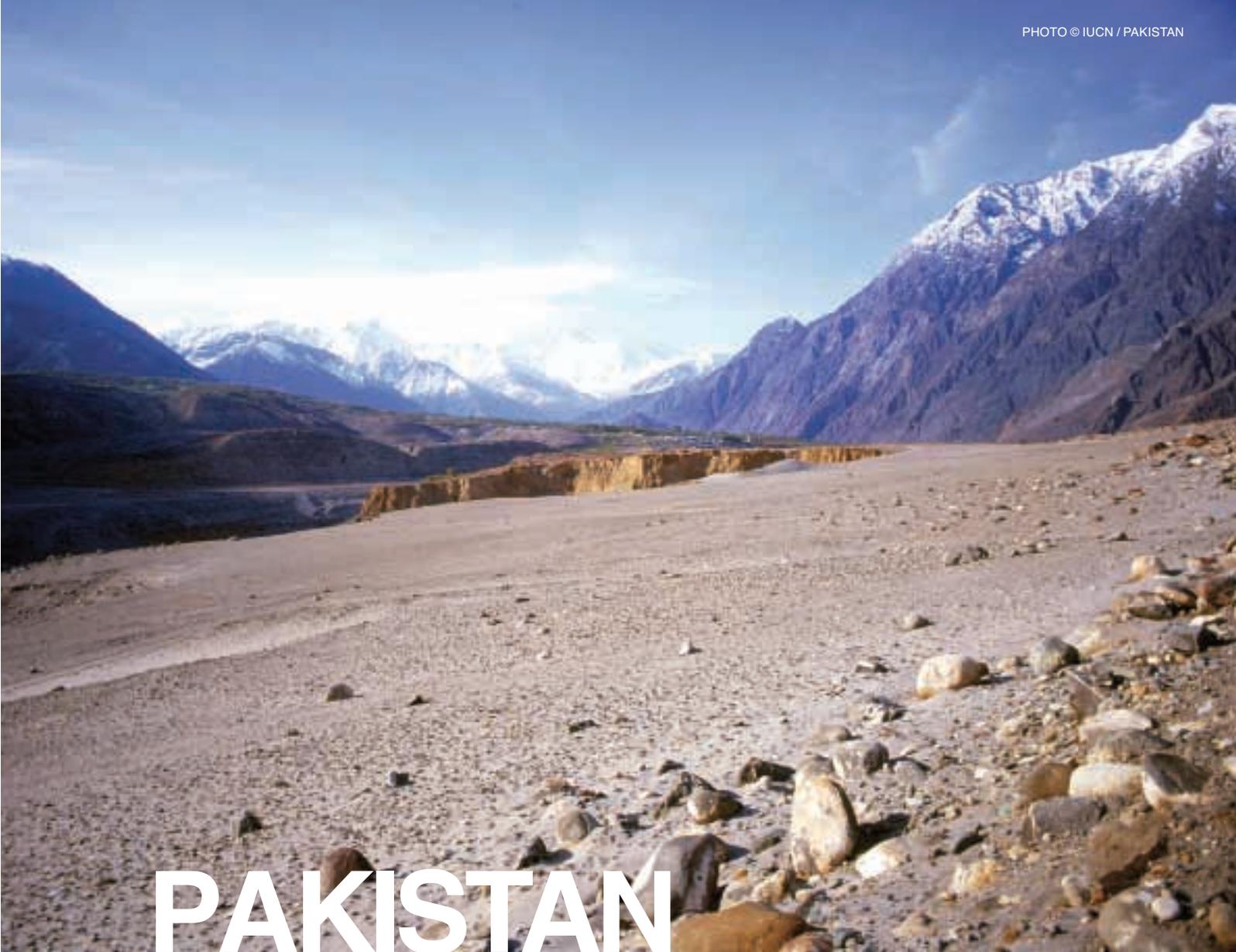
IUCN Nepal's internal capacity was strengthened for programme development, monitoring and evaluation. Also, initial steps were taken towards diversification of donor base for better organisational sustainability.

New Programme Components in the Pipeline

Existing field projects will continue over the next five years with the explicit focus of sharing experiences nationally and influencing policy. The Wetland Conservation and Sustainable Use Project is anticipated to begin in 2004. New projects are under development in Integrated River Basin Management, Local Governance, Environmental Security and Conflict Resolution, and Climate Change and Air Quality.

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PAKISTAN

Pakistan is a large, densely populated country with a wide range of climatic zones and ecosystems. With more than a third of the population below the poverty line and as one of the ten most populous countries in the world, Pakistan presents enormous challenges in conservation and sustainable development. As one of the first steps towards meeting the challenges posed, the Government of Pakistan, together with IUCN Pakistan, developed a National Conservation Strategy - a framework for sustainable development of the country. Since then, similar conservation strategies have been formulated at the provincial and district levels.

World events, most notably September 11, 2001 and its aftermath, have presented Pakistan with one of the most severe challenges in its history. The country has been at the centre stage of the ‘war on terrorism’, waged in neighbouring Afghanistan since October 2001. The year 2001 was also the beginning of a transition in overseas development assistance (ODA) flows to the country. The level of ODA to the country changed dramatically, with several countries (Canada, Norway, the US) offering debt relief and resuming support to Pakistan. Most markedly, however, aid flows shifted to poverty reduction (following the World Bank supported Poverty Reduction Strategy paper), good governance (often with a focus on decentralising governance to the district and *tehsil* or sub-district levels) and public health and education. Increasingly, ODA flows are directed towards supporting government institutions rather than the civil society sector, perhaps as a move to strengthen weakened state bureaucracies. The other player that is emerging is the private sector. As WTO regulations are

coming into play, there is an increased focus on preparing private companies to comply with these regulations and compete in the global marketplace.

The key sustainable development issue in Pakistan is the continuing degradation of the natural environment, exacerbated by population pressures and poverty. Many areas face an acute shortage of water whilst others face severe water logging and salinity problems. Unplanned urbanisation with increasing air, water and soil pollution continue to affect urban residents, while deforestation in the absence of adequate reforestation measures remain a problem. The issues of gender imbalance, economic inequity and, most importantly, lack of political will and capacity to deal with these issues, have added to the severity of the problems.

What this heralds for the environment is alarming. International political demands, global trade competition with better resourced and more advanced countries, and ODA flows to the poverty, education and health sectors means that the attention given to the environment will shrink. Organizations like IUCN will need to continue to lobby for attention to this area until such time as donors start supporting sustainable natural resource management initiatives by all players: government, civil society and private sectors.

IUCN Pakistan's current programme continues to be made up of work around core technical themes and cross-cutting areas expressed through conservation strategies work and field projects.

Structure of the Programme

In 2001, IUCN Pakistan was reorganised to handle a mature and large programme following a programme and management review. Financial, human resources and administration functions were partially decentralised to the provincial programme offices while the internal matrix management structure was strengthened.

The IUCN Pakistan Programme, directed from its country office in Karachi, is organised into three groups. The first is its thematic programmes

encompassing both technical and cross-cutting themes, the second are the various conservation strategies (at national, sub-national and district levels) which are in different phases of formulation and implementation (directly managed by the relevant programme offices), and the third are the select field projects.

The core programme consists of the following:

- Programme Coordination Unit
- Policy and Constituency Development Unit
- Education, Communication and Knowledge Management Group: Education; Communications; and Knowledge Management Programmes
- Society, Economy and Environment Group: Environment Assessment; Environmental Law; and Environmental Economics Programmes
- Ecosystems Management Group: Water; Forests; Coastal and Marine Ecosystems; and Biodiversity Programmes

Country Office

The IUCN Pakistan Programme is headed from the country office in Karachi.

Programme Offices

These offices house the field projects in addition to managing several projects themselves: Balochistan, Islamabad, Northern Areas, Sarhad & Sindh.

Field Projects

- Environmental Rehabilitation for North West Frontier Province and Punjab (ERNP)
- Mountain Areas Conservancy Project (MACP)

Key Activities Under Implementation

Historically, the IUCN Pakistan Programme has been built around the National Conservation Strategy, later extended to the provincial, regional and district levels. While there has been a shift in the focus of the NCS after its mid-term review from a purely conservation strategy to a strategy for sustainable development and an overhaul of its implementation mechanism in recent years, the NCS and its sub-national strategies are still at the core of the Pakistan Programme.

These strategies themselves are essentially policy frameworks that guide the integration of environmental considerations in development planning, which are implemented through capacity building initiatives complemented by suitably chosen demonstration projects. The Pakistan Environment Programme (PEP), which aims at capacity building for the implementation of the NCS through a unique partnership between IUCN Pakistan, two government units and a civil society policy research institution (the Sustainable Development Policy Institute), began in 1994 and is funded by CIDA. Running for nearly eight years, PEP was recently extended in December 2002 to allow partners to apply their individual and collective capacities to support sustainable development in Pakistan. This is being done through undertaking advocacy for the environment; influencing natural resource related policies (such as the recent Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Pakistan); supporting the districts to develop their 'vision' as required under LGO 2001 (D. I. Khan in the NWFP and Gwadar in Balochistan), supporting select institutions to develop their capacity for sustainable development work; training; supporting the provincial Environmental Protection Agencies and their decentralised units at the district level.

The Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy IV (SPCS) developed in partnership with the Government of the NWFP with SDC funding and approved by the provincial cabinet in 1996, moved into its final three year phase in July 2001. Operating through the Sarhad office in Peshawar, the SPCS negotiated with the provincial government for an SPCS 'Section' within the central Planning and Development Department, which will continue to push for environmental considerations in development planning. Five Roundtables – communications, NGOs, sustainable agriculture, urban environment, and sustainable industrial development – that encourage interaction between civil society, the private sector and government will continue with the support of member organisations/institutions instead of IUCN. A capacity building programme for stakeholders from different sectors and levels (provincial, district and *tehsil*) has proved so fruitful that there are plans to continue it for another three years.

SPCS has also worked at the next tier of government, the district, in Chitral and Abbottabad. Both the Chitral Conservation Strategy and the Abbottabad Conservation Strategy have been adopted by the respective District Councils as the 'vision' for development at the local level.

The Balochistan Conservation Strategy (BCS), developed in partnership with the Government of Balochistan, was formally approved in 2000. The BCS integrates social, economic and ecological issues; proposes a way forward; sets out challenges and realistic recommendations; and identifies actions to be taken together by government, private sector, and civil society. While BCS implementation is the mandate of the provincial government, IUCN has decided to support this process, as part of its larger programme of work in the province, under a five year Balochistan Programme funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy from March 2002 onwards. IUCN is building on its strengths of facilitating policy development, of fostering capacity for environmental work both at the individual and institutional levels (particularly in the formal education sector), of being a catalyst for action (initiating a study on the effectiveness of check dams) and the much needed neutral interface between civil society and government. Under the programme, two districts – Gwadar and Qila Saifullah – have been chosen for carrying out demonstration projects, and possibly to infuse SD planning at the devolved district level. The IUCN national water programme is also being funded through the Balochistan Programme and as such has a focus on the province. The current plan includes work on the recharge of aquifers, rainwater harvesting, and integrated water resource management.

The Northern Areas Conservation Strategy (NACS) project, co-funded by SDC and NORAD, began in July 1999 and is due to be completed in December 2003. Following a participatory approach, 56 workshops were held with people coming from all over the Northern Areas, and 16 sector papers were written towards developing an NACS. During this time, however, it was realised that conservation with an increased focus on poverty alleviation and a more people-centred approach towards sustainable development better

addressed the issues of social, economic and ecological well-being in the Northern Areas. As a result, the approach shifted from a conservation strategy towards articulating the principles of a strategy for sustainable development. The Northern Areas Strategy for Sustainable Development will be launched by the Northern Areas Administration towards the end of 2003.

The Programme Support for Northern Pakistan

(PSNP) marks a shift in the partnership between SDC and IUCN, from a project mode of financing to programmatic support for IUCN in Northern Pakistan, covering both the NWFP and the Northern Areas. The national forest programme was also funded from here. Running concurrently with the SPCS IV project and meant to complement its work, PSNP was designed to work with partners and in sectoral areas that could not be addressed by SPCS IV. Under this programme, a major mid-term review of the SPCS has been launched, lessons learned from the Chitral and Abbottabad district strategies have been applied to another district (D. I. Khan), a review of the national forest policy and a sustainable agriculture policy for the NWFP is underway, nine natural resource management projects have been studied to cull out replicable experiences in NWFP and NAs, an environmental studies course developed for Protected Areas categories IX-X and XI-XII in collaboration with the Bureau of Curriculum, Abbottabad, and a knowledge management system developed for IUCN.

The Sindh Programme based in Karachi is slightly different than IUCN's other provincial programmes. Instead of explicitly formulating a conservation strategy (although it is about to finalise the *State of Environment and Development for Sindh*, collating information on 17 different sectors in the province), it is structured to develop IUCN's programme in Sindh with a focus on collaboration with members and partners. A large proportion of this work is funded by NORAD through the fourth phase of its framework agreement with IUCN Pakistan (NORAD IV). The coastal and marine ecosystem programme of IUCN Pakistan is also part of the Sindh Programme. It was responsible for highlighting the issue of environmental flows whereby a historic decrease in freshwater flowing down the river Indus has resulted in seawater intrusion 54 kilometres into the delta affecting coastal ecosystems adversely. Consequently

there is the need for integrated coastal zone management. In this context, an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan was developed for an ecologically sensitive high priority area along the coast of Sindh. Recently it has been given the responsibility of spearheading a rehabilitation plan for the marine ecosystem damaged by a huge oil spill off the coast of Karachi – the worst in the history of Pakistan.

Field projects represent an important dimension of IUCN's work. Not only do they demonstrate the principles of conservation and sustainability on the ground, they are rich sources of learning that can contribute to IUCN's policy work and close the field-policy loop. Two field projects that IUCN Pakistan is currently managing are Environmental Rehabilitation in NWFP and Punjab (ERNP) and Mountain Areas Conservancy Project (MACP).

Environmental Rehabilitation in NWFP and Punjab

(ERNP) funded by the EU, is being implemented in a tripartite partnership with the federal and two provincial governments and a European technical assistance company. Originally planned to run for seven years (1996-2003) it has recently been extended for another six months to June 2004. The project aims to halt and reverse the environmental degradation in the mountainous areas of NWFP and the Punjab. In line with the National Conservation Strategy, the project



Study visit of students of Mass Communication Department, University of Balochistan to Ziarat Juniper Forests. PHOTO © IUCN / PAKISTAN

methodology is based on the use of integrated measures of rehabilitation of natural resources and sustainable socio-economic development. A community development process that has fostered productive working partnerships between the local communities and government line departments has been promoted to carry out a wide-range of activities, from educating the local communities about sustainable use of natural resources to launching innovative income generation schemes and trying to improve forestry, agriculture, watershed, range and livestock management practices.

The Mountain Areas Conservation Project, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the UNDP, covers a large area under four 'conservancies' in NWFP and the Northern Areas. Designed as a seven-year project (1999-2006), it aims to achieve the goal of biodiversity conservation and management through the involvement of local communities. Some of the mechanisms include capacity-building at the community level, imparting conservation values and assisting communities in attracting outside support for long term eco-development, trophy hunting as a means of protecting keystone species, improving the collection and marketing of non-timber forest products such as medicinal plants, and encouraging ecotourism. The project is also working with the government to revise policies and legislation to improve support for participatory conservation. In addition, MACP is also trying to develop an endowment fund to meet the ongoing costs of conservancy management. The Mountain Areas Conservancy Fund will be the first GEF fund in Pakistan.

The Sustainable Development Networking Programme, Pakistan, part of a global initiative of UNDP, has been a pioneer of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the country, both in providing access through email and internet and in setting up web-based development information services. In the final phase, which ended in June 2001, the range of activities mainly involved capacity building in web publishing, access and internet use, and the development of content and advocacy materials. Since its formal closure in 2002, work has continued under the knowledge management programme of IUCN Pakistan.

The Programme Coordination Unit provides programme development services, including project development, and coordination between projects and core programmes, and the monitoring and evaluation for the overall programme. The Unit operates provides both technical assistance and quality control functions. During 2003, it was instrumental in carving out a strategic direction for IUCN Pakistan, leading to a four year intersessional programme for the organisation.

The Policy and Constituency Development Unit aims to integrate environmental and sustainability concerns within the macro policy framework in Pakistan. It provides support to partners, members and staff in identifying and advocating policy level issues of local, national, and regional significance. Apart from its original brief of engaging and strengthening the IUCN constituency in Pakistan, it has recently acquired the added function of steering and synergizing the work of the thematic groups.

The Education, Communication and Knowledge Management Group aims to integrate environment and sustainable development at all levels of education and development communication in the country. It is also responsible for internal communication and knowledge management with a special focus on organizational learning. The group with its cross-cutting themes is working closely with other components of the IUCN Pakistan Programme providing technical support and guidance in many areas. Its major focus areas are: the infusion of environmental knowledge in the formal primary school curriculum, highlighting environmental issues in the media and enriching the 'knowledge web' of IUCN Pakistan.

The Society, Economy and Environment Group encompasses the technical cross-cutting themes of environmental assessment, environmental law, environmental economics and business. Each of these themes attempts to promote people-centred conservation principles and practices in the society. Major activities carried out by the group include: a comprehensive orientation programme (undertaken in collaboration with the national and provincial Environmental Protection Agencies) for

environmental magistrates and other relevant judicial officials in environmental law; economic valuation study of selected Protected Areas of Pakistan as part of a regional initiative; and a review of natural resource legislation in select provinces in the country.

The thematic programmes of forests, coastal and marine ecosystems, biodiversity and water are the focus for the Ecosystems Management Group. The aim is to conserve the diversity and integrity of these ecosystems that are also a key to human survival. The Biodiversity Programme has started work on the mammalian Red List of Pakistan (the first of its kind in the country), the Water Programme is about to launch a major ground water recharge initiative in Balochistan and the Forests Programme is supporting the revision of the forest policy at the national level and reviewing rules and regulations under the provincial NWFP forest legislation.

In addition to these major programme components, IUCN Pakistan is about to conclude the World Commission on Dams, Consultative Process in Pakistan project, funded by RNE. Under this initiative, the key findings of the World Commission on Dams comprehensive report on dams and development are to be disseminated to all stakeholders in the country. Through a series of consultative workshops on major themes related to dams and development, policy recommendations - representing a national consensus - will be formulated.

Major Achievements 2000-2003

- The Environment Donors Coordination Group, supported by IUCN Pakistan, has advocated the inclusion of environmental issues in the World Bank mandated Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Pakistan, for communicating the link between sustainable livelihoods and ecosystems.
- The Chitral Conservation Strategy and, more recently the Abbottabad Conservation Strategy, have been adopted as the 'vision' for development planning by their respective District Councils, the first time that political

bodies have been actively involved in policy formulation.

- The Balochistan Conservation Strategy has been approved and adopted by the Government of Balochistan.
- The Pakistan Biodiversity Action Plan has been endorsed by the Federal Government.
- Federal, provincial and customary laws pertaining to natural resource management have been reviewed and compiled.
- A major organisational review of the Pakistan Forest Institute was conducted at the request of the Government.
- ERNP's model of natural resource management through community participation has had a visible impact.
- The concept of trophy hunting as a tool towards conservation has been successfully applied in MACP's conservancy areas.
- A highly successful and widely acclaimed internship programme has been run under SPCS.
- The Pakistan Development Gateway, a comprehensive web-based portal on development information that links regional and thematic gateways has been developed.
- Cyber community centres have been set up in some of the remotest areas of Pakistan.
- Environmental issues have been integrated into the primary school curriculum of the Northern Areas.
- Environmental checklists and guidelines have been adopted for screening small projects in the NWFP.
- Sea intrusion in the Indus Delta, with an attendant loss in the livelihoods of people in the area, has been highlighted.

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A photograph showing two traditional Sri Lankan boats, known as 'kumbukaras', on the ocean. The boats are wooden with blue and white stripes along the hull. They have tall masts and are equipped with various gear. A person is visible on the deck of the boat in the foreground. The water is a clear, vibrant blue, and the sky is a pale, hazy blue.

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka is a pearl shaped island in the Indian Ocean off the east coast of India. With a land area of only 65,000 square kilometres and a population of 19 million, Sri Lanka is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Despite its small size, Sri Lanka is home to a range of ecosystems including coral reefs, sea grass beds and mangrove forests in the coastal areas, tropical rain forests, montane zone forests, and patana grasslands in the interior of the country. These ecosystems harbour a rich diversity of flora and fauna, including a large number of species that are endemic to the island.

Structure of the Programme

Established in 1988, IUCN Sri Lanka has provided considerable support to national initiatives for the sustainable management of biodiversity and for enhancing local capacity for environmental management. Responding to issues critical to the country's future, IUCN Sri Lanka works as a catalyst for policy formulation, habitat and species conservation, protected area management and in the promotion of environmental awareness. IUCN Sri Lanka's strategic plan 2005-2008 recognises the need to disseminate and share information widely amongst all stakeholders and to thereby ensure that IUCN plays a major role in priority conservation and development issues in the country.

The IUCN Sri Lanka Programme is managed by a core staff with national and international technical expertise. In addition, the services of experts within the Asia Regional Programmes co-located within the country office are also available to the programme. IUCN's programme in Sri Lanka is implemented in three broad thematic areas in accordance with the country's priority conservation needs. They are Ecosystems Management and Species Conservation, Policy, Social and Economics, and Education and Communications.

The Ecosystems Management and Species Conservation (EMSC) unit takes a lead role in assisting the Government of Sri Lanka in implementing the nation's Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan (BCAP), which was prepared by IUCN in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

Key Activities Under Implementation and Major Achievements 2000-2003

Following a consultative process, Sri Lanka's list of threatened fauna and flora was published by IUCN Sri Lanka in 2000. Since its publication, efforts have been made to institutionalize the red listing process by the establishment of a National Species Conservation Advisory Group (NSCAG) in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. IUCN has now taken the responsibility of assisting the NSCAG in the preparation of a National Species Conservation Strategy (NSCS).

Over the past few years, IUCN Sri Lanka has provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Indigenous Medicine in its efforts to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants, an important but threatened component of biodiversity and of immense economic and cultural value to Sri Lanka. This World Bank/GEF funded initiative has achieved its objectives through in situ conservation by establishing five medicinal plant conservation areas (MPCAs); *ex situ* cultivation by promoting nurseries, home gardens, plantation cultivation, propagation and agronomic research, and by providing information and institutional support.

At present, one of the focal areas of the unit is conducting assessments of biodiversity. IUCN Sri Lanka has designed scientifically sound biodiversity assessment techniques that enable the identification of critical habitats. Surveys have been successfully completed in the Muthurajawela Wetland Sanctuary, Maduganga Mangrove Estuary, Bundala Ramsar Wetland and the Udawalawe Left Bank Irrigation extension area. IUCN Sri Lanka is currently influencing the relevant state agencies in making policy shifts necessary for more effective ecosystem management. The Unit also publishes information on biodiversity associated with particular sites as a series of occasional papers and general guides.

In the marine and coastal realm, the priority issues of the unit include: wetland and mangrove habitats, threatened marine species, coral reefs, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, and Marine Protected Areas. At the invitation of the Department of Wildlife Conservation, IUCN Sri Lanka was instrumental in the preparation of a National Action Plan for Marine Turtle Conservation. Several stakeholder workshops were held to ensure that a collaborative consultative approach was used in the preparation of this important policy document. Comprehensive management plans for ten selected mangrove areas along the southwest coast of the island have also been completed. This was done through a participatory approach, taking into consideration the needs, strengths, and weaknesses of the communities that live around mangrove areas. One of the main activities the EMSC programme has been engaged in over the past year is the development of an integrated coastal zone management plan for a critical coastal stretch on the south coast of the country. The objectives of this GEF funded project include consolidating and strengthening the information on ecosystems and species in terms of composition, threats, human impacts, and priorities. IUCN Sri Lanka is also involved in the implementation of three projects funded by the ADB: the Coastal Resource Management project on the south and south western coasts of Sri Lanka, ADB Eastern Province Coastal Community Development project and the ADB Regional Technical Assistance project on Coastal and Marine Resources Management and Poverty Reduction in South Asia. These projects collectively focus on integrated coastal resource management, poverty alleviation, and promotion of sustainable economic development of coastal fishing communities in the respective project areas.



PHOTO © IUCN / SRI LANKA

In the field of forests and protected areas, IUCN Sri Lanka has worked closely with the Forest Department on several initiatives in the Sinharaja and Knuckles range of forests. This partnership resulted in the formulation of a major national initiative titled “Conservation of Threatened Species in the Rainforests of South - West Sri Lanka”, which was funded through the UNDP/GEF. Joining hands with community organisations, the Forest Department, and other divisional level state officials, the “Conservation of Biodiversity and Water Resources in the Knuckles Range of Forests” is being continued with funding from the Community Environmental Initiative Facility (CEIF) of the Ministry of Environment. A National Assessment of Forest Restoration Policy and Practice in Sri Lanka was also undertaken as a component of the IUCN - Asia Regional Forestry Programme as an initial step in the development of a regional project on forest restoration. This assessment has been completed.

One of the major areas of future intervention for the EMSC unit is monitoring the establishment and spread of invasive alien species in Sri Lanka.

Policy, Social and Economics (PSE) Unit

Established in early 2003, the Policy, Social and Economics unit of IUCN Sri Lanka consists of several cross-cutting programmes: Environmental Law, Environmental Economics, and the emerging Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Gender

programmes. The unit seeks to influence the development of appropriate policy, legal, and economic instruments in Sri Lanka to support IUCN Sri Lanka’s overall objectives of conservation and sustainable use. The unit’s work is oriented towards reducing disincentives and identifying and promoting incentives and mechanisms for ecosystem and protected area management and species conservation. The unit aims to accomplish these objectives while also emphasising the importance of linking human well-being with conservation. Valuation, financing and incentives, economic and conservation policy, and legal analysis are some of the tools used by the unit.

The Environmental Economics Programme of IUCN Sri Lanka has been involved in a range of activities. Some of its major projects include the integration of wetland ecosystems values with river basin management (WANI), the integration of economic values into protected area management (PA Valuation), and resource economic assessment of change in dependency on natural resources due to irrigation development.

WANI is a regional project to demonstrate practical applications of environmental economic techniques and measures in sustainable wetland and river basin management. The Sri Lanka component of the project is being executed in the Kala Oya basin, which is the pilot river basin for implementing the integrated river basin planning and management approaches by the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka.

The programme also provides technical support in evaluating EIA reports on environmental economics and the functioning of the environmental economics policy discussion group (EEPDG) of Sri Lanka.

IUCN Sri Lanka’s work in the field of environmental law contributes towards the development and implementation of policies and legal frameworks that support and facilitate the conservation and sustainable use of Sri Lanka’s rich biodiversity. The unit adopts two complementary approaches, strengthening policy and legal frameworks and developing in-country capacity for the effective implementation of these policies and laws.

IUCN Sri Lanka provided technical and logistical support to the Ministry of Environment in developing

an outline for a legal and institutional framework to regulate access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits accruing from the access and use of such resources. Concurrently, IUCN provided similar assistance to the same ministry in developing national guidelines for regulating activities involving Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). The unit is currently working on several initiatives, including the development of material for the identification of legally protected orchid species of Sri Lanka, and the identification of gaps between the conservation status of native species and the legal protection afforded them under national and international instruments. The unit is also involved in implementing a project funded by the Small Grants Fund under the Ramsar Convention to conserve Sri Lanka's second Ramsar wetland - the Anavilundawa Wetland Sanctuary. This collaborative effort between IUCN Sri Lanka and the Department of Wildlife Conservation seeks to build the institutional linkages and local community capacities necessary to establish a sustainable and collaborative framework for the management of the sanctuary.

The Education and Communications (E&C) Unit

IUCN Sri Lanka's Education and Communications Programme uses its expertise to involve, inform, and inspire people in all walks of life to appreciate and conserve Sri Lanka's magnificent natural heritage. The programme conducts ongoing education and awareness campaigns for diverse groups such as school children, teachers, state sector officials, and media personnel. The unit also prepares and produces public information material on biodiversity including informative posters, brochures, and video material.

A recent achievement was a project to enhance public awareness of the status of Sri Lanka's coral reefs titled *A Tomorrow For Our Coral Reefs*. The goal of the project was to improve the sustainable livelihoods of coastal communities and thereby arrest the degradation of coral reef ecosystems at selected sites in Sri Lanka. This was achieved through awareness raising activities in the form of public exhibits in Colombo and selected coastal sites around Sri Lanka. In collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries and the Department of Wildlife Conservation, an extensive awareness campaign entitled the *Conservation of Small Cetaceans* was also

implemented. In collaboration with the Department of Wildlife Conservation and funded by the Ramsar Small Grants Fund, an awareness strategy to conserve Sri Lanka's first Ramsar wetland, the Bundala National Park, was also implemented. This project focused on improving the information available at the visitors centre through informative posters, display panels, and through the production of a visitor field guide.

The programme actively supports the incorporation of environmental concerns into the formal and non-formal education sectors of Sri Lanka. A resource book to assist secondary school teachers in teaching the subject of biodiversity to schoolchildren was published in 2000. A resource book on coral reef ecosystems, to be used by schoolteachers as supplementary teaching material, was also published in 2003. The training of schoolteachers on aspects of biodiversity, inclusive of field training, is ongoing. Regular media briefings and public events are held to disseminate information to the general public on topics of public interest.

Recognising the pivotal role that education and communication must play in all activities relating to IUCN's mission, the programme continues to build close partnerships with national, regional, and global stakeholders in order to maximise the benefits that can be gained from coordinated and cooperative efforts.

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THAILAND

Over the last three years, IUCN's work in Thailand has been associated with the development and implementation of projects that are both specific to Thailand and more regional in nature, involving Thailand and other countries in the Lower Mekong basin. In addition, IUCN staff have also participated in, or provided support to, some of the activities of its members and partners in Thailand. The Asia Regional Office in Bangkok has committed itself to developing a framework for building a coherent, long-term programme in Thailand. More recently, IUCN has worked with the Government of Thailand towards hosting the next World Conservation Congress in Bangkok.

Key Activities Under Implementation

A Study of the Regulation of the Trade in Timber and Non-timber Forest Products in the Lower Mekong Basin countries was carried out to understand how the regulatory framework for controlling cross-border trade in these products can be made more efficient and effective. A review of Protected Areas and their contribution to economic development in the Lower Mekong countries was carried out in partnership with several national governmental organisations and international conservation organisations. The review provided opportunities for information sharing and networking amongst actors from the conservation and economic development sectors. The review was supported by IUCN offices in the Lower Mekong countries and has led to the publication of a

series of reports, some of which were launched at the fifth World Park Congress in Durban, South Africa, in September 2003. The Thailand PAD National Report will be launched at the end of 2003.

The Lower Songkhram River Basin was identified as Thailand's demonstration site for the Mekong Wetland Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme. With financial support from Wetland International, field operations commenced in 2002. IUCN is working closely with local government agencies, NGOs, experts and communities to strengthen the capacity of local institutions and grass roots organisations to manage natural resources, through the development of participatory planning processes, and by supporting local people to monitor and assess their own natural resource base.

IUCN has helped stakeholders to increase their awareness and understanding of the potential impacts of the Mekong Navigation Agreement. Under this intergovernmental agreement to improve navigation year round on the Mekong River, rock blasting started in 2003 in Lao PDR and Myanmar. Several partners of IUCN expressed concern that the various components of this initiative (the blasting, dam construction to regulate water levels, and the increased usage by larger vessels) will impact on the livelihoods of local people and the habitats of aquatic biodiversity resources. In response to these concerns, IUCN and partners (including the Lao National Mekong Committee, Lao Government representatives and Thai NGO's) conducted a rapid scoping study aimed at assessing the impact of the blasting on the biodiversity of the river system. In mid 2003 this study was presented to several interest groups in Thailand and Lao PDR.

In Thailand, the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, the Senator Commissions on Environment and on Public Participation, and the Thai Environmental Journalist Club all showed a strong interest in the environmental and social impacts of blasting the Mekong rapids and IUCN's work in this area. In September 2003, the Thai Cabinet decided that further environmental impact assessments would be required before it would approve blasting on the Thai side. IUCN was asked

to be a member of the steering committee to oversee the Thai EIA study. In addition, IUCN aims to collaborate with the Mekong River Commission and its country members to guarantee the quality of the regional EIA study.

IUCN, along with partners concerned with water resource management, facilitated a dialogue concerning the implementation of the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams (WCD) in Thailand. IUCN was appointed to the Working Group on the WCD recommendations in Thailand, which will formulate a strategic framework for water resources management in Thailand. The framework will be presented to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in due course.

In 2001, IUCN and its members and partners in Thailand agreed to pilot ForestPACT (Forest Partnership for Action and Commitment Today) in Thailand. ForestPACT is a global initiative to promote action for improved forest management through voluntary stakeholder pledges. IUCN has facilitated this process in Thailand by working with key forest conservation organisations to translate and adapt the global concept of a ForestPACT Pledge to the specific context of Thailand. ForestPACT Thailand provides a useful forum for participating organisations to discuss issues pertaining to the forest sector and to improve collaboration and cooperation. Over the past two years, members of ForestPACT have further coordinated their efforts and have begun to formulate pledges.

Ongoing and Future Activities

In August 2003, IUCN organised a consultation to discuss its draft Thailand Strategy (2005-2008) with members, partners, and commission members in Thailand. The following overall goal agreed for IUCN in Thailand by the participants is to support Thai society to improve its natural resource conditions, maintain people's livelihoods, and promote empowerment and good governance in the sustainable use and conservation of its natural environment. To work towards this goal, IUCN will

work in partnership with members and partners to formulate and implement projects and programmes that link natural resource conservation, equitable and sustainable use of natural resources, and livelihood improvements.

The Thailand Programme will concentrate on assisting members and partners in Thailand to prepare for the World Conservation Congress in November 2004 in Bangkok. The Thailand Programme Strategy will be discussed and adopted during the Congress. IUCN is working with the Thailand Government to host the Congress.

One such project is the Development of a National Protected Area System's Plan for Thailand. The protected area management model that is currently in place in Thailand focuses primarily on enforcement and preservation. It leaves little room for flexible protected area management that permits human settlement, sustainable use of natural resources, and traditional agricultural practices. The plan will be developed through a participatory process involving an array of stakeholder groups. The plan will seek to ensure that all major ecosystem types in Thailand are adequately represented in the protected area system, and will provide recommendations on developing an integrated policy and legal framework, incorporating a broader and more flexible range of protected area management categories.

IUCN Thailand will be providing technical support to the NGO Yadfon Association to promote integrated ecosystem management in the Palian River Basin in Southern Thailand. The aim of this initiative is to improve people's livelihoods, and to maintain the biological richness of the river basin ecosystems, from the watershed down to the estuary.

The proposal for the Restoration of Degraded Forests in the Lower Mekong Region focuses on translating the ITTO Guidelines for Forest Restoration into activities on the ground. The project will work in the four Lower Mekong countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam. In each country, a pilot site will be selected to test and demonstrate stakeholder negotiation processes for forest restoration at a landscape level. A regional component will allow for sharing of experiences and lessons. The project will assist key stakeholders in forest restoration through

training and the practical application of landscape and site-level approaches to restoration in target provinces and villages, and through the establishment of demonstration areas to showcase forest landscape restoration approaches.

Finally, with Thailand's ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity in late 2003, IUCN intends to increase cooperation and coordination with members and partners to support the implementation of the CBD and other multilateral environmental agreements in Thailand.

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VIETNAM

Vietnam is a country with abundant natural resources, and as a popular saying goes “with bounty forests rich as gold and vast seas rich as silver”. Mountains, hills, and forests account for two thirds of the country’s total land area of over 330,000 square kilometres. The two major deltas of the Red River in the North and Mekong River in the South provide valuable fertile areas for rice and agricultural production. Situated in the eastern-most part of the Indochina peninsula, bordering the Pacific Ocean, Vietnam has a long coast line of more than 3,200 kilometres and large areas of continental shelf.

The country has gone through many decades of war, which together with poverty, pressures of population growth and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources have heavily impacted the rich and diverse natural resource base, biodiversity, and the environment of the country.

Since the late 1980s, a process of reforms known as the “renovation process”, have been initiated. As a result the country has witnessed rapid changes and remarkable development, including continuously high economic growth rate and all-round improvements. Four important and fundamental principles - high and sustainable economic growth, political and social stability, equity, and people-centred development - have been guiding the country’s development strategy. The major challenges in the development of Vietnam are poverty reduction, public administration reforms, industrialization, and environmentally sustainable development.



PHOTO © IUCN / ZAKIR HUSSAIN

IUCN's involvement in Vietnam dates back to the mid 1980s, when it provided technical assistance to the country in the development of the National Conservation Strategy (1985), the 1991-2000 National Plan for Environment and Sustainable Development (1990), and The National Biodiversity Action Plan, the 10-year 2001-2010 National Strategy of Environment Protection (2001) etc.

Since the mid 1980s IUCN has continuously provided support to both government institutions and NGOs in the capacity-building process for the environment, natural resource conservation, and sustainable use in Vietnam. IUCN Vietnam's project/programme activities have been geared towards creating effective linkages between both policy advice and local sustainable livelihoods and between national actions and regional and global agreements.

Structure of the Programme

IUCN Vietnam's programme for 2001 to 2005 was developed in the year 2000 and focuses on the key challenges and issues facing Vietnam as well as Key Result Areas of IUCN Global and Asia Regional Programmes.

The programme is structured around the following key thematic areas:

- Environmental management and planning
- Biodiversity conservation, EIAs and MEAs
- Forest conservation, Protected Areas, NTFPs sustainable management and development
- Marine conservation, Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and Integrated Coastal Management (ICM)
- Wetlands conservation/sustainable use and river basin management
- Sustainable tourism and environmental economics

Key Activities Under Implementation

The Capacity-Strengthening Programme for Environmental Management in Vietnam supports the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE), and its National Environment Agency (NEA). Through this programme, numerous important policies, strategies, and actions have been developed such as the National Environment Protection Strategy 2001-2010, the National Environment Action Plan 2001-2005, and the International Support Partnership for Environment Sector in VN etc.

IUCN has continued to support Vietnam's participation in, and implementation of, MEAs including CBD, Ramsar, CITES etc. Issues such as access and benefit sharing, biosafety, and traditional knowledge have also been supported both in terms of awareness raising and capacity building.

Continuous and strong support has been given to the Forest Sector Programme Partnership between the Government and the donor community in Vietnam. A major programme on the sustainable management and development of NTFPs is ongoing, and supports institutional capacity building, policy discussion, sub-sector strategy development, and sustainable livelihood building at local levels in the buffer zones of Protected Areas and Nature Reserves. IUCN also supports other activities such as Protected Area management, and financing, and preventing forest fires. It undertook a study on PAs and their relevance to socio-economic development.

With a long coastline and a strong desire to develop a marine and coastal economy, Vietnam is badly in need of support for marine and coastal resource conservation and management for sustainable development in these areas. IUCN continues to support the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Vietnam. The first MPA pilot project was implemented during the past two years and has contributed to the building of management capacities at the provincial and commune levels. Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICM) also remains a priority area.

Wetlands and Water Resources Conservation

Since Vietnam is a country rich in wetland and water resources, conservation is essential to the long term success of Vietnam's culture and economy. The inland and coastal wetlands and diverse river systems of the country present great potentials for development, but also increasing challenges of degradation and decline in quality and quantity. IUCN has identified this as a high priority. IUCN also supported the development of a National Wetlands Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme in Vietnam. IUCN is also in the process of initiating the development of a pilot programme for integrated river-basin management for long-term flood mitigation and water-use in the Huong River basin, Central Vietnam.

IUCN is involved in projects that support sustainable tourism. With an open-door policy and active integration in the regional and global mainstreams, Vietnam's tourism has been expanding rapidly. Despite the tremendous economic benefits, tourism that develops too quickly, particularly when not adequately planned and managed, has also resulted in significant adverse impacts on both the local ecosystem and livelihoods of local culture.

IUCN Vietnam continues to assist initiatives to promote eco-tourism activities and sustainable forms of tourism that benefit both ecosystems and local communities.

Based on extensive analysis of the situation in Vietnam, there are some gaps, challenges and opportunities, particularly in the above-mentioned

Thematic Programme Areas (TPAs) that have been identified as cross-cutting issues, issues that constitute a constant thread running through all IUCN's approaches and project/programme actions in the country. The cross-cutting issues include:

- Adequate inclusions of gender considerations
- Effective support to institutional capacity building and strengthening
- Poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods through local participation and empowerment
- Innovative awareness-raising communication and education in the environment, nature conservation, and sustainable development

Major Achievements 2000-2003

Under the guidance of the strategic Country Programme framework of 2001-2005, IUCN had many major achievements during the 2000-2003 period. Some are listed below.

IUCN assisted the Government in an intensive process of participatory development of the 10 year National Strategy for Environment Protection 2001-2010, and the 5-year National Action Plan 2001-2005. For the past 15 years, IUCN has published a study on foreign aid given for the environmental sector.

IUCN has successfully implemented the Pilot Project on Sustainable Development of NTFPs and developed the Project Phase II for support to the NTFP sub-sector in Vietnam. The project has a national component and demonstration activities in six provinces (phase I has only two demonstration sites).

IUCN has successfully initiated the first MPA pilot project in Vietnam. Project implementation has been evaluated by World Bank and Danida (project donors) as highly satisfactory. Efforts on sustainable financing for MPA management, the participation of the local community in MPA management, alternative livelihoods credits, environmental education and awareness-raising, capacity building, and policy advice have been effectively supported.

Awareness and capacity building in ICM for Ministry of Fishery staff and the provincial government has been supported through training and workshops.

IUCN has assisted the Government in developing the National Conservation Action Plan for Marine Turtles, which includes programmes to combat trade in turtle products, and support Vietnam's participation in international agreements such as India Ocean and SEA MOU on Marine Turtle conservation and the CMS.

IUCN has carried out supplementary EIA for a project of a water reservoir and hydro-power dam in the buffer zone of a forest national park and nature reserve. IUCN recommended that the Government and an electricity company involved in the project implement mitigation measures.

At both the national and provincial level, IUCN has been working to raise awareness on the need for an integrated approach to river basin and water resources. The project was strongly supported and a pilot river basin integrated management project is in the process of being developed. IUCN has also been working to raise awareness on the potential as well as risks and challenges of sandy land aquaculture expansion in the coastal provinces of Vietnam.

New Programme Components in the Pipeline

Many of the projects/initiatives mentioned in the previous section will continue in the coming years. Some of these initiatives are in the preparatory phase and will need to be developed further into funded projects. It is hoped that the following issues can be addressed in new programmes to be developed in the near future.

- Access and benefit sharing of biological resources
- Integrated River-basin management in the Huong River Vallley in Central Vietnam
- ICM Project for the region of North West Tonkin Archipelego.
- National Wetlands Programme in Vietnam
- Climate change and natural disasters

- Forest fire prevention capacity
- Conservation and development of medicinal plants

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EMERGING INITIATIVES

**Mountains
Climate Change
Environmental Assessment
Communications and
Knowledge Management**

Mountains

In view of the biological and ecological significance of mountains, IUCN has started a Mountains Initiative in Asia, with a view to meet the new emerging challenges for conserving mountain ecosystems.

The Mountain Initiative builds on a number of existing policy and sustainable resource management initiatives that are currently underway in several Asian countries. These initiatives focus on issues relating to the enhancement of both the institutional and human capacity to conserve biological diversity, government policies and regulations for better management of mountain ecosystems and improved governance through empowerment of mountain communities.

The Himal Project: The Predecessor to the Mountains Initiative

The Himal Project started in 1999 and was implemented by five partners: IUCN Country Offices in Nepal, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, a group of three Indian organisations co-ordinated by the Wildlife Institute of India, and NODE – a consortium of three Norwegian institutions. The project focused on building linkages with other organisations in the region, designing and implementing pilot level field activities, holding consultative meetings to pull together a strategy for sustainable development in the Himal region, and preparing for participation in the International Year of Mountains, 2002.

Key Achievements

- Provided intense and focused inputs into the global and regional International Year of Mountains (IYM) events, in particular the Asia High Summit, the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, the Alpine Conference at Bechtesgarden and the Mountain Women Conference in Nepal.
- Advocated north-south and inter-regional sharing of information, experiences and capacity/skills transfers.
- Co-authorship of one of the ten thematic papers for the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit.
- Participated in the IUCN/CEM/WCPA Mountains Initiative Task Force, which includes UNEP, WCMC, MRI, GMBA, UNESCO and other key global institutions.
- Initiating project development for mountain regions between Vietnam and Lao PDR.
- Active support to setting up IYM national committees in Pakistan and Lao PDR.
- Production of communications material such as posters, leaflets, briefs and newsletters for raising awareness on mountain issues.

The Himal Pilot projects used the following approaches:

- **Partnership building:** Strategic partners were found to link programme implementation with on-going initiatives of IUCN members and partners. In Bangladesh, the project collaborated with the Forest Department and Hill Tracts Council, in India, and three autonomous institutions of Government - the Wildlife Institute of India, the India Institute for Forest Management and the GB Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development. These organisations worked together under the umbrella of the IUCN National Member's Committee. In Nepal, linkages were established in the King Mahendra Trust for the Rhododendron Conservation Area. In Pakistan the initial focus was on the conservation of critical sub-tropical pine and broad-leaved ecosystems in Murree Hills, in collaboration with the Environmental Rehabilitation Project in NWFP and Punjab, funded by the European Union.
- **Application of the ecosystem approach:** In Pakistan, an environment management plan, using the ecosystem management approach, was developed for the pilot area. Pakistan's field projects, mainly the Mountain Areas Conservancy Project (MACP), is an example of up-scaling from site to village, village to valley and valley to larger landscape. The MACP focuses on landscape level conservation of biodiversity through community based management of natural resources, stressing economic incentives. In Nepal, IUCN's Himal Programme worked in the Tinjure Milke Jaljale area, which is characterised by high rhododendron diversity as an entry point (reputedly 25 species). It is a corridor between two protected areas - Makalu Barun and Kanchanjunga and has high eco-tourism potential.
- **Linking research to action and policy:** Throughout the implementation of the Himal

project, there has been a focus on information sharing by linking research results to policies, and the actions and learning of various initiatives and organisations working in this region. IUCN partnered with NODE and GLOBIO, an affiliate of UNEP, to develop a study on Himalayan assessment. The Nepal Himal project contributed to the understanding of the status, distribution, values, and threats to biodiversity and the links between livelihoods, poverty, equity and environmental sustainability, with local conservation planning and sustainable use.

- **Promoting regional collaboration:** This has been a strong element throughout the implementation of the Himal project. Coordination of the Himal Project has been uninterrupted despite heightened conflict in South Asia. Recent changes promise a willingness to share experiences and even discuss issues of common ecological interest.

These approaches have been modified and developed into a set of principles and themes for the fully fledged implementation of the mountains initiative of IUCN in Asia.

Himal and the International Year of Mountains

A significant opportunity to increase awareness and understanding on mountains was brought about by the 1998 UN General Assembly's decision to declare 2002 the International Year of Mountains. The observance of the IYM gave new impetus to mountain initiatives and provided greater opportunities to improve policies, financial mechanisms, institutional arrangements and other issues affecting mountains.

Several mountain specific issues were highlighted and the mountain agenda received international attention, raising national awareness at the same time. IUCN was prominent in its advocacy of adopting an ecosystems management approach to mountain development and strengthening collaboration and partnership building. IUCN signed the Global Mountains Partnerships Agreement, and set up an inter-commission World Commission on Protected Areas and Commission on Ecosystem Management (WCPACE) task force to guide its future work on mountain issues. The IUCN Asia

Programme played an active role throughout, especially in raising the regional and national issues with regard to mountain development.

The IUCN Asia's Himal Project contributed to the IYM by raising mountain issues in Asia throughout the year. Some of the results of the IYM to which IUCN contributed are:

- Sharing of information on the development issues of the Himalayas with the global community
- Awareness of the significance of the Himalayas, and their vulnerability to trends of globalisation and economic development
- Sharing of principles and approaches for the development of mountains, with due consideration to the people of the Himalayas, their fragile resource base and their unique social and cultural heritage

Partnerships and linkages were established between organisations in the North and South, leading to joint programmes for conservation and sustainable development in the Himalayas.

The Mountains Initiative

The IUCN Asia Mountain Initiative (AMI) aims to address the key issues surrounding mountains: conflicts, climate change impacts and biodiversity management. IUCN is geared to explore an integrated set of solutions with the active involvement of its network of government and non-government members, experts and scientists in its six Commissions, and its partners. This will be done by building on the knowledge gained from the Himal Project, from other mountain related activities in Asia and from relevant global discussions. The Initiative is also responding to calls from various mountain regions of the world to further focus on bridging the north-south divide by strengthening greater institutional links and sharing mountain knowledge between the developing and developed worlds.

The IUCN AMI strives to link a number of sub-projects, institutions, networks and individuals and engender a participatory and interdisciplinary approach to sustainable development. It also strives to influence changes in government policies from policing to collaboration, advocate special consideration for mountains in national planning, empower local communities to influence national

decision making, and become active partners in mountain development. Thus, the initiative aims at a holistic, regional view, maintaining links with, and keeping abreast of, developments elsewhere, as well as drawing from national and local field experiences.

The AMI also supports the recommendations of the Asia High Summit, the Alpine Convention Conference, the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit and the IYM to strengthen institutional collaboration between north and south, by collaborating with European mountain institutes, and working with research based organisations, thus helping to bridge the research-to-action gaps.

The AMI is governed by five principles: integrated solutions, knowledge management, learning, innovation, and capacity building.

At a regional level, IUCN is fostering:

- Information sharing and dialogues between countries, institutions and stakeholders
- Development and implementation of bilateral and/or regional projects
- Comparative lessons learned and institutional collaboration
- Sharing of expertise across countries
- Strengthening of north-south partnerships

As part of this initiative, IUCN Asia has just finalised a project with two partners from Italy and ICIMOD.

The project covers:

- Scientific research, monitoring of long term change, data management
- Cataloguing and organisation of data
- Gap and potentials assessment
- Development of a Decision Support System (DSS)
- Inter-institutional networking
- Pilot projects

IUCN's AMI is jointly preparing an assessment of impacts of infrastructure and human activities on mountain ecosystems with UNEP, ICIMOD and other agencies. This assessment will be followed by the development of a series of recommended actions and policy responses.

In addition, the AMI includes the following initiatives in the HKH region:

- A Water and Nature Initiative (WANI) for the HKH region, to support the development of integrated water resource management policies in the region
- Wetland management plans for select mountain regions in Nepal and China
- Climate change studies on vulnerability assessment and adaptation strategies, with focus on the climate change impacts on specific habitats and species in mountain regions
- Implementation of a management plan for selected mountain protected areas and parks, such as the Central Karakoram National Park in Pakistan
- Preparation and implementation of a targeted awareness raising plan, starting with issues related to the K2 Summit in Pakistan

Climate Change

Over recent years, IUCN has taken a more proactive role in light of the potential impacts of climate change on ecosystems, species and people. In view of the growing environmental significance of climate change, IUCN in Asia has developed a strategy for addressing climate change issues. The aim of this strategy is to assist and support the vulnerable Asian countries in mainstreaming climate change concerns in the national policy formulation and planning processes.

IUCN in Asia has worked on certain aspects of climate change, partially through links to the Conference of Parties (CoP) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) processes, and partially at individual country levels. Between 1999 and 2002, a scoping study was carried out to prepare recommendations on the potential role IUCN can play in Asia on climate change. A comprehensive strategy was prepared in consultation with IUCN HQ.

So far, some of the key activities have been:

- A review of the situation in Asian countries
- Promoting the use of fuel-efficient cooking technologies, micro-hydroelectric systems, and photo-voltaic powered submersible pumps for groundwater extraction
- Promoting reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from water reservoirs

- Providing advice on increasing the fuel efficiency of thermal power stations under different projects operating in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan
- Studies on rainfall shift in selected watersheds of Himalayas
- Studies on the possible impacts of climate change on water availability in Nepal
- Studies on the carbon sequestration potential of selected tree species

IUCN partners in these efforts include the relevant government agencies and departments, the Mekong River Basin Commission, the National Mekong Committees of the Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Vietnam, the International Water Management Institute (Sri Lanka), the International Centre of Living Aquatic Resources Management-ICLARM (Philippines), Oxfam US, Can Tho University (Vietnam), Mahidol University (Thailand), and the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies.

Several project proposals have been produced, including the promotion of mitigation measures, supporting national and regional dialogues on climate change and water issues, and assessment of climate change impacts along the Hindhu Kush Karakoram Himal region in Asia.

Key Achievements

At a regional level, the main areas of work have been:

- Involvement with, and support to, HQ in influencing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) events, policy inputs and participation in SBSTTAs and CoPs. This has included organising national preparatory meetings and preparing briefs on specific issues to be discussed at CoPs.
- Participation in global events and meetings, such as those of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the World Water Forum.
- Preparation of tool kits (in the form of CD ROMs), and training and awareness raising material for use by government delegations to CoPs.
- Production of regular information bulletins on issues related to biodiversity and climate change

- Collection of secondary information and formulation of assessment methodologies, supported by local and national dialogues and participatory vulnerability assessments ultimately leading to a regional assessment and adaptation plan for the Mekong region.
- Organisation of national and regional meetings to scope out related issues and provide inputs into the Third World Water Forum for South Asia.
- Initial thinking as to how to assist countries in preparing National Action Plans for Adaptation (NAPAs).

Based on the above achievements, IUCN has prepared a four year programme of work which focuses on the assessment of impacts on key ecosystems, adaptation strategies, capacity building and advocacy for integrating climate change within sectoral strategies. This programme of work will follow a practical and flexible approach with development and implementation running parallel to each other. IUCN in Asia will be reporting on the progress of the defined objectives, so that at the end of the three years, there is a basis to assess results and to refocus as required.

The key areas will be:

- Contribute to the objectives of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol
- Assist developing countries with capacity building, adaptation and technology transfer
- Capitalise on the comparative capabilities of IUCN and its network of environmental advisors
- Support the active participation of civil society, governments and the private sector to effectively address climate change
- Develop an enabling environment for national and local organisations to design and implement measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Demonstrate the important benefits to biodiversity conservation, social equity, poverty, and welfare benefits from climate change activities
- Identify and address synergies between the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
- Demonstrate the links between and across policies, and ground level impacts

Environmental Assessment

The overall goal of the Regional Environmental Assessment Programme (REAP) is to assist countries in Asia in integrating environmental impact assessment into development plans and policies and to assist in developing the required capacity. Until mid 2002, the programme was being co-ordinated through senior staff based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Key Achievements

IUCN supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs successfully completed a regional initiative for Capacity Development for EA in South Asia (CDEAP). This initiative has helped to empower civil society to play a more effective role in the national EIA process. The outcome of this two year initiative was the creation and strengthening of national EIA associations in five countries - Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. These associations were linked by creating a regional body, SAREAA (South Asian Regional Environment Assessment Association). Consequently, a website for SAREAA was developed and a quarterly news bulletin was published for promoting exchange of experiences and views amongst the EIA professionals in the region.

Over the two year period of the project, seven workshops and conferences were organised in four countries, including one regional workshop on Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) for senior planners and two annual South Asian EA Conferences. The SEA workshop helped senior planners to identify certain sectors of the national economy where they could use SEA in integrating environmental concerns in national policies and plans. The workshop thus created a demand for capacity building of senior planners in actually using the SEA approach in their work.

The capacity development work for EIA practitioners covered issues relating to water, biodiversity and climate change, with due emphasis on public participation in the decision-making process. The Regional Training Workshop focused on the integration of biodiversity concerns in the EIA process. The discussions provided useful information that

supported global work in this direction. It should be noted that the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recommends the integration of biodiversity concerns in EIA by all signatories. The workshops thus helped the professionals from South Asian countries to become more aware of the issues that needed to be examined in order to eventually comply with the CBD recommendation.

To further support this work, an analysis was done of EIA Guidelines of six South Asian countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This analysis identified the gaps and opportunities for improving the EIA Guidelines. This work needs to be taken forward by (a) actual improvement of EIA Guidelines and (b) capacity enhancement of EIA officials and practitioners in making effective use of the improved EIA Guidelines.

The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) recognised SAREAA as an Associate Organisation. The SAREAA network has the potential of providing independent technical advice, resolving EA related conflicts, and thus serving as the South Asian Commission on Environmental Impact Assessment.

As a spin-off from the CDEAP, several students received advanced training while working on internship assignments with the IUCN team. Three of these students came from the Netherlands, one each from Canada and Norway, and four from Nepal. A team of IUCN experts have started a five-year initiative to provide third party monitoring services to a rural road development programme of ADB in Lao PDR. This project includes development and training of local professionals in EA guidelines and methods for environmental monitoring.

Hazardous material handling and disaster management issues have been addressed in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Activities included training workshops in Bangladesh and Pakistan, biomedical waste management initiatives for Pakistan and Nepal, advice on handling oil spills in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and the actual handling of large amounts of hazardous material in Pakistan.

The programme also provided advice to IUCN country offices in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan on

environmental flow downstream of dams, water channel management, reservoir development, and water quality improvement.

New Programme Components in the Pipeline

The programme has so far based its work on explicit requests for help received from member and partner organisations and demand generated through advocacy, which led to a request to IUCN for assistance. In many organisations in developing countries, there has been a slow but gradual increase in the number of trained professionals. Consequently, requests of a highly variable nature come to IUCN depending on the need and the complexity of the issue that an agency faces.

To address these requests, the EA programme works at three levels: international, regional, and national. A modular but organic approach is adopted, identifying national priorities through IUCN membership with support from the IUCN National EA programmes, providing technical advice and guidance to various countries on the request of membership and partners, and designing regional and national initiatives that include aspects of mutual capacity building and experience sharing, such as the recently concluded CDEAP. At the global level, the work is mainly centred on



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providing policy advice and inputs into discussions on MEA implementation from the regional perspective.

The IUCN Asia Programme has decided to reformulate its EA programme, focusing more on integrating EA with biodiversity issues and working through an informal team of EA and biodiversity experts, who are drawn from within the IUCN secretariat and its network of members and partners.

Communications and Knowledge Management

IUCN is a knowledge based organisation and considers outreach and communications as critical functions. The IUCN Asia team has managed to keep its communication activities at a high level despite the absence of a formal communications unit at a regional level. Several of the IUCN country offices in Asia, and regional programmes, have strong communication activities within their work programmes, particularly Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Key Achievements

Over the past three years, IUCN in Asia, through its component programmes, has produced several publications, newsletters, articles and other types of communication material such as leaflets, posters and documentaries. Associations of environmental journalists are active in Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Assistance has been provided to local and traditional forms of communications, such as street theatre and dramas. However, the most significant achievement has been in electronic networking and information management. A large number of local and regional websites have been set up, dealing with issues on sustainable development and environment; several partners, including members, have been trained on electronic information use, and knowledge databases have been developed. Specific knowledge management units are now functioning in Pakistan, Nepal, Thailand and Sri Lanka. Recently, an Asia electronic newsletter has been introduced, with the help of a Communications Focal Point Team (including one member from each programme or Country Office) and is distributed to all Asia staff and members each month. In addition,

an “All Asia List Serve” has been established, which places all Asia staff on a universal email address and has enabled easy mass communication.

In 2002, a Regional Communications Manual was produced, which has provided communication related input to IUCN globally. Since the skills and expertise required for communications resides in several offices, IUCN finds it more efficient and effective to pull together teams from across its secretariat offices to carry out its regional communications work. IUCN Asia is actively involved in managing several email lists and networks for the global Union, and is looking at developing a programme of work to communicate information to and from its membership.

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IUCN IN ASIA MEMBERS

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NG 24659	Centre for Coastal Environmental Conservation
NG/22338	Centre for Sustainable Development (CFSD)
NG/1326	Coastal Area Resource Dev. & Management Association (CARDMA)
NG/968	Comilla Proshika Centre for Development
NG/1546	Forum of Env. Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB)
ST/457	Ministry of Environment & Forest (MOEF)
NG/22487	Nature Conservation Management (NACOM)
NG/414	Wildlife & Nature Conservation Society of Bangladesh (WNCSB)
NG/753	Wildlife Society of Bangladesh (WSB)
NG/23402	Women's Environment & Development Organisation (WEDO)

CHINA

GA/461	Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Dept.
NG/24069	Centre for Biodiversity & Indigenous Knowledge (CBIK)
NG/24641	China Landscape & Historic Sites Association (CLHSA)
NG/752	China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA)
GA/798	HK Zoological & Botanical Gardens (HKZBG)
AF/802	Institute of Botany, Academia Sinica
ST/1552	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NG/1618	Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences (NIES)
NG/732	World Wide Fund for Nature - Hong Kong (WWF)

INDIA

GA/23596	Attappaddy Hills Area Dev. Society (AHADS)
NG/75	Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)
GA/24634	G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment & Development
NG/737	Development Alternatives
NG/980	Environment Society of India
NG/23620	Gujarat Ecological Education & Reserch Foundation (GEER)
NG/23265	Gujarat Ecological Society (GES)
NG/21196	Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology (GUIDE)
GA/76	Indian Board for Wildlife, Dept. of Environment, Forests & Wildlife
GA/8342	Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM)
NG/801	Indian Nat'l Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (INTACH)

NG1611	Institute for Integrated Rural Development (IIRD)
NG/725	International Society of Naturalists (INSONA)
ST/460	Ministry of Environment & Forests
NG/22491	Foundation for Ecological Security (FES)
NG/24232	Nature, Environment & Wildlife Society (NEWS)
NG/1297	Orissa Social Service Institute
NG/1269	Centre for Environment Education-Nehru Foundation for Development (CEE)
GA/815	Wildlife Institute of India (WII)
NG/19224	Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI)
NG/481	World Wide Fund for Nature- India (WWF)

INDONESIA

GA/77	Directorate General of Forest Protection & Nature Conservation, Ministry of Forestry
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JAPAN

NG/22343	Seibutsu Tayosei Japan (Biodiversity Network Japan)
ST/1436	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)
NG/630	Elsa Nature Conservancy
NG/681	Japan Centre for Human Environmental Problems
NG/1389	Japan Women's Global Environment Network International (GENKI)
NG/407	Japanese Association of Zoological Gardens & Aquariums (JAZGA)
NG/836	Shizen Kankyo Kenkyu Senta (Japan Wildlife Research Centre-JWRC)
NG/23215	Kamehameha Okoku
NG/91	Kokuritu Koen Kyokai (Natural Parks Association of Japan)
GA/599	Ministry of Environment
NG/92	Nature Conservation Society of Japan (NACSJ)
NG/1414	Nihon Gan-wo Hogo suru Kai (Japanese Association for Wild Geese-JAWGP)
NG/23217	Nihon Umigame Kyougikai (Sea Turtle Association of Japan)
NG/1461	Keidanren Committee on Nature Conservation (CNC)
NG/1014	Okinawa Daigaku Chiiki Kenkyusyo (The Institute of Regional Study, Okinawa University)
NG/620	Wild Bird Society of Japan
NG/477	World Wide Fund for Nature - Japan
NG/22357	Yaseidoubutsu Kyuugo Juuishi (Wildlife Rescue Veterinarian's Association-WRV)

KOREA DPR

NG/229	Natural Conservation Union
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KOREA RE

NG/273	Korean Association for Conservation of Nature
NG/626	Korean National Council for Conservation of Nature
NG/629	Korean Society for the Protection of Wild Animals
GA/790	Ministry of Environment
NG/388	National Parks Association of Korea

LAO PDR

ST/337 Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MALAYSIA

ST/104 Dept. of Wildlife & National Parks (DWNP)
AF/818 Int'l Centre for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM)
NG/962 Malaysian Nature Society
GA/281 The Sabah Parks Board of Trustees
GA/265 Wildlife Dept. Sabah
NG/408 World Wide Fund for Nature - Malaysia (WWF)

MONGOLIA

NG/1576 Mongolian Association for Conservation of Nature & the Environment (MACNE)

NEPAL

NG/1510 Association for Protection of the Environment & Culture (APEC)
ST/497 Dept. of National Parks & Wildlife Conservation
NG/1044 Environmental Camps for Conservation Awareness (ECCA)
NG/22348 Green Camp Nepal (GCN)
NG/1059 King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC)
NG/1619 Mahila Batabaran Samuha (Women in Environment - WE)
NG/22349 Manab Kalyan Tatha Batabaran Samrakchhan Kendra (Human Welfare & Environment Protection Centre-HWEPC)
NG/991 Nepal Batabaran Patrakar Samuha (Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists - NEBAPASA)
NG/1054 Nepal Heritage Society (NHS)
NG/23956 Youth Awareness Environment Forum (YAEF)

PAKISTAN

NG/1086 Belour Advisory & Social Dev. Organisation (BASDO)
NG/1112 Baanhn Beli / A Friend Forever
GA/1526 Environmental Protection Agency, Government of the North-West Frontier Province
GA/426 Sindh Wildlife Department (SWD)
NG/1517 Khwendo Kor (KK)
NG/24027 Leadership for Environment & Development (LEAD)
ST/549 Ministry of Environment, Local Government & Rural Dev.
GA/1424 National Institute of Oceanography (NIO)
NG/23953 Pakistan Environmental Protection Foundation (PEPF)
NG/1131 Pakistan Institute of Labour Education & Research (PILER)
GA/1476 Planning & Development Dept, Government of the NWFP
NG/1196 Sarhad Rural Support Corporation (SRSC)
NG/1267 Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)
NG/1130 Shehri-Citizens for a Better Environment
NG/985 Shirkat Gah-Women's Resource Centre
NG/8456 South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAP-PK)

NG/1358	Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO)
NG/1129	Sungi Development Foundation
NG/947	Teachers' Resource Centre (TRC)
NG/931	The Scientific & Cultural Society of Pakistan (SCSP)
NG/1473	H.E. J. Research Institute of Chemistry
NG/353	World Wide Fund for Nature - Pakistan (WWF)

PHILIPPINES

NG/621	Ecological Society of the Philippines
NG/1032	Haribon Foundation for the Conservation of Natural Resources (HARIBON)
GA/280	Protected Areas & Wildlife Bureau, Dept. of Environment & Natural Resources

SINGAPORE

NG/1124	Nature Society (Singapore)
NG/22472	Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL)
NG/21360	Singapore Environment Council (SEC)
NG/369	Singapore Zoological Gardens

SRI LANKA

GA/10797	Central Environmental Authority (CEA)
GA/291	Dept. of Wildlife Conservation (DWLC)
NG/945	Environmental Foundation Ltd. (EFL)
GA/987	Forest Department
ST/869	Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources
NG/1469	Organisation for Resource Dev & Environment (ORDE)
NG/1134	Sri Lank Parisara Sammelanaya (Sri Lanka Environment Congress-SLEC)
NG/1085	Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF)
NG/282	Wildlife & Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka (WNPS)
NG/1551	Worldview Sri Lanka (WSL)

THAILAND

ST/161	Royal Forest Dept.
NG/799	Wildlife Fund Thailand

VIETNAM

NG/1616	Centre for Natural Resources & Environmental Studies (CRES)
ST/209	Ministry of Science, Technology & Environment
NG/1442	Vien Kinh Te Sinh Thai (Institute of Ecological Economy- Eco ECO)

ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ABD	Asian Development Bank	S&SE Asia	South and South East Asia
ARD	Asia Regional Directorate	SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
ARO	Asia Regional Office	Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations	SPT	Strategic Planning Team
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Collaboration and Development	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
CEESP	Commission on Environment, Economics and Social Policy	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CEL	Commission on Environmental Law	WANI	Water and nature Initiative
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency	WB	World Bank
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna	WCD	World Commission on Dams
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species	WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
COP	Conferences of the Parties	WHC	World Heritage Convention
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance	WTO	World Trade Organisation
EU	European Union	WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation		
GBF	Global Biodiversity Forum		
GEF	Global Environment Facility		
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation		
HQ	Headquarters		
ICTSD	International Centre on Trade and Sustainable Development		
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development		
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organisation		
IYM	International Year of Mountains		
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement		
MRC	Mekong River Commission		
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans		
NCS	National Conservation Strategy		
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation		
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation		
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Products		
PA	Protected Areas		
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers		
RBP	Regional Biodiversity Programme		
RCF	Regional Conservation Forum		
REAP	Regional Environmental Assessment Programme		
REEP	Regional Environmental Economics Programme		
RELPA	Regional Environmental Law Programme		
RFP	Regional Forest Programme		
RMP	Regional Marine Programme		
RNE	Royal Netherlands Embassy		
RPAP	Regional Protected Area Programme		
RWWP	Regional Wetlands and Water Resources Programme		
SACEP	South Asia Co-operative Environmental Programme		
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice		



IUCN - The World Conservation Union

Founded in 1948, The World Conservation Union brings together States, government agencies and a diverse range of non-governmental organizations in a unique world partnership: over 1000 members in all, spread across some 140 countries.

As a Union, IUCN seeks 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. A central Secretariat coordinates the IUCN Programme and serves the Union membership, representing their views on the world stage and providing them with the strategies, services, scientific knowledge and technical support they need to achieve their goals. Through its six Commissions, IUCN draws together over 10,000 expert volunteers in project teams and action groups, focusing in particular on species and biodiversity conservation and the management of habitats and natural resources. The Union has helped many countries to prepare National Conservation Strategies, and demonstrates the application of its knowledge through the field projects it supervises. Operations are increasingly decentralized and are carried forward by an expanding network of regional and country offices, located principally in developing countries.

The World Conservation Union builds on the strengths of its members, networks and partners to enhance their capacity and to support global alliances to safeguard natural resources at local, regional and global levels.

The IUCN Asia Region extends from Pakistan in the West to Japan in the East, Indonesia in the South to Mongolia in the North. There are 23 countries in the region. IUCN maintains offices in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. The regional office is located in Bangkok, Thailand. There are 136 IUCN members in Asia, including 11 States, 20 Government Agencies, 103 NGOs, and two affiliates. Most of the major nature conservation NGOs in the region are members of IUCN.

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