Pioneering nature’s solutions to Asia’s challenges

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

Our vision: A just world that values and conserves nature

Our mission: Influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

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

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

Founded in 1948, IUCN is the world’s oldest and largest global environmental organisation, with more than 1,200 government and NGO Members and nearly 15,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries.

IUCN implements projects in and across countries throughout South, Northeast and Southeast Asia. There are 14 State Members, and we have offices in 12 countries in the region.

Asia: A rich and dynamic region

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

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

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

Asia: Fast Facts

Asia is home to 60% of the world’s population and accounts for 40% of global economic output and 2/3 of global growth. But 800 million live below the poverty line and urban populations are predicted to grow from 1.9 billion to 3.3 billion in 2050.

Five Asian countries are among the world’s 17 most biodiverse, but loss of mangrove cover and rate of loss of wetlands are the highest in the world. 95% of the coral reefs in Southeast Asia are at risk, 10 countries are experiencing high or very high water stress, and more than 1,400 plants and animals are Critically Endangered.

Sources: International Monetary Fund; United Nations (UN); Asian Development Bank; UN, Conservation International; World Resources Institute (WRI); IUCN; WRI; IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.
Nature’s solutions are at our fingertips. They are cost-effective and we are gaining increasing expertise on how to implement them. IUCN promotes nature-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change, secure water, food and energy supplies, reduce poverty and support economic growth.

**Our work in Asia**

IUCN is involved in more than 100 projects throughout the region with a number of these implemented in large ecosystems that extend beyond the shared borders of two or more countries. Our work builds on IUCN's niche as the world's authority on biodiversity conservation, nature-based solutions and related environmental governance. In Asia, we work on projects that cut across several themes.

**Species and Biodiversity Conservation**

Asia harbours one third of the world’s recognised biodiversity hotspots. IUCN aims to promote conservation and equitable and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Asia region.

Examples of our work in this area include: updating the National Red List of Endangered species in several countries; assisting governments to develop their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans for the Convention on Biological Diversity; and implementing species-focused initiatives (e.g. vultures, tigers, rhinos) across the region.

**Climate change and resilience**

While the impacts of climate change will be felt globally, experts recognise that Asia will be among the hardest hit. Low lying and crowded coastal cities in many South and Southeast Asian countries are most at risk, and the hundreds of millions of people who live there are particularly vulnerable.
IUCN Asia has a number of projects in the region which focus on building resilience of communities to the impacts of climate change. These projects work in parallel on restoration and conservation of natural ecosystems which serve as important buffers against flooding, storm surges and extreme weather events, while also adopting a participatory approach that strengthens community governance systems, supports sustainable livelihoods and effectively combines local, traditional knowledge with scientific expertise.

**Coastal and Marine**
Three quarters of the world’s population living in vulnerable coastal zones call Asia home. IUCN works to reduce the risks posed to coastal communities by supporting sound policy and integrated coastal management initiatives.

Our work includes: promoting investment in coastal ecosystem conservation for sustainable development through the Mangroves for the Future initiative (co-chaired with UNDP) which works in 10 countries in Asia to protect and restore the health of coastal ecosystems and help build community resilience.

**Protected Areas**
There are now more than 10,900 protected areas in the region. IUCN works to help build healthy protected area systems across Asia as a foundation for nature and human well-being by strengthening the capacity for protected area establishment and management across the region.

Our work includes the establishment of the Asia Protected Areas Partnership which provides a regional platform for promoting and sharing best practice in protected area management; and piloting IUCN’s Green List of Protected Areas – a new initiative to recognise well-managed protected areas – in China and Republic of Korea.

**Water and Wetlands**
Sustainable water resource management is a key issue across Asia where water stress and the degradation of watersheds and wetlands is a critical challenge. IUCN champions water resource management and is uniquely positioned to encourage cross-border cooperation on water issues.

Our work includes: building collaborative water governance capacity in trans-boundary river basins in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam through the BRIDGE (Building River Dialogue and Governance) Project; and facilitating dialogue processes to promote better understanding of the management of natural resources across borders through the Ecosystems for Life and Mekong Water Dialogues projects.

**Nature-Based Disaster Risk Reduction**
Six countries in Asia were among the top 10 in the world affected by climate change in 2013. The region is also recognised as the most disaster-prone. IUCN’s ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, food security and protecting livelihoods are of particular importance in the Asia region.

Our work includes: exploring how natural engineering can help mitigate landslides and other disasters through the Ecosystems Protecting Infrastructure and Communities project.
Private Sector Engagement
Crucial to the survival of any business is its sustainable use of natural resources. Guided by a clear set of principles that respect mutual roles, IUCN works with an increasing number of businesses and business associations in Asia on conservation and sustainable development issues.

Our work includes: reducing impact of mining operations on biodiversity and local livelihoods, protecting major watersheds and promoting mangrove-shrimp polyculture models through certification.

Leveraging partnerships
The environmental and sustainability challenges we face today will only be effectively managed if all sectors work together to find and implement solutions. Around the region we are working with governments, the private sector and communities to put the latest science and knowledge into practice. We are helping to restore forests, rivers and wetlands, and bring our oceans back to life.

IUCN represents an extraordinary partnership of governments and civil society. We find strength in our numbers and in our diversity, allowing us to bring both breadth and depth to our understanding of country-specific, regional and global challenges. In Asia we work with more than 250 government and NGO Members and more than 2,500 experts as well as hundreds of partners from the government, non-government and private sectors.

IUCN's Asia Regional Office is in Bangkok, Thailand. The IUCN Asia Regional Secretariat has presence through country and liaison offices in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

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

Visit our website at www.iucn.org/asia or email asia@iucn.org for more details. Follow us on Facebook (iucn.asia) and Twitter (IUCNAsia)