

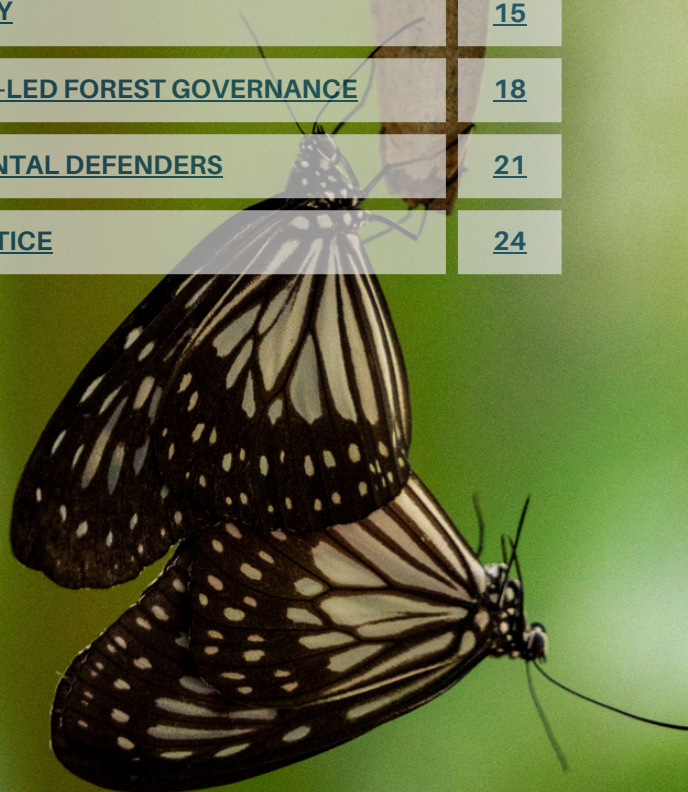
PROTECTING FORESTS

IUCN NL
Action portfolio
2025-2030

Nature is our foundation

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TROPICAL FORESTS ARE UNDER IMMENSE PRESSURE

IUCN NL works towards sustainable and inclusive governance of tropical forests, in a way that promotes:



climate mitigation and locally-led adaptation



biodiversity conservation



the stable provisioning of clean, fresh water



the safeguarding of the livelihoods of local communities



human rights





OUR WORK

We collaborate with and support organisations and societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of forests and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. We

- focus on forests that have a **high biodiversity** and natural value, and that are under pressure
- conserve, **connect and restore nature** to secure climate-resilient forested landscapes
- strengthen the position of the **people, flora and fauna** that depend on these forests
- strengthen the position of Indigenous Peoples & local communities (IP&LCs), women, youth and Environmental and Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) to safeguard nature and **protect civic space**
- **scout** new partners and innovative opportunities to make impact
- **build bridges** between different sectors and across multiple levels of governance

OUR REASON



- with more and more people in need of space, food, water and other resources that nature offers, growing pressure is being put on the natural world



- ever-increasing consumption, unsustainable production and use of natural resources are driving the climate and biodiversity crises worldwide



- ecosystems, on which we humans and all other species depend, are in danger of collapsing



- biodiversity is under threat; disappearing species are precluding present and future use that are important for all living creatures, including mankind



- structural inequalities and power imbalances in and between societies aggravate these impacts, especially on women, Indigenous peoples and other marginalised groups

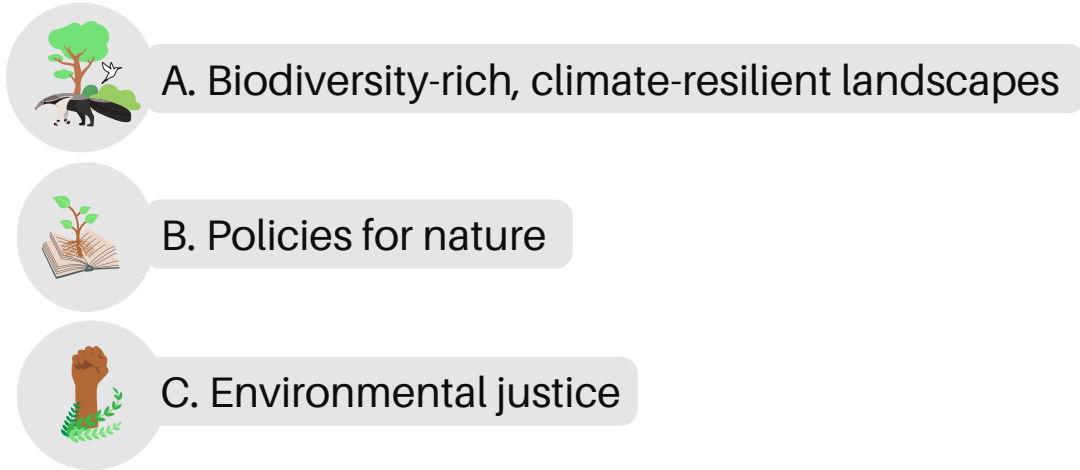


This is especially true of the world's tropical forests

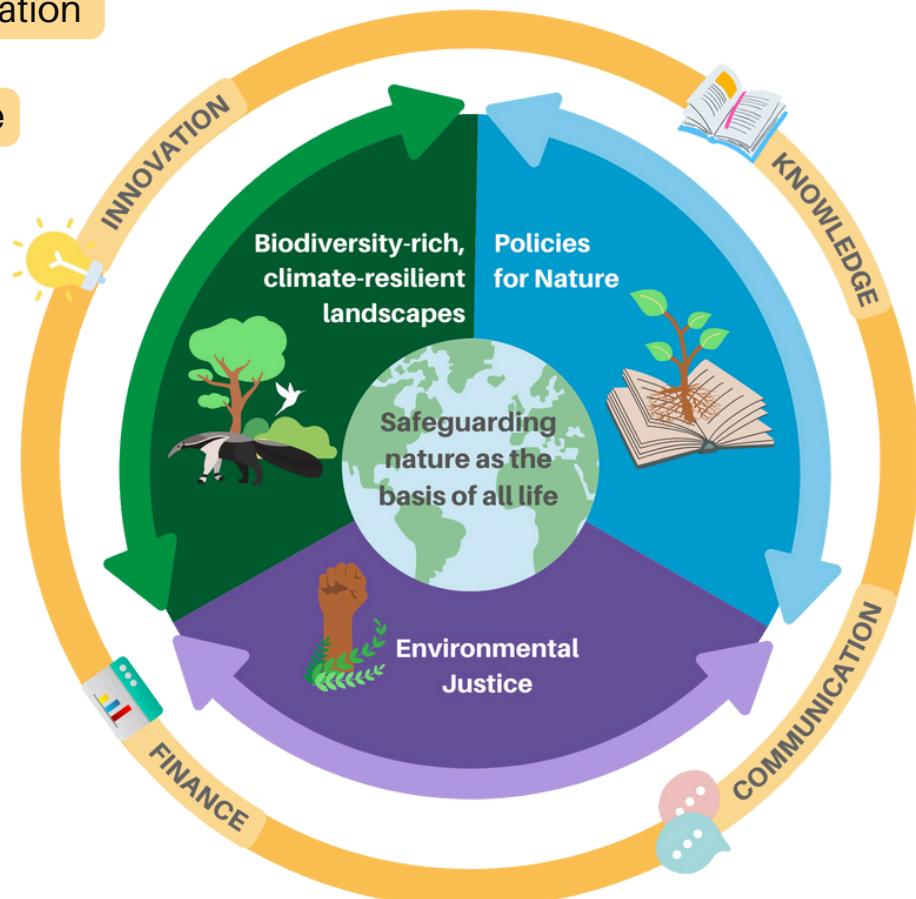
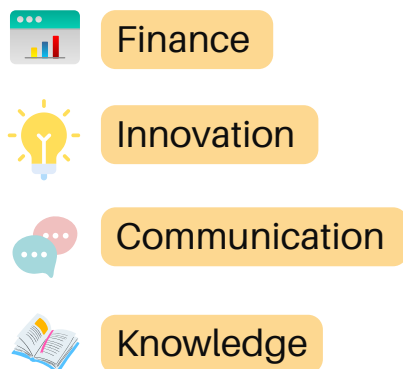


PATHWAYS OF ACTION

IUCN NL works across 3 PATHWAYS



and through 4 key ENABLERS FOR CHANGE





A Rocha field team by *Cepha pentandra* in Arewa forest Photo credit: Jeremy Lindsell

OUR APPROACH

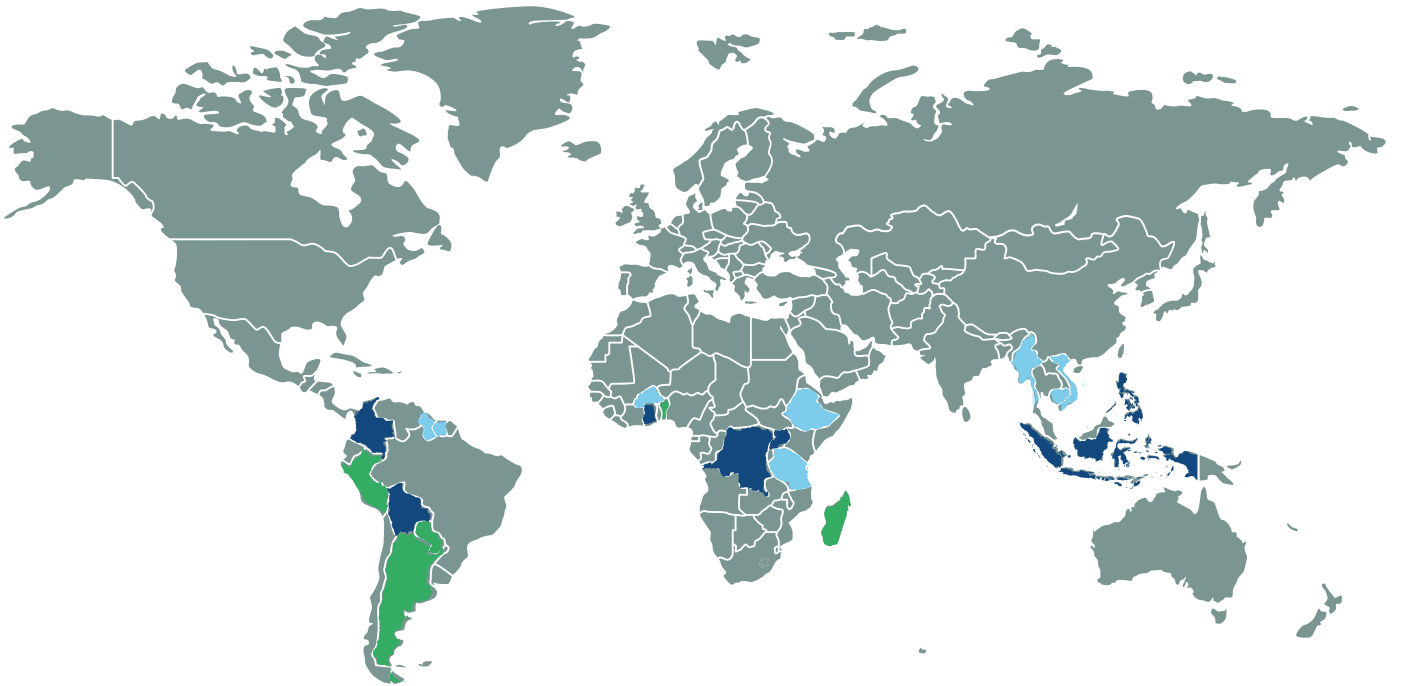
Departing from the landscape level, IUCN NL supports partners in the South across our three pathways with **knowledge, networks** and **access to funding** to increase our collective impact on the ground.

We use **bottom-up, locally led approaches** in the design of all our programmes.

The knowledge and experience generated at landscape level are fed back into **national and global policy arenas**.

There is a strong, growing, evidence base that demonstrates that, with the right enabling conditions, **Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IP&LCs)** are the best stewards of forestland, and that their rights and capacities are crucial to protecting the world's remaining tropical forests. IP&LCs, including women and youth, have a key role to play in bottom-up sustainable development and forest governance. IUCN NL works with IP&LCs to ensure that they are included and represented in decision-making processes concerning their land and livelihoods.

WHERE WE WORK



Focus landscapes and countries



Countries with active engagement



Countries of interest

FOREST THEMES

IUCN NL's work focuses on inclusive & sustainable forest governance for:

- A. Forests & Climate
- B. Forests & Water
- C. Forests & Biodiversity
- D. Forests & Community-led Forest Governance
- E. Forests & Environmental Defenders
- F. Forests & Gender Justice



OUR PARTNERS



CONTIOCAP
Coordinadora Nacional de Defensa de Territorios
Indígenas Originarios Campesinos y Áreas Protegidas



AFIEGO
AFRICA INSTITUTE FOR ENERGY
GOVERNANCE



Centre d'Éducation pour
Protection de l'Environnement
et Développement durable



Centre de Recherche sur l'Environnement,
la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme
(CREDDHO)



Innovation et formation pour
le développement et la Paix
Our Difference, Our Mission



Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia



**KOMUNITAS
KONSERVASI
INDONESIA
WARS I**



A. FORESTS & CLIMATE

IUCN NL strengthens Indigenous Peoples' & local community-led governance in forest landscapes where nature is under threat. Together with partner organisations in the South, IUCN NL applies a unique bottom-up approach and a mix of locally-led methodologies and nature-based solutions, to ensure that tropical forests are able to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

A. FORESTS & CLIMATE

Forests are vitally important. The conservation and restoration of forests are essential in the fight against climate change. Forests absorb carbon dioxide, making them an important ally in sequestering greenhouse gas emissions. Approximately 2.6 billion tons of carbon dioxide, one-third of the CO₂ released from burning fossil fuels, is absorbed by forests every year.

Forests play an essential role in rainfall patterns, act as a sponge for storing and releasing water, protect the soil and thus protect us against the effects of climate change, such as extreme weather events, floods and droughts. Furthermore, forests provide a multitude of crucial ecosystem services to people and nature, such as food security and water supply. They are home to plants and animals and crucial to maintain the world's biodiversity. In addition, forests have cultural and relational value for communities.

OUR COMMITMENT

IUCN NL

- runs programmes that increase the ability of communities to manage, reduce and buffer the impacts of climate change
- works with civil society organisations to develop community projects on locally-led adaptation & mitigation
- supports the developments of sustainable livelihoods in parallel with forest conservation
- acts as a broker to link the aspirations of funders with the capability and aspirations of our civil society organization network
- uses up to 80% of funds for regranting to local organizations, who in turn regrant to community-based groups and grassroots organisations and networks
- supports dialogues with national and local government agencies to gain recognition and support for locally-led mitigation and adaptation

USPs

- support for bottom-up projects implemented together with IP&LCs
- attention for capacity building of civil society and community-based organisations
- intersectional approach, addressing power imbalances and gender injustice
- strong networks in Asia, Africa and Latin America
- regranting capacity

FORESTS & CLIMATE

SOME EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK



Bolivia's watershed agreements: a case study of locally-led adaptation for climate resilience

Watershed agreements in Bolivia: bridging the need for upstream forest conservation and downstream water usage

Year-round irrigation for (organic) rice fields in Indonesia, thanks to improved water supply of well-managed village forests



Locally Led Adaptation and social forestry in Indonesia



Congolese women's association champions drought-resilient farming

Drought-resilient farming techniques (agroforestry and soil health) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

JOIN US IN PROTECTING FORESTS



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Forests and climate |

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B. FORESTS & WATER

IUCN NL strengthens Indigenous Peoples' and local community-led forest and water governance in tropical forest landscapes where nature is under threat. We apply a unique bottom-up approach towards protecting and restoring forested watersheds to sustain water supply for healthy ecosystems, productive landscapes and to ensure access to sufficient and good quality water for local communities.

B. FORESTS & WATER

Forests play an essential role in the stable provisioning of clean, fresh water and related ecosystem services. In fact, climate change is primarily a water crisis: its impacts are felt through worsening floods, rising sea levels, wildfires and droughts. Inclusive and just water governance is central to building the resilience of societies and ecosystems and to reducing carbon emissions.

The ecosystems that supply humanity with fresh water are disappearing at an alarming rate and many of the world's freshwater systems are under (extreme) stress. Agriculture consumes more water than any other source and agro-chemicals too often end up polluting waterways. Likewise mining requires significant amounts of water and mine waste often contaminates water in nearby communities. Climate change is altering patterns of weather and water around the world, causing shortages and droughts in some areas and floods in others.

OUR COMMITMENT

IUCN NL

- works towards sustained water supply for healthy ecosystems, productive landscapes & fair access to good quality water for local communities
- takes a landscape approach - we link water to biodiversity, climate and the needs of local populations (IP&LCs, women and people living in urban areas)
- pushes for water policies & investments that take nature, biodiversity, climate, fair access to water into account
- addresses and helps solve water conflicts around water extraction & pollution
- supports community-based forest governance to protect and restore watersheds, rivers and creeks

USPs

- ability to link water to international processes and commitments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, and bringing water issues into national UPR reporting
- legal action if needed
- promotion of civic space and support to Environmental Human Rights Defenders who work towards water justice
- proven experience in supporting communities to address and solve water conflicts
- know-how on how to set up water committees

FORESTS & WATER: SOME EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

Beyond the Amazon: Chiquitania, a forest gem navigating a water crisis

The Chiquitania forest, located in the eastern lowlands of Santa Cruz, Bolivia, and extending into Mato Grosso, Brazil, represents one of the most unique and critically important ecosystems in the world. Chiquitania is a tropical dry forest, a biome that does not have the same global recognition as the Amazon Rainforest, but that plays an essential role in biodiversity conservation and climate regulation

The devastating effects of tropical storms made people on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines painfully aware of the urgent need for more sustainable land use management. To ensure a river basin-wide approach for protection and restoration of the environment, a coalition of local civil society organisations pushed for the set-up of a river basin council uniting representatives from government, businesses, civil society and indigenous peoples. Their efforts resulted in an ordinance ensuring that all citizens of Cagayan de Oro City pay indirectly for the restoration and protection efforts by different stakeholders in the upstream areas.

Multi-stakeholder effort mobilizes tax money for conservation and restoration

Sustainable forest management in West Sumatra

The Batang Laweh river forms an essential water source for the life of the Minangkabau people in Sirukam village in the Solok district of West Sumatra, Indonesia. A healthy forest ecosystem is needed to protect the water catchment area and secure a year-round water flow. 'We should not leave a legacy of tears but of springs' says Jasmir Jumadi, who is a member of the Village Forest Management Group (VFMG) patrol team. 'Protecting the water source is therefore like protecting life for us.'

JOIN US IN PROTECTING FORESTS



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C. FORESTS & BIODIVERSITY

IUCN NL strengthens Indigenous Peoples' and local community-led biodiversity governance in tropical forest landscapes where nature is under threat. We apply a unique bottom-up approach to protect crucial habitats, restore degraded forests and establish Indigenous and Community-Conserved areas and territories (ICCAs) and other means of effective conservation.



C. FORESTS & BIODIVERSITY

One million plant and animal species are facing the threat of extinction. Major causes include the loss and fragmentation of their habitats, including the world's forests. It is increasingly difficult for (endangered) species living in these areas to survive.

People are aware of the urgent need to conserve and restore biodiverse ecosystems by stopping deforestation, mitigating climate change, and halting habitat loss, but they do not (always) have the means. Many consumers do not know how to act to prevent biodiversity loss. To achieve this we need the whole of society, effective strategies for ecosystems-based biodiversity conservation, an active and strong civil society, habitat protection, watershed management, ecosystem restoration, species conservation, and regenerative farming and sustainable use of natural resources. We also need a culture and consumption change to live within planetary boundaries and increase people's connectivity to nature.

OUR COMMITMENT

IUCN NL

- contributes to the conservation and restoration of biodiversity, while promoting social justice and economic resilience for local communities
- aims to stop or reduce the speed of biodiversity degradation
- protects crucial habitats, restores degraded forests and promotes ecosystem-based land use, together with local communities and civil society
- empowers local communities through capacity building and leadership
- creates conditions for policy change and environmental justice

USPs

- case studies and scientific reports demonstrating the effectiveness of our approach
- proven impact in terms of habitat area maintained and ecosystems restored
- portfolio of successful projects and partnerships worldwide
- experience with land purchase, forest restoration, and the promoting sustainable economic alternatives
- reganting capacity

FORESTS & BIODIVERSITY

AN EXAMPLE OF OUR WORK



Supported by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), IUCN NL and partners in Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius and the Seychelles are guiding ecosystem-based adaptation and conservation projects in this biodiversity hotspot - a group of islands with incredible species diversity and extremely high rates of endemism.

IUCN NL's Land Acquisition Fund provides grants to local NGOs across the globe. With these grants, they can strategically acquire threatened patches of nature to protect and connect wildlife habitats. This results in the expansion and conservation of the habitat of endangered species. It allows us to safeguard the survival of these species in an extremely effective and cost-efficient manner.



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D. FORESTS & COMMUNITY-LED FOREST GOVERNANCE

IUCN NL supports Indigenous Peoples' and local community-led forest & biodiversity governance in tropical forest landscapes where nature is under threat. Our collaboration with networks of grassroots organisations is characterised by bottom-up, inclusive, rights-based and community-led approaches.

D. FORESTS & COMMUNITY-LED FOREST GOVERNANCE

Worldwide, 1.6 billion people (almost 25% of the world's population) depend on forests for their livelihood; many of them are among the poorest people in the world. Powerful economic interests such as the expansion of agriculture, mining and infrastructure often take precedence over the rights and needs of local communities. As a result, large portions of nature that were used and managed by indigenous and local communities for generations, are under great pressure. People who want to counteract the loss of their land and overexploitation of nature and natural resources unite in small community organisations. But their rights are not always recognised and their knowledge not valued. This lack of recognition is reinforced by limited access to funds and limited visibility on a national and international level. The consequences of these developments are specifically serious for women. Women play a key role in food production, gathering medicinal plants and water and the sustainable use of natural resources. They also play an important role in the safeguarding and transfer of traditional knowledge about nature, while they are often excluded from decision making and denied, access to benefits or resources.

OUR COMMITMENT

IUCN NL

- works with a network of organisations that have trusted relationships with Indigenous Peoples & local communities, to develop bottom-up community projects on forest governance, locally-led adaptation and livelihoods
- acts as a broker to link the aspirations of development funds to the capability of our CSO network
- works for the recognition of the rights of local and indigenous communities, their traditional knowledge and their perception of relational value of nature
- facilitates networking & learning, provides technical support, increases the visibility of community initiatives and performs policy advocacy at national and EU level

USPs

- 20+ year track record in community governance of forests in Asia, Africa and Latin America
- access to relevant networks of CSOs
- 30+ year track record in regranting to civil society organisations
- access to relevant national and local government agencies to advocate for recognition and/or support for land use and management rights
- track record of concrete projects in forest conservation, sustainable livelihoods and locally-led adaptation

FORESTS & COMMUNITY-LED FOREST GOVERNANCE: SOME EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK



Natural resources and the rights of local communities living in or around biodiversity-rich natural areas are increasingly under threat. With the Strengthen the Roots project, IUCN NL and Wilde Ganzen support community organizations in Bolivia, Ghana and Indonesia that develop sustainable community enterprises based on local resources and stand up for nature in and around their communities, enabling them to mobilize local support for their work. This way, Strengthen the Roots works on nature conservation that is not performed top-down, but is driven by the interests and strength of community organizations

The Tanintharyi region of Myanmar is home to a variety of indigenous and local communities. The largest ethnic group is the Karen. With their knowledge and experience of sustainable use and management of natural resources built up over generations, they can make a huge contribution to nature conservation and sustainable development.



JOIN US IN SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-LED FOREST GOVERNANCE



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Community governance
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E. FORESTS & ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS

IUCN NL supports Indigenous Peoples' & local communities' governance in forest landscapes where nature is under threat. This can only be achieved in a context where civil society organisations and communities can speak out freely and act safely. However, many environmental defenders are threatened, intimidated, arrested or physically attacked. We support environmental defenders, CSOs and communities in a variety of ways to protect themselves against threats and in dealing with repression.

E. FORESTS & ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS

In many countries civic space is shrinking, and rated as either closed, repressed or obstructed (Civicus monitor 2023). Civil society organisations and communities experience threatening situations, that may range from physical attacks to political repression. Pressing problems include restrictive legislation (e.g. on foreign funding), criminalisation, red-tagging, strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), negative framing, misinformation/fake news, cyber bullying and various forms of violence (including gender-based violence). In order to protect forests, organisations, Indigenous Peoples and local communities need to be able to stand up against vested interests. Through structural abuses of power, corporates and government elites are often responsible for human rights violations and displacement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities from their lands.

OUR COMMITMENT

IUCN NL

- furthers environmental justice - equitable distribution of benefits and burdens, inclusive participation, recognition of roles and histories, and links to nature -, whereby civic space and environmental human rights are crucial
- supports environmental human rights defenders in their conservation drive
- amplifies the rights, voices, positions of Indigenous Peoples and local communities
- builds strong networks (regional, national and international)
- builds solidarity
- supports access to justice
- facilitates trainings on safety and security and access to safe spaces
- provides emergency funds
- advocates for policies that respect and secure civic space

USPs

- 20+ year track record in supporting environmental defenders and working to secure civic space in Asia, Africa and Latin America
- knowledge of mechanisms such as Escazu, and ASEAN framework on environmental human rights
- experience in organization of international, regional and national exchanges
- emergency funds to support (women) environmental human rights defenders
- knowledge of addressing environmental conflict and environmental peace building
- connected to specialised organisations such as Protection International

FORESTS & ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS: SOME EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK



The project Inclusive Protection of Environmental Defenders in the Amazon aims to improve the national protection system for environmental defenders. Together with our Peruvian partner Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental (SPDA), we shed light on the situation of women environmental defenders to promote their and their communities' effective participation in the development of public policy.

With the project Amazon rights in focus: peoples and forest protection IUCN NL, together with Colombian nature organisations FCDS and Ambiente y Sociedad and news platform Mongabay, is committed to tackling forest crime in the Amazon forests of Colombia, and to improve the territorial rights and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Because these people are the forest's best guardians.



In five countries - Colombia, Peru, DR Congo, Indonesia and the Philippines - we worked on concrete interventions that improve the safety of threatened environmental defenders, their organisations and their communities. Together with local partner organizations, we worked on a registration system to gain better insight into the problems and to be able to report an incident quickly. We also worked on safety trainings, standard operating procedures and measures, documenting evidence for criminal cases, legal assistance and getting environmental defenders to safety in the event of acute danger.

JOIN US IN PROTECTING FORESTS AND THE PEOPLE THAT DEFEND THEM



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F. FORESTS & GENDER JUSTICE

IUCN NL supports Indigenous Peoples' and local community-led forest governance in tropical forest landscapes where nature is under threat. We promote inclusive natural resource governance, through a gender equal and intersectional approach, ensuring the participation and leadership of women in decision-making processes around their forests and territories. We campaign for women's rights in forest policies and for an end to gender-based violence.

F. FORESTS & GENDER JUSTICE

Women and girls often play a central role in nature conservation. They are disproportionately affected by a degrading natural environment undermining their roles as providers of food, water, firewood and herbal medicine. In many cases women are denied access and ownership over natural resources and their benefits and are marginalized when it comes to decision-making processes around forests, waters and lands. They are facing discrimination and deeply rooted power imbalances. This is especially true for indigenous women. Moreover, gender-based violence is used as a weapon to silence environmental defenders.

OUR COMMITMENT

IUCN NL

- addresses gender inequality and its root causes from an environmental perspective
- applies an intersectional feminist approach
- supports the rights, voice, position and leadership roles of women and (eco)feminist solidarity networks
- promotes involvement of the whole community (men and women) in work on gender justice
- contributes to gender equality in regional mechanisms such as Escazu
- advocates for gender equality in policies (at country / regional / international levels) regarding forests and land rights

USPs

- support for ecofeminist groups
- organisation of exchanges and management of (small) grants programmes
- more than 30 years experience in re-granting funds to feminist networks and women's groups
- work together with specialised organisations. such as WECF

FORESTS & GENDER JUSTICE: SOME EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK



Sustainable land use benefits both people and nature. In many parts of the world, however, women do not have equal opportunities in ownership and use of land and its resources. MoMo4C works on business enterprise development in six landscapes in Africa and Asia that face a large variety of threats to their biodiversity and climate resilience. Our Ugandan partner applies the GALS approach to bridge the gender gap between men and women in rural communities

Based on baseline research and the Observatorio Amazonia, we elaborate on dynamics in deforestation contexts in the Colombian Amazon. The study, conducted as part of our Amazon rights in focus project, analysed the role of women in the main drivers of deforestation. Applying critical feminist geography and intersectional approaches, it focused on power relationships affecting forested territories based on social inequalities related to gender, ethnicity and age. Central to the methodology was the notion of how the body is the first territory impacted by environmental degradation and conflict.



JOIN US IN WORKING TOWARDS GENDER JUSTICE IN AND AROUND TROPICAL FORESTS



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