Co-designing REDAA in South Asia

Regional Consultation Workshop Report

ICIMOD

REVERSING ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION
REDAA
IN AFRICA AND ASIA

About the report

This workshop report summarises discussions from a South Asia regional consultation workshop, which was organised to help inform the grant calls and strategy for the Reversing Environmental Degradation in Africa and Asia (REDAA) programme.
For more information about this report, contact: enquiries@redaa.org

About the REDAA programme

REDAA is a programme that catalyses research, innovation and action across sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia, by offering grants and technical support. The programme will fund initiatives that are locally led and help both people and nature to thrive.

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REDAA is funded by UK International Development from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and managed by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

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Acknowledgements

This report was drafted by Janine Duffy and Xiaoting Hou-Jones of the International Institute for Environment and Development. Thanks are extended to all the workshop participants and resource persons (see Annex 1) who contributed their time and expertise and provided valuable inputs to this report. Additional thanks go to colleagues at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), particularly Samuel Thomas, Sunita Chaudhary, Binaya Pasakhala, Rekha Rasaily, Nakul Chettri and Sushmita Kunwar, for their support in the organisation and co-delivery of this workshop.

Cover photo: Bangladesh. Credit: Mehedi Hasan via Unsplash

Introduction

The research-to-action programme Reversing Environmental Degradation in Africa and Asia (REDAA) is supported by the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and managed by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). REDAA aims to expand the technical knowledge and evidence base for environmental restoration and sustainable natural resources management in Africa and Asia over at least four years starting in 2023 and will include a grant-making facility to support primarily locally led initiatives putting research into action.

Drawing on a range of scoping studies and the initial results from several 'demonstrator projects', a draft REDAA strategy is being developed. One of the scoping studies — carried out by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) — focuses on potential research-to-action priorities for REDAA in South Asia. These priorities are in the form of promising areas of research-to-action that REDAA could potentially support where: evidence can be improved and taken up; tools can be improved and well used; and governance systems can be improved for environmental restoration and sustainable natural resources management. The ICIMOD-led study also identified emerging ecosystems and degradation hotspots where research-to-action priorities might be located.

On 29–30 March 2023, the ICIMOD and REDAA teams held a two-day workshop at ICIMOD's headquarters in Kathmandu, which 14 experts from across South Asia attended. Participants represented various organisations working on issues related to environmental degradation and restoration and who are deeply committed to helping people and nature to thrive together. Some focus on research, while others work on policy and action. Drawing on the ICIMOD-led scoping paper and learning from scoping work for Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, the workshop aimed to help further refine REDAA's priorities for South Asia and ensure that the REDAA programme is designed to support key stakeholders in the region. Annex 1 provides a list of workshop participants.

Inspired by the scoping paper and drawing on their experiences working on related issues, participants discussed and highlighted key opportunities and challenges for addressing environmental degradation in South Asia, and ways forward to help reverse environmental degradation in the region. The discussions also helped to further refine the priorities for the REDAA programme.

Key challenges and opportunities for addressing environmental degradation

Challenges

Exclusion of local and traditional knowledge: To improve understanding of environmental degradation and restoration, encourage local buy in and ensure longevity and effectiveness of initiatives, local and traditional knowledge must be valued and integrated into natural resource management research, policy and practice. Natural resource management in South Asia is currently dominated by 'mainstream' approaches that ignore or negate the importance and inclusion of traditional knowledge. Most climate change research is focused on climate models and variables, with local-level climate action often failing to get the recognition it deserves. However, evidence shows that when Indigenous Peoples/

ethnic groups and local communities (see Box 1) can employ their own knowledge and management systems, such as *Mukhiya* in Nepal, *Balyan* in India, and community conserved areas councils, they create effective strategies to manage natural resources well and adapt to crises like climate change and biodiversity loss. For example, after the nationalisation of land in Nepal gave way to significant deforestation and degradation, the Nepalese government began a large-scale community forestry programme, entrusting the protection and management of forests to local communities and volunteers. Since its implementation, tree cover in Nepal has doubled to 45%, with communities directly managing more than one-third of the total area.

Failing to incorporate traditional knowledge can lead to the failure of restoration efforts, as seen in northeast India. Here, traditional and ecological practices were replaced with generalised mainstream tools, leading to failures in restoration efforts and the gradual loss of traditional knowledge.

Box 1: Indigenous Peoples and local communities

Whether the terminology 'Indigenous Peoples or local communities' is used, and how such groups are defined if this terminology is used, varies across South Asian countries. For example, Nepal's constitution recognises 59 Indigenous peoples or nationalities. India does not recognise 'Indigenous' but uses 'Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Indian Tribes (SITs)' to officially designate its most disadvantaged socioeconomic groups, including a special category for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). Similarly, the Bangladesh constitution does not recognise Indigenous Peoples in this term but does ensure affirmative action for its 'tribes, minor races, ethnic sects, and communities'. In Bhutan, everyone is considered 'Indigenous and local', but there are also ethnic minorities. In some areas, the terms Indigenous Peoples, local communities and ethnic minorities can cause contestation, drive divisions or even exacerbate problems for marginalised groups at the local level.

Therefore, the workshop participants recommend REDAA to consider using the term 'Indigenous Peoples/ethnic minorities and local communities' with a clear caveat to indicate that how those terms are used will vary based on local context.

Transboundary nature of environmental issues: Ecosystems are complex and interconnected, with many of South Asia's most critical ecosystems sitting across multiple borders, including, for example, the Sundarbans mangrove forest, which sits across India and Bangladesh, and the Himalayan river basins, upon which almost three billion people depend for water and food security. In many such ecosystems, there are linkages between upstream and downstream impacts, particularly in relation to water pollution. Upstream industrial waste and agricultural runoff can harm downstream aquatic plants and animals and make the water unsafe for humans. Similarly, the impacts of human–wildlife conflict, which result from intensified competition for space and resources between humans and wildlife, cannot be confined to one country or landscape. The interconnectedness of such ecosystems and environmental issues highlights the importance of integrated, cross-border cooperation and

collaboration, including the exchange of expertise and evidence. Participants emphasised REDAA as a significant opportunity to foster intra and cross-regional collaboration to help address these types of cascading transboundary issues.

Evidence to implementation gap: Participants highlighted that in relation to many environmental issues across South Asia, strong evidence, and in some instances, strong policies, already exist. However, those policies are often poorly implemented, and evidence is not acted upon. For example, Nepal was highlighted as a country with strong natural resource management (NRM) policies but weak implementation. Therefore, a key challenge for REDAA in South Asia is to avoid the pitfalls of generating more research without bringing about associated actions. Participants highlighted the need for REDAA initiatives to emphasise implementation from the outset, for example, by ensuring grantees develop their thinking on implementation partners and detailing implementation plans in the early stages of project development.

Identifying priority landscapes in South Asia: While some indicative priority landscapes for REDAA were identified in the ICIMOD-led scoping report, discussions between workshop participants highlighted the importance of incorporating a more flexible approach to identifying areas where research-to-action priorities may be located. For example, participants highlighted how many priority landscapes identified in the scoping paper are protected or biologically rich areas already receiving substantial research attention and funding (for example, the Himalayan region). Other areas with a high threat level but where research and funding are scarce were put forward, including desert ecosystems, wetlands and open natural ecosystems in India. Some participants emphasised the importance of focusing conservation efforts on degraded or intact ecosystems (thereby employing either a reactive or precautionary approach). Others suggested the importance of working on transboundary issues that cut across different landscapes and the necessity to establish corridors among key landscapes, given the interconnectedness of many ecosystems. These discussions highlight how stakeholders identify priority areas differently according to their perceptions and interests. These interests and opportunities to turn research into action can also shift as local, national and regional political and economic contexts change. Taking a flexible approach and not prescribing specific landscapes for grantees can allow local stakeholders to work more effectively based on their knowledge of the changing local context.

Rural to urban links: While the current urban population in South Asia (35%) currently sits below the global average, it is predicted that future global urbanisation will be concentrated in South Asia, with the highest increases expected in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. With some of the world's fastest urbanisation and economic growth rates, South Asia is experiencing rapid environmental change. These processes significantly impact how land and natural resources in South Asia are used, with such rapid transformations often leading to increases in inequalities and environmental degradation. There are also sociocultural implications of rapid urbanisation, such as the out-migration of men from rural areas and the resulting feminisation of agriculture and natural resource management. Rather than looking separately at urban and rural areas and their associated environmental issues, examining the linkages between them is vital. Improving our understanding of these links and the related dynamics can help to better address environmental and livelihood challenges and leverage opportunities for change.

Opportunities

Integrated multi-objective participatory natural resource use assessment tools and decision making: Currently, assessment tools and decision making in NRM tend to incorporate a limited set of biodiversity and ecosystem values and are often overly focused on economic outcomes, with little consideration given to environmental, social and cultural factors. However, if solutions are to be created that allow both people and nature to thrive, then we must develop a more holistic approach to decision making that impacts on our natural resources and give weight to the multiplicity of world views and nature values that people hold. Supporting the development of assessment tools and decision making that recognise and account for the wide range of values ascribed to nature could aid in prioritising and managing conservation and restoration interventions and help preserve local and traditional knowledge.

Getting finance to the local level: Indigenous Peoples/ethnic groups and local communities are the stewards for most of the world's biodiversity, but due diligence and eligibility criteria requirements for international funding can create barriers to channelling finance directly to the local level — both for the communities themselves and the grassroots organisations working with them to access finance. The experiences of other funding organisations demonstrate that management of small-scale grants requires funders to also invest in capacity building and understanding local context and needs.

To mitigate such issues and ensure finance reaches the local level, participants suggested that REDAA could consider a 'support for the supporters' funding approach, aiming to work through regional organisations with proven systems supporting networks of Indigenous Peoples/ethnic groups and local communities. This type of mechanism recognises the proportionately high investment of time and resources needed to support effective capacity among small local organisations while acknowledging that many existing and effective organisational systems and processes in the region already support smaller local groups, which REDAA can build upon. Alongside this funding model, REDAA could also explore short-term seed funding for grassroots organisations, with built-in capacity strengthening. Where funds are channelled directly to the local level, participants highlighted the need for patient, trust-based funding approaches that avoid burdens through heavy reporting requirements but focus instead on asking essential questions on the ground to ensure/improve implementation.

One initiative in South Asia that REDAA could learn from is the Green Climate Fund (GCF). In Nepal, GCF channels its funding through a handful of accredited organisations, who then provide sub-granting to smaller, more locally based organisations. However, this funding approach may only be suitable for some countries across the region. India, for example, requires organisations receiving funding from foreign donors to be registered with the government; sub-granting is prohibited.

Digital tools and citizen science for inclusion of local and traditional knowledge: Tools such as mobile apps that support citizen science and participatory Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can empower local communities to be a part of data collection and solutions while also providing critical insights into local environments. Mobile access is relatively cheap in many parts of South Asia, and coverage is often high. In Bhutan, for example, mobile

coverage stands at around 98% in remote areas, highlighting the potential of such tools to engage harder-to-reach communities. In Nepal, one initiative is utilising participatory GIS to help improve the understanding of biodiversity loss on cityscapes by incorporating the perceptions and lived experiences of minority and marginalised voices. The insights gained through these tools can facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the intersectional impacts of biodiversity loss and urbanisation as critical inputs to urban and climate planning. When developing and implementing such tools, it is important to consider gender dynamics and how tools can be utilised to empower women. For example, in India, one initiative is providing women with targeted tech support so they can champion agrobiodiversity and ecosystem-based approaches to managing their land. To incentivise the use of such technologies and ensure benefits for local communities, experience in the region shows the importance of creating a sense of community and ownership of such technologies and tailoring incentives based on local needs.

Multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary collaboration for inclusive governance: Collaboration, dialogue and partnerships between governments, community-based organisations, local communities and businesses within and across disciplines are essential for leveraging resources and expertise, ensuring the long-term sustainability of environmental restoration and conservation efforts and avoiding maladaptation practices. Ensuring that governance processes are inclusive also creates opportunities to enhance trust between stakeholders and minimises the risks of particular interests co-opting NRM policies and practices. While such dialogues and collaboration must ensure the inclusion of marginalised groups like local communities, participants also highlight the vital role of both government and the private sector in South Asia. For example, in Sri Lanka, over 80% of land is state-owned, with around 30-40% managed by the private sector, including some high-biodiversity landscapes. Government actors and businesses, therefore, hold considerable decision-making and financial power in the region. However, careful attention should be paid to ensure these actors do not co-opt initiatives.

Multi-disciplinary collaboration was also highlighted as crucial for inclusive governance in South Asia, with current decision making regarding NRM being dominated by engineering approaches. Such approaches often emphasise the efficiency and feasibility of solutions. Promoting integrated multi-objective participatory natural resource use assessment tools and decision making can open more windows for ecologists or social scientists to influence decision making. Supporting and strengthening existing multi-stakeholder platforms can also help ensure consultations with broader stakeholder groups.

Sustainable, equitable and climate-resilient business models: Conservation and restoration efforts need to incentivise communities to participate in conservation as well as contribute to improving livelihoods. In addition, conservation and restoration efforts require sustainable financing mechanisms to ensure their scalability and long-term viability. REDAA could support the design and implementation of sustainable, equitable and climate-resilient business models that ensure long-term financing for conservation and restoration. Examples include carbon credits, biodiversity credits and payments for ecosystem services. Although these types of mechanisms have demonstrated some success, improvements need to be made to ensure they do not displace or further marginalise Indigenous Peoples/ethnic groups and local communities and are instead accessible to locally led initiatives (LLI), allowing them to become more ingrained into long-term financing strategies.

Interlinkages and interdependencies between the different priority areas: The interlinkages and interdependencies across other research-to-action priorities create opportunities for catalytic action. For example, if we strengthen the integration of local and traditional knowledge into research, policy, governance and implementation, this may also help support multi-objective participatory decision making, because local and traditional knowledge and values will be integrated into these processes, or it may support more inclusive business models by incorporating multiple values of nature.

Ways of working — to strengthen prospects of reversing environmental degradation

Maximising impact and building synergies across initiatives: Participants highlighted that there are many existing initiatives to reverse environmental degradation in the region, including some national-scale ones, which have already generated a lot of valuable lessons learnt — for example: Nepal's community-based forestry; Pakistan's 'ten billion tree tsunami'; and the Indian government's strong ongoing programmes on restoration as well as India's strong civil society national alliance and learning network on restoration. To ensure activities can build on evidence and lessons learnt and to help build synergies across initiatives within the region, REDAA could encourage intra- and cross-regional partnerships or a partnership approach. Approaches that support key government flagship programmes and policies may also get more traction and are more likely to create impact within REDAA's relatively short operation timeframe. Where partnerships are not feasible or appropriate, REDAA could encourage grantees to reflect on complementary initiatives, highlighting how they can build on good practices and address key gaps. To begin the process of building potential synergies between REDAA and regional organisations, participants highlighted several initiatives already active in South Asia (see Annex 2).

Supporting learning and tailored capacity strengthening: Alongside building synergies between initiatives, REDAA could facilitate cross-learning, through a community of practice, both within and across regions. This type of knowledge sharing may help develop common methodologies and approaches for initiatives with similar themes or challenges. Good practice and lessons learnt can then be shared more widely to help catalyse local, regional and global change. To help facilitate the successful involvement of local communities and Indigenous Peoples/ethnic groups, REDAA could provide grantees with tailored capacity strengthening to maximise impact and ensure the long-term sustainability of initiatives. Activities could include webinars, training sessions and facilitating learning among grantees. Workshop participants provided some areas that may require tailored capacity support, including financial management, reporting, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), gender equality, social inclusion and stakeholder mapping.

Next steps for REDAA

Based on the scoping paper and workshop discussions, emerging priorities for REDAA in South Asia are summarised below:

The overarching priority could be to **support locally led initiatives that implement integrated approaches, which can address interlinked challenges of biodiversity loss, climate change and inequality**. Such locally led context-specific initiatives could focus on:

- Strengthening the integration of local and traditional knowledge in research, policy and actions to sustainably manage natural resources
- Integrated multi-objective participatory natural resource use assessment tools and decision making
- Inclusive governance mechanisms for natural resources management that foster multi-stakeholder and interdisciplinary collaboration
- Sustainable, equitable and climate-resilient business models, and
- Direct and patient long-term financing mechanisms for locally led initiatives.

REDAA-supported initiatives should emphasise gender equality and social inclusion and could also consider: tackling transboundary environmental degradation issues; addressing urban–rural dynamics creating degradation or fostering restoration; tailored capacity building for key local stakeholders; and application of locally appropriate data systems and technology.

In addition:

- REDAA should encourage action in certain ecologies and landscape types but will not prescribe a list of specific landscapes in which it aims to support initiatives. Rather it will encourage potential grantees to demonstrate in their proposals the rationale for their choice of scale and location.
- REDAA should also aim to support initiatives to learn from each other as well as from other existing initiatives in the region to facilitate intra- and cross-regional learning.
- REDAA could encourage partnership initiatives that can foster multi-stakeholder and interdisciplinary approaches and build on good practices in the region.

REDAA will aim to work through organisations with proven systems supporting Indigenous Peoples/ethnic group and local communitie's work by offering support and grants of an appropriate size to those organisations. This proposed 'support for the supporters' of local organisations recognises the proportionately high level of investment of time and resources that are needed to build trust and support effective capacity among small local organisations, and the many existing effective organisational systems and processes in the region that already support smaller local groups which REDAA can build upon.

The facilitators of the workshop would like to thank the participants for generously offering their time and expertise, and the REDAA programme team invite comments on this report, which can be sent to: enquiries@redaa.org

Annex 1: Participant list

Name_	Organisation_
Mokhlesur Rahman	Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS), Bangladesh
Tasfia Tasnim	International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)
Kaka Tshering	Department of Water, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Bhutan
Lungten Norbu, PhD	Royal Society of Protection of Nature, Bhutan
Sarala Khaling, PhD	Asoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)
Aravind Neelava Anantharam, PhD, FLS	Asoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)
Nandini Velho, PhD	Independent researcher
Representative	Institute of Research and Development, Maldives
Pema Sherpa	Red Panda Network
Puspa Lal Ghimire	Asian Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)
Prabina Shrestha	Utopia
Devaka L Weerakoon PhD	Department of Zoology and Environment Sciences, University of Colombo
Representative	Forest, Range and Wildlife Management, Karakoram International University
Representative	Mountain Partnership, Pakistan

Resource people for the workshop:

FCDO: Ugan Manandhar

ICIMOD: Samuel Thomas, Sunita Chaudhary, Binaya Pasakhala, Sushmita Kunwar, Nakul Chettri, Kabir Uddin, Babar Khan, Rekha Rasaily

IIED: Xiaoting Hou-Jones, Janine Duffy

Annex 2: Some existing initiatives in South Asia that address environmental degradation with some emphasis on research-to-action

Initiative	Objective and main activities	Geographic focus	Lead	Funder	More info:
Red Panda Network (RPN) community-based conservation initiative	The project aims to preserve the wild red panda population and their habitat by empowering local communities through adapting community-based research, education and sustainable development. RPN has undertaken a comprehensive field survey of the red panda population status and distribution, habitat utilisation, and snaring and poaching incidents, and carried out environmental awareness campaigns, outreach activities and workshops to increase the public's understanding of the plight of red pandas and the need for conservation in the region.	Nepal	Red Panda Network	Nordens Ark, Rainforest Trust, ICFC, Fondation Segre	Link to website
Eco Restoration Alliance India (ERA India)	An alliance of practitioners and ecologists who have come together to foster collective efforts to support and sustain ecological restoration in India. The goals of ERA India are to collate and share knowledge, experience and case studies of ecological restoration of different natural ecosystems across India. It carries out events and training on ecological restoration, provides support and resources for others involved in restoration activities and is developing a knowledge portal.	India	Multi-stakeholder (run by a steering committee)	Rainmatter Foundation, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies	Link to website
Nature-based Solutions Bangladesh Network	A community of researchers, practitioners and policymakers working at the interface of climate change, nature conservation and sustainable development. Their mission is to enhance understanding of nature-based solutions' importance and scale-up their implementation in Bangladesh. Activities include collating scientific evidence and evidence from practice on the effectiveness of existing nature-based solutions projects from across Bangladesh, identifying areas that could benefit from the implementation of nature-based solutions in future, and building an evidence base for the role of nature-based solutions for economic development in Bangladesh.	Bangladesh	University of Oxford		Link to website

Initiative	Objective and main activities	Geographic focus	Lead	Funder	More info:
Bhutan for Life	Bhutan For Life is Asia's first Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) model. The model aims to permanently protect Bhutan's network of protected areas that contribute to human wellbeing and biodiversity conservation and improve Bhutan's resilience to the effects of climate change. The mechanism will provide a sustained flow of funds to manage Bhutan's protected areas and biological corridors effectively. Activities that investment will go towards include: development by the Royal Government of Bhutan of clear milestones and targets for investment for the next 15 years for the protected areas; strengthening enforcement and management of protected areas; diversifying eco-tourism activities and products in other areas of the country as the general tourism routes get saturated; protecting and monitoring wildlife and biodiversity; supporting people in the protected areas through job creation and income-generating opportunities.	Bhutan	WWF and the Royal Government of Bhutan	Green Climate Fund, private donors (via WWF), UNDP/Global Environment Facility (GEF), Royal Government of Bhutan, Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation	Link to website + Link to website
Community-based Forest Resources Management (CBFRM)	This project aims to help CBFRM groups to effectively manage their forest resources and improve their livelihood by supporting enterprise development and creating employment opportunities. Capacity building and training focuses on the efficient use of forest resources, improving governance of the group and providing technical skills to forestry staff and communities.	Bhutan	WWF in close collaboration with the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) and the Department of Forest and Park Services (DoFPS)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland (through WWF Finland)	Link to website

Initiative	Objective and main activities	Geographic focus	Lead	Funder	More info:
Public Private Community Alliance (PPCA)	This new alliance brings together local governments, Nepali farm and forest producers, community organisations, cooperatives and associations, domestic and international enterprises, service providers (including quality assurance and certification organisations), and government, donor and NGO programmes at central, provincial and local levels assisting the agriculture and forestry sector with the goal of demonstrating a sustainable natural products-based enterprises and local economic development model that is environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially just.	Nepal	Asian Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)	Aveda, Global Greengrants Fund	Link to website
White-bellied Heron (WBH) conservation project	The project's overall goal is to maintain the significance of Punatsangchu as the habitat of the critically endangered white-bellied heron as a contribution to the global conservation of the species. The initiative has helped establish two important white-bellied heron habitat areas in Bhutan: 1) Punatsangchu basin, Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag; and 2) Berti, Zhemgang Dzongkhag. Current activities include an ecological study of white-bellied heron and an awareness campaign among hydropower project workers, communities, policymakers, technocrats and the general public.	Bhutan	The Royal Society of Protection of Nature		Link to website
Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Programme	The overall objective of Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme is to revive forest and wildlife resources in Pakistan, to improve the overall conservation of the existing protected areas; and encourage ecotourism, community engagement and job creation through the conservation. The project aims to restore degraded forests and ecosystems and conserve biodiversity in order to maximise environmental, social and biodiversity benefits.	Pakistan	Pakistan Ministry of Climate Change, and provincial and territorial Forest and Wildlife Departments	Government of Pakistan	Link to website

Initiative	Objective and main activities	Geographic focus	Lead	Funder	More info:
Living landscapes: securing High Conservation Value (HCV) in south-western Bhutan	The project seeks to achieve long-term conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and contribute towards the country's sustainable development through securing High Conservation Values (HCVs) in southwestern Bhutan. This project will help integrate the concept of HCVs into the national land use planning system. Objectives include: integrate the approach of HCVs into the national land use and planning systems to ensure conservation of HCVs in the areas without legal protection; ensure sustainable management of natural resources based on scientific management principles in the areas outside the protected areas network system by developing integrated climate-smart management plans for nine divisional forest offices in the project landscape; by 2028, at least nine High Conservation Value Areas (HCVAs) are put under management regime; by 2028, the population of indicator species in the project landscapes is secured; by 2028, the average annual household income of the target communities has increased by 60%.	Bhutan	WWF Bhutan and Tarayana Foundation	International Climate Initiative (IKI) — The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU)	Link to website
LIFE Project	LIFE was designed to track progress made on ecological and biological indicators, such as water and soil quality, species diversity, forest structure, and climate indicators (such as levels of erosion and rainfall). The progress data derived from this analysis and collaboration with local and international experts will be used to develop the credit accrual system. The primary goal of the LIFE project is to support the development of policies and tools so that the accrued bio-credits can be utilised effectively and in alignment with national priorities. The project has also created significant employment opportunities for the surrounding communities — an endeavour that has strengthened the local economy.	Sri Lanka	Biodiversity Sri Lanka (BSL) with the Forest Department of Sri Lanka and IUCN		Link to website