



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Pathfinder Award

For innovation in nature conservation



2021 Call for Nominations

Theme: Celebrating sites with innovative, integrated approaches to protected and conserved area management that successfully conserve nature while making development gains related to human health, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and sustainable land management.

An initiative under PANORAMA – Solutions for a Healthy Planet

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the IUCN International Union for Conservation of Nature are excited to invite nominations/applications for the 2nd iteration of the Pathfinder Award. The Award serves as a unique and timely opportunity to showcase best cases of conservation management models and promote solutions that generate co-benefits for all.

With this award, we will celebrate, honour, and support individuals, groups, or organisations for their effective solutions that contribute to the success of protected and conserved areas. The 3 award winners will receive a financial grant of US\$ 10,000 and a plaque and certificate of achievement, promotion and visibility, and an invitation to the awards ceremonies. As the gatherings of the three Rio Conventions (CBD COP 15, UNFCCC COP 26 and UNCCD COP 15) are set to take place within 2021 and 2022, winners will be selected in three categories and presented during each of the conferences. All eligible solutions will be published on the [PANORAMA – Solutions for a Healthy Planet web platform](#) and be promoted further through the PANORAMA initiative.

The 2021 **Pathfinder Award** seeks initiatives focused on sites with innovative, integrated approaches to protected and conserved area management that successfully conserve nature while making development gains related to 1) human health, 2) climate change mitigation and adaptation, and 3) sustainable land management (see below for further details).





About the Pathfinder Award

The **Pathfinder Award** is designed to recognise outstanding solutions for protected and conserved areas developed and implemented by individuals, organisations or groups.

UNDP and IUCN have partnered to highlight these success stories and ensure that these solutions received global attention and recognition. The award is also supported by the contributions of several partners and funders through projects that are helping to identify and communicate biodiversity conservation solutions.

The **Pathfinder Award** sets out to:

- Identify and showcase a growing global suite of innovations and solutions from protected and conserved areas that demonstrate success and inspire further action;
- Recognise and reward those individuals or groups/organisations that have achieved these successes;
- Incentivise the adaptation and replication of these solutions more widely;
- Reinforce policy messages related to quality, equity, and performance of protected and conserved areas within global frameworks and commitments;
- Highlight the work of leading agencies and global partners (governments, conservation agencies, civil society) in achieving solutions;
- Raise the profile of protected and conserved areas and systems, and their stakeholders; and
- Encourage further support and investment in applying successful approaches.



The 2021 Award Theme

Background to this 2021 call for applications/ nominations.

The world has experienced unprecedented change. The severe global health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19 are stark examples of risks associated with nature loss and degradation of natural ecosystems. When ecosystems are healthy, functioning and undisturbed, the normal interactions between organisms are contained, preventing zoonotic pathogens from spilling over into the human system or causing diseases. In a world where 75 per cent of the land surface is now impacted by humans, and disruption of natural ecosystems is increasing, the spill-over effect has become more frequent, and is likely to increase - unless we act swiftly.

It is more critical than ever for making progress on the climate emergency and halting the loss of nature. The better we manage our ecosystems, the better we can manage human health. Business-as-usual cannot continue. For the first time in 20 years, all three Rio Conventions will independently meet within a 12-month period, bringing nature and climate to the forefront of global discourse. During the CBD COP 15, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) will be agreed, setting the course for the next decade of action on nature. Since signing the Paris Agreement in 2015, the UNFCCC COP 26 will mark the first occasion where countries are expected to enhance their national commitments to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The UNCCD COP 15 will assess progress towards the Land Degradation Neutrality target (SDG 15.3) and position the convention in the context of the new GBF.

Now is the time for ambitious action for nature.

There is an unprecedented opportunity to showcase successful models of protected and conserved area management that contribute to a diverse array of objectives beyond conservation. A multi-facet approach to conservation will be necessary in order to tackle the many existing, and emerging, crises facing our planet. Currently, the understanding of integration and how to ensure effectiveness is still evolving. There is an urgent need for guidance as well as great potential to learn from existing inspiring solutions.

The Pathfinder Award serves as a unique and timely opportunity to showcase best cases of conservation management models and promote solutions that generate co-benefits for all.

The 2nd Pathfinder Award will focus on *celebrating sites with innovative, integrated approaches to protected and conserved area management that successfully conserve nature while making development gains related to human health, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and sustainable land management.*

A winning initiative will be selected for each of the following award categories as it relates to:

	CBD COP 15	UNFCCC COP 26 ¹	UNCCD COP 15 ¹
Category	<p>(A) Biodiversity conservation: Innovative protected and conserved area solutions that enhance people’s health and well-being, and could inspire ways to ‘build back better’ following the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>(B) Technology category: Protected and conserved area solutions for innovative and outstanding use of technology for successful nature conservation.</p>	<p>(C) Climate change: Innovative Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for adaptation</p>	<p>(D) Land management: Protected and conserved area solutions that contribute to Land Degradation Neutrality</p>
Category Specific Eligibility	<p>(A) Biodiversity Conservation category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submissions that demonstrate how protected and conserved areas provide direct benefits to physical, spiritual and mental health through time spent in nature; and/or - Submissions that demonstrate integration of protected and conserved areas into land-use and marine spatial planning, including through economic valuation and policy advocacy, and harmonised with other development sectors <p>(B) Technology category: Submissions that demonstrate innovative use of technology in and around protected and conserved areas in at least one of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -helping people to safely and sustainably access and benefit from nature -protecting and nurturing wildlife and natural values -generates knowledge and impactful research into biodiversity conservation 	<p>(C) Climate change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NbS for adaptation that fulfill the Ecosystem based Adaptation qualification criteria & quality standards by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) helping people to adapt to a changing climate; 2) actively making use of biodiversity to achieve this; 3) being part of an overall adaptation strategy. - NbS for adaptation that create demonstrated mitigation co-benefits (for instance reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation), - NbS for adaptation that actively engage with the private sector and have developed private sector-driven business models. 	<p>(D) Land management: Submissions that demonstrate how restoring land in or adjacent to protected and conserved areas contribute to stabilization/r estoration of populations of threatened species and degraded ecosystems.</p>

¹ The call for nominations for the 2nd and 3rd award categories will open on 15 June. The exact category themes and specific criteria will be announced at that time.



Award Criteria and Selection Process

The 2021 award winners will be selected as follows.

- 👍 An **Award Review Committee** will screen and review all nominations/submissions received and prepare a shortlist. The Committee will be comprised of protected areas management and climate change experts from UNDP, IUCN Secretariat and other selected experts.
- 👍 A **jury** of at least five eminent persons will select the winners from the shortlist submitted by the Award Review Committee.

👍 All submissions/nominations will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- **Relevance:** Match to one or more of the thematic categories of the Award.
- **Innovation:** The extent to which the nominee(s) have demonstrated innovation, new partnerships, or 'out- of-the-box' ideas.
- **Impact:** The innovative solutions or approaches introduced by the nominee(s) must have been already implemented within a protected or conserved area and be showing effective results. To the extent possible, impact will be evaluated based not only the demonstrated results and achievements, but also on the extent to which the introduced solution contributed to nature conservation outcomes and can demonstrate more effective governance or management of the relevant protected or conserved area (or protected area system).
- **Scalability:** The extent to which the solution could be scaled regionally / nationally / internationally.
- **Excellence and inspiration:** The extent to which the nominee(s) have demonstrated outstanding and innovative achievements in conservation management practices in one of the above categories.





Eligibility Requirements

We welcome all applications/nominations that meet the following requirements:

- The applicant/nominee(s) must be an individual or group/organisation that works within or represents a protected or conserved area and their constituents and stakeholders (e.g., rangers, park managers, directors, local leaders, members of communities, and advocates).
- Innovation and initiative must be completed with clear results, or under implementation with a certain level of accomplishment. Innovative ideas that are not yet fully developed and/or implemented are not eligible for the award.
- All categories of protected and conserved areas are eligible including community and private conservation areas, and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities. There are no restrictions related to the protected area management, ownership, or governance types.
- Any person or a group can be nominated by those who are sufficiently familiar with their work and with the full approval of the nominee(s). Self-nominations are welcome and encouraged.



Application/ Nomination Process

Applications or nominations for the award should be submitted no later than 15 July 2021, by filling out the on-line Nomination Form. If you are unable to access the on-line form, please contact us at the email address below for further information.

To submit an application or a nomination, please complete both steps below:

1. Complete the on-line Nomination Form in English : <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HXS7Z32>, French: <https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/69GSWMH> and Spanish <https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/G33ZNXT>
2. Follow the web link provided in the Nomination Form to the PANORAMA platform or go directly to <https://panorama.solutions/en> to submit a full description of the protected area innovation / solution being nominated. Please note that to contribute a solution you will first have to register with PANORAMA. Complete the 'Full Solution' online entry template under the Protected areas Thematic community and submit the solution as a draft on the platform.

Applications or nominations will only be considered if both of these steps have been completed.

Nominated initiatives will undergo a verification process that may require nominee(s) and/or nominators to provide additional information and/or materials.

By submitting a nomination, the applicants or nominee(s) agree to participate in any interviews, social media promotional activities, or any other activities that may be required to promote the Award and the nominees' achievements.



Award Prizes

The winners will receive the following prizes:

- Public recognition and acknowledgement which can then be used to motivate and inspire others. The award ceremonies will be held either in person or virtually at the CBD COP15 meeting in Kunming, China between 15 and 28 October 2021, at the UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow, UK between 1 and 12 November 2021 and at the UNCCD COP15 in 2022.
- A financial prize of US\$ 10,000 will be awarded to each of four winners within the set categories.
- The Pathfinder Award certificate and a plaque.
- Possible participation in a training programme or mentorship, including the IUCN Green List of Protected Areas Programme, if not already a candidate or listed site.
- Opportunity to receive in-kind technical support or membership of a network, including IUCN WCPA and IUCN Green List.
- Potential opportunity for keynote participation in a global, regional, or digital PANORAMA event.
- Further promotion and visibility: All complete submissions that meet PANORAMA's 'criteria for solutions' will be published on the web platform, regardless of their success in the award process.

The winners, runners-up, as well as other select nominees and their work may be featured on the relevant UNDP and IUCN websites and in a range of other promotional material, social media sites, or printed material.

Important Dates

- **Call for nominations/applications opens:** 01 June 2021
- **Call closes:** 15 July 2021
- **Review of nominations:** From opening to 31 Aug 2021
- **Winner(s) selection and notification:** Mid-September 2021
- **The Awards ceremonies:** CBD COP 15 meeting in October 2021, UNFCCC COP26 in November 2021, UNCCD COP15 2022

Further Information

For further information please contact us at:

pathfinderaward@iucn.org

Photo credits:
IUCN

