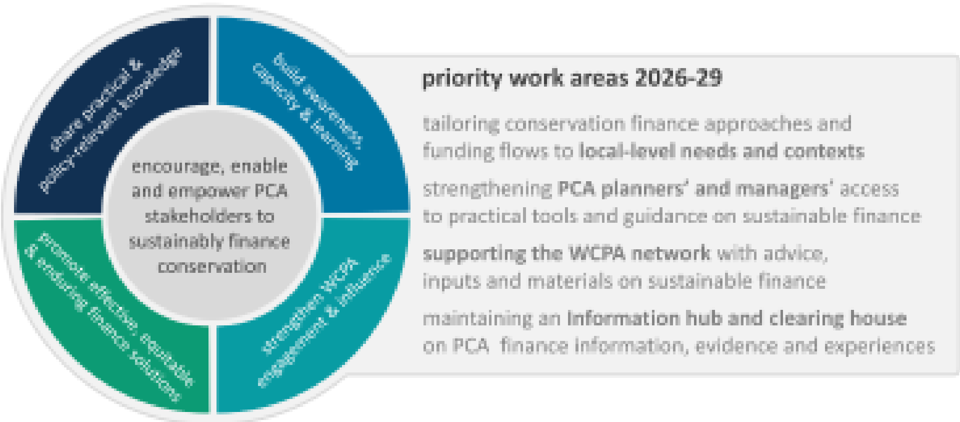
IUCN WCPA Sustainable Finance Specialist Group

Protected and conserved areas (PCAs) around the world **continue to face serious financial and management challenges**. It is now widely recognised that these extend far beyond a simple lack of funding. There is an equal need to make efforts to improve the diversity, stability and security of PCAs' financial portfolios, ensure that funds are received in an appropriate form, at the right time and place, by the appropriate groups, and are managed and spent effectively according to the greatest management needs.

Just as PCAs are now recognised to encompass a diverse array of management regimes, governance arrangements and stewardship responsibilities, so there is a need to rethink how conservation finance is conceptualised and delivered. This requires **moving beyond the traditional preoccupation with fundraising**. The primary concern becomes to ensure that all of the groups that are responsible for and incur costs from managing PCAs and conserving nature are equipped to access sufficient finance, in a manner and a form that is suited to their unique needs and circumstances, and are able to use it to support their highest conservation priorities .

To these ends, the Sustainable Finance Specialist Group (SFSG) seeks to **encourage, enable and empower PCA stakeholders to sustainably finance conservation**, by sharing practical and policy-relevant knowledge, building awareness, capacity and learning, strengthening WCPA engagement and influence, and promoting effective, equitable and enduring finance solutions.



We plan to focus on four particularly important PCA finance topics and issues over the next quadrennium:

- Tailoring conservation finance approaches and funding flows to **local-level needs and contexts** *(for example, by engaging in efforts to tailor finance and funding mechanisms to the needs of community-conserved areas, especially those involving IP&LCs and ITTs)*;
- Strengthening PCA planners' and managers' access to **practical tools and guidance** on sustainable finance *(for example by extending the reach, usability and application of the 2025 "Practice Guidance for Protected and Conserved Area Finance" by developing planning tools and training modules for PCA practitioners)*;
- **Supporting the WCPA network** with advice, inputs and materials on sustainable finance *(for example by providing new platforms for collaboration, exchange and networking between SFSG members, and conducting joint activities with other WPCA Thematic, Working and Specialist Groups and Task Forces)*; and
- Maintaining an **Information hub and clearing house** on PCA finance information, evidence and experiences *(for example, to ensure that sustainable finance topics and events are embedded and showcased at the 2027 World Protected and Conserved Areas Congress, and facilitate SFSG members' engagement)*.

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