

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

REGIONAL OFFICE
MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR CONSERVATION
OF NATURE



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Cover Photo

**The Central American
Volcanic Arc**
Acatenango,
Chimaltenango,
Guatemala

© Diego Girón - Pexels

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Coordination: Giulia Clerici, Regional Communications Coordinator, IUCN ORMACC
Ariel Gómez, Regional Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Coordinator, IUCN ORMACC

Layout: Colmena Lab

Translated by: Colmena Lab

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Message from the Regional Director

The year 2025 was a year of great achievements and significant challenges. In a complex and changing global context, the Union reaffirmed its resilience and its role as a space for articulation and dialogue to address the most pressing environmental and social challenges we face.

During this period, the Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, together with its partners, allies and Members, mobilised technical and financial resources to bring solutions and initiatives with direct impact to the territories. With the addition of 15 new Members, including two subnational governments and five Indigenous Peoples' organisations, we strengthened the Union's representativeness, incorporating a greater diversity of perspectives, capacities and knowledge to reach a total of 118 Members in the region.

Our contribution in strategic spaces for national and regional dialogue reaffirmed IUCN's role as a trusted partner that accompanies countries in fulfilling their international commitments and promotes the incorporation of mechanisms to reach global targets. From ecological and productive restoration to sustainable food systems and the strengthening of the rights of environmental defenders, our work has demonstrated that scientific rigour and community leadership are the drivers that make conservation effective on the ground.

The achievements reached are the result of the collaborative work between the three pillars of our Union: Members, Commissions and the Secretariat. Together, we have advanced towards more effective and equitable biodiversity conservation, as well as the restoration of ecosystems that sustain life in communities, incorporating innovative approaches to the current challenges of the region and the world.



The IUCN World Conservation Congress marked a milestone in this journey. In the Pavilion of the Americas, regional priorities were positioned at the epicentre of the global agenda, proving that Mesoamerica and the Caribbean not only participate in international dialogue but also define its course.

We look towards 2026 with hope and determination, under the renewed mandate of a four-year Programme, guided by the 20-year Vision, whose framework demands a deeper commitment to rights-based conservation and addresses the interrelation between nature and the multiple global changes the planet faces.

The roadmap for the coming years is ambitious and focuses on areas of structural transformation. It seeks the alignment of financial systems with nature's integrity, the consolidation of sustainable food systems and the promotion of a regenerative blue economy. Water security and a just energy transition will be the pillars upon which territorial resilience will be built.

The challenge is immense, but the organisation's capacity to articulate collective responses is our greatest certainty. The Union in the region will continue to lead the way, with the conviction that a healthy nature is the only possible foundation for prosperity and justice.

Úrsula Parrilla

Regional Director, IUCN Mexico,
Central America and the Caribbean



About IUCN

01

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IUCN around the world

United for nature, aligned around a shared purpose

The **International Union for Conservation of Nature** is a global environmental network that brings together science, public policy and technical action to conserve nature and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. As a **Union of Members**, composed of **States, national and subnational governments, Indigenous Peoples' organisation's and civil society organisations**, IUCN generates knowledge, sets standards and supports decisions that guide conservation efforts worldwide.

Coral Reef

© Albert Kok





Vision

A just world
that values and
conserves nature.

Mission

To influence, encourage
and assist societies in
conserving the integrity
and diversity of nature
and ensure that any use
of natural resources is
equitable and ecologically
sustainable.



For more than seven decades, IUCN has demonstrated that **effective conservation emerges** out of **strategic cooperation**. Founded in 1948, the Union has consolidated itself as a space where actors with different responsibilities, decision-making levels and mandates come together around a **shared purpose: nature conservation based on science, dialogue and coordinated action**.

Today, IUCN brings together a network of **more than 1,500 Member organisations** and mobilises the knowledge of **over 19,000 experts**, organised across seven Commissions. This combination of political authority, scientific rigour and institutional diversity has positioned the Union as a **global reference on the state of biodiversity and the actions required to safeguard it**.

The Union's model is structured around a central principle:

One Programme. Members, Commissions and the Secretariat work in coordination to advance three strategic functions that define the Union's role within the international system:

01

Inform

by providing data, assessments and technical frameworks to guide decision-making, from the Red List of Threatened Species to global standards in conservation and sustainable use.

02

Influence

by providing a neutral forum based on evidence for building agreements, public policy recommendations and international regulatory frameworks.

03

Implement

by supporting governments, institutions and partners in applying Nature-based Solutions adapted to specific ecological and social contexts.

In a world marked by interconnected crises, the Union offers a distinctive vision: **legitimacy grounded in evidence and dialogue**. Its strength lies in its rigour and in its unique ability to translate evidence and data into global consensus and actions with territorial impact.



“

IUCN is a unique institution. In ecological terms, it is a rare species.

Its existence is unusual and extraordinary, bringing together States, social organisations, Indigenous Peoples' organisations and volunteer experts from around the world to combine knowledge, align collective will and build political momentum for nature. It is a clear example of how a common cause can inspire unity in diversity.

IUCN has been a beacon of light: a powerful beacon for the conservation community.

”

Bernardo Arévalo de León
President of Guatemala



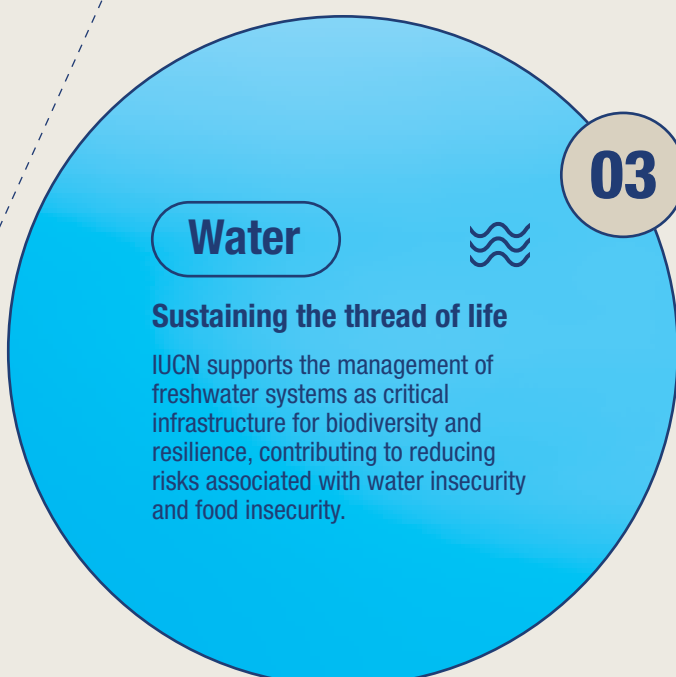


Nature 2030

The Union in action

Adopted in 2021 during the **IUCN World Conservation Congress**, the **Nature 2030 Programme** establishes the strategic framework guiding IUCN's work during the current decade.

Its objective is clear: to advance towards a **just world that values and conserves nature through measurable impacts aligned with major international agreements**.





Global Nature 2030 model

An integrated approach
for life, equity, and
resilience

The Programme is organised
into five interdependent areas
demonstrating the complexity of
the social and natural systems.

04

Oceans



Strengthening the resilience of the blue lung

Through solid regulatory frameworks and investment mechanisms, IUCN drives the restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems, ensuring their ecological and social productivity over time.

The value of this global framework lies in its ability to **adapt to local and regional contexts**, in which environmental pressures, institutional capacities and social priorities vary. This is a decisive quality for supporting countries and territories in their decision-making.

05

Climate



Aligning climate action with nature

IUCN integrates biodiversity into climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, promoting Nature-based Solutions that contribute to limiting the global temperature increase and to strengthening the resilience of ecosystems and communities.



Looking towards the future

A 20-year strategic vision for the Union

At the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi, IUCN Members for the first time adopted a long-term strategic vision, articulating the Union's commitment to "a just world that values and conserves nature."

In response to the unprecedented environmental challenges of our time, this strategic vision sets a clear direction for the next two decades, based on three commitments: effectively conserving biodiversity, comprehensively addressing the drivers of nature loss and fostering a more just and equitable society.

Effective conservation occurs at the level of species, landscapes and ecosystems. However, it is also imperative that the underlying drivers of nature loss be addressed: rather than focusing solely on symptoms, IUCN is tackling the root causes. Targeting these drivers and transforming systems, values and economies on a global scale will be the focus and motivation of its work over the next 20 years.

Brown pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

© IUCN





“

**Creating a world
that truly values
and conserves
nature is no
small task – it
is a defining
challenge.**

It requires nothing less than reshaping
the relationship between people and the
natural world.

”

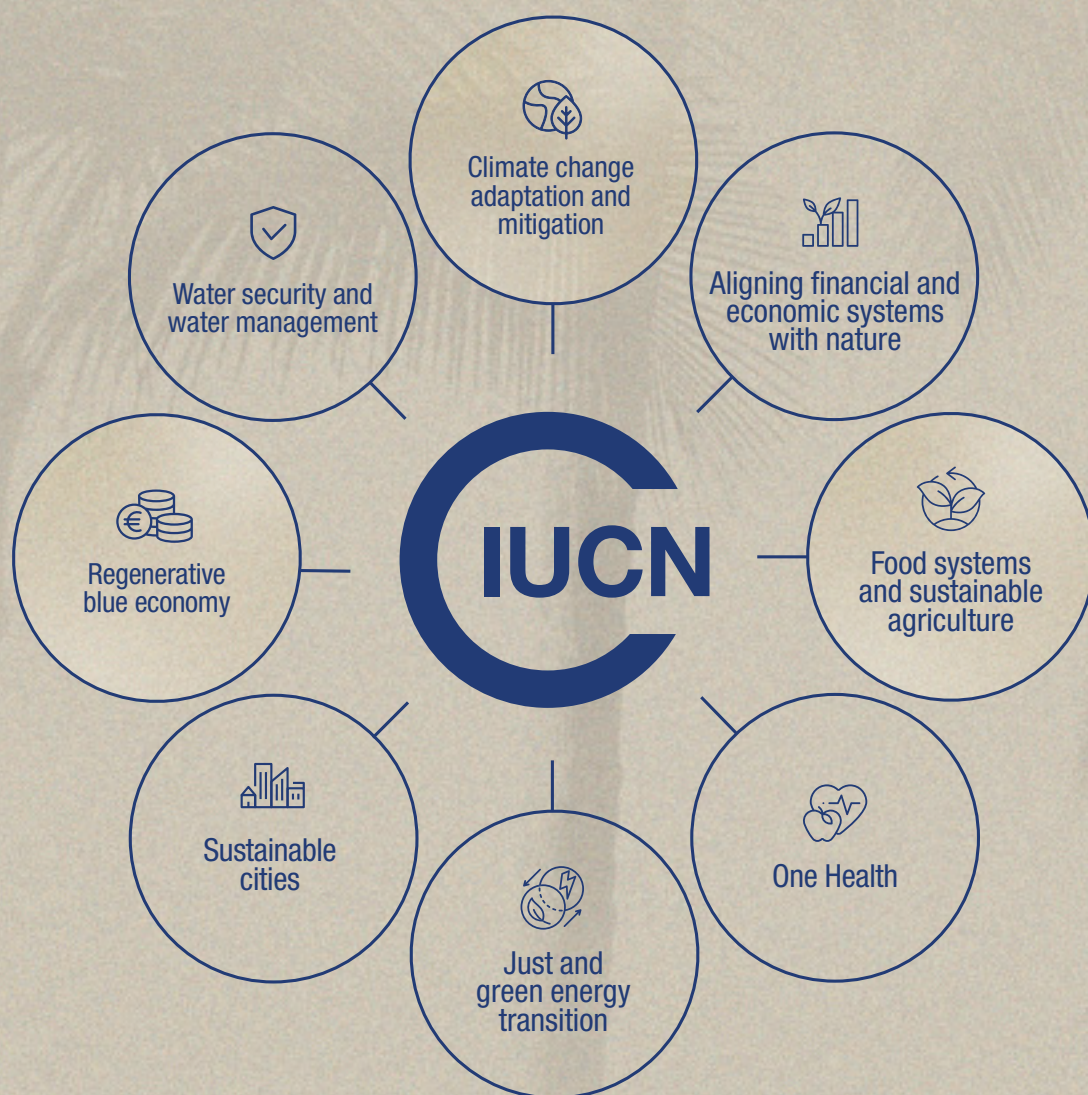


Dr Grethel Aguilar
IUCN General Director



Focusing influence

IUCN has identified eight areas that require urgent and long-term systemic transformation:



Read the document: Unite for Nature on the Path to 2045



Expand our existing work

IUCN will continue to expand biodiversity conservation across land, water, and oceans by:

Conservation at the species level.

Effective area-based conservation.

Ecosystem conservation and restoration.

Addressing the nexus between nature and the multiple global changes facing the planet.

A rights-based and equity-based approach to conservation action.

We will focus on developing resilient and sustainable action.

IUCN catalytic roles

IUCN will focus on the following activities that generate transformative changes for the Union:

Convening power and networking.

Knowledge, science, and data.

Policy and advocacy.

Capacity building.

Resource mobilisation for nature and people on the ground.

Promoting education and awareness.

To work toward turning this ambitious vision into reality, Members also adopted the IUCN Programme 2026-2029, which establishes specific goals and objectives to achieve three impacts:

1 Biodiversity

(ecosystems, species and genetic diversity) is effectively conserved, protected, and restored across terrestrial, freshwater, and marine realms, and mainstreamed across all sectors.

2 Effective conservation

of biodiversity and ecosystem services has significantly contributed to addressing the nature–global change nexus. This includes Nature-based Solutions to enhance ecosystem and societal resilience, reducing risks to nature from unsustainable responses to global anthropogenic crises.

3 The equitable, legitimate, legal and sustainable use

of nature and natural resources has contributed to both nature conservation and a just, equitable and sustainable society.

Read the document: Nature 2030. One nature, one future.





“

**IUCN has both
eyes on the future.
Our ambition is
clear.**

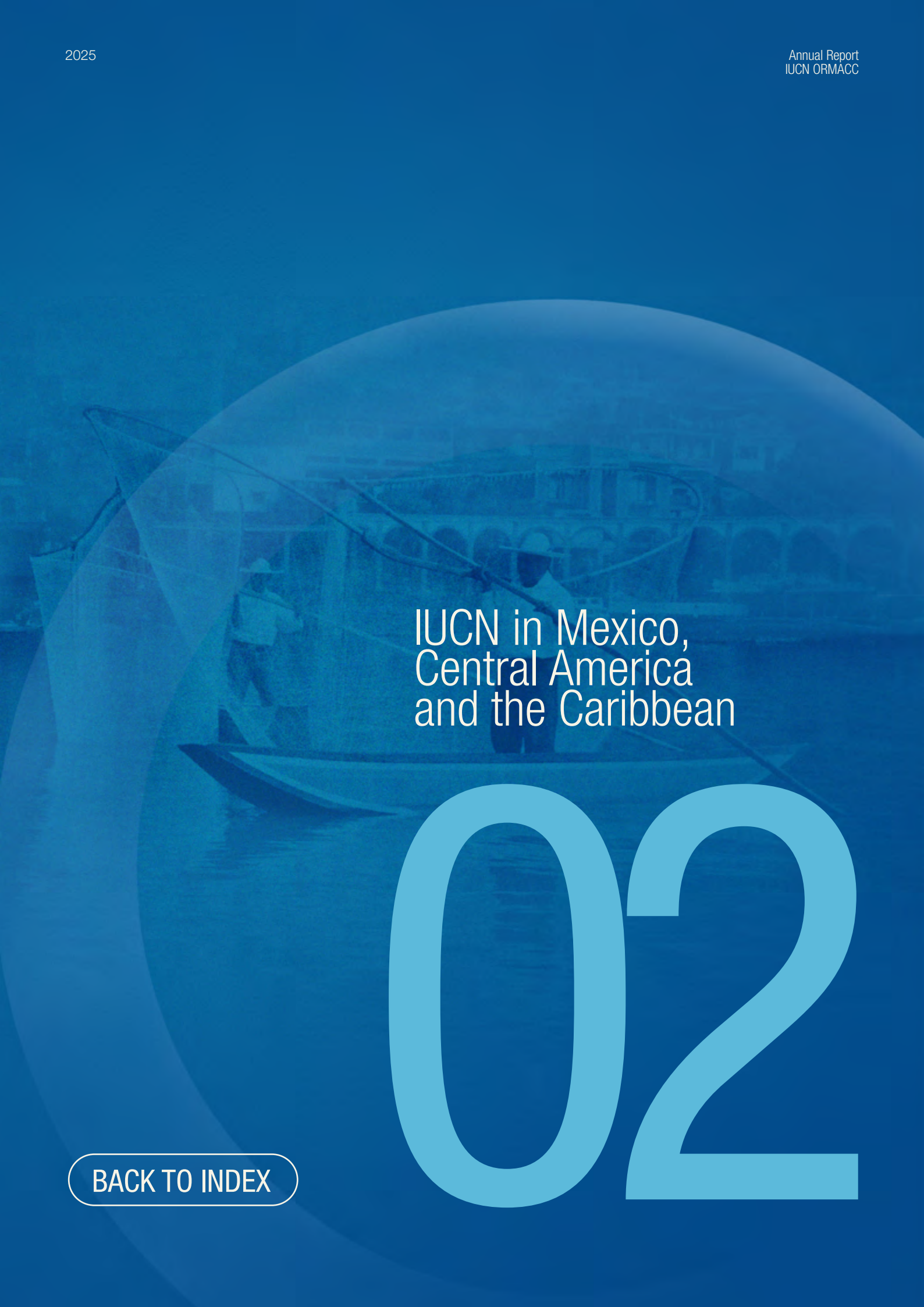
We are focused on a new era of conservation,
building on 75 years of experience. Let's unite
for nature on the path to 2045.

”



Razan Al Mubarak
IUCN President





IUCN in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean

02

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The power of the Union: Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean

Evidence of collective impact and regional conservation architecture

IUCN acts as a regional convenor, translating global science into territorial solutions and connecting 118 organisations around a single ambition: Nature 2030.

The Union's network

118

Members

A political and technical network for conservation.

763

Commission Members

100%

of the Member States in the region (Mexico, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Panama) **are actively involved in implementing the portfolio.**

4/7

Commissions of experts directly participate in regional technical execution.

82%

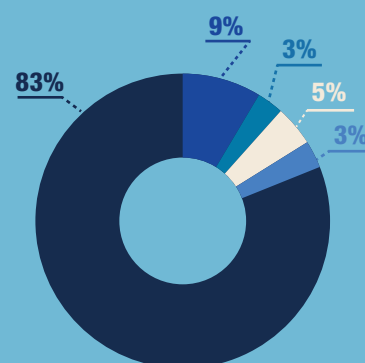
of the Indigenous Peoples' Member Organisations in the region **actively** participate in the portfolio.

95%

of active projects involve Members or Commissions, operating under the "One Programme" approach.

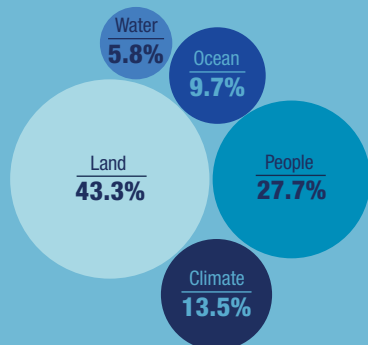
Members by category

- Indigenous Peoples' organisations
- States
- Government agencies
- Subnational governments
- Non-governmental organisations

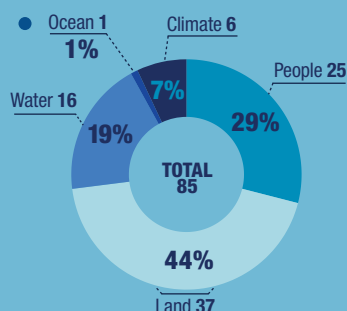




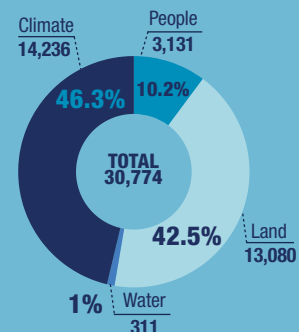
Nature 2030 Contributions (2025)



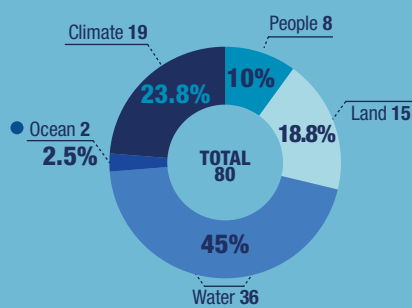
1. Policies, laws and governance mechanisms created, improved or implemented



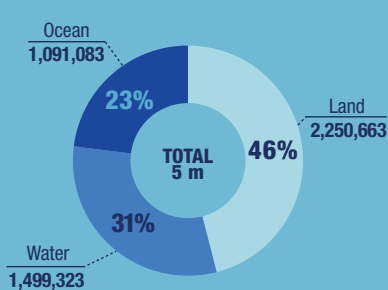
2. People trained



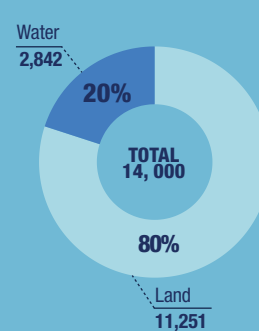
3. Strategies, action plans and guidelines created or improved



4. Hectares protected, managed or conserved



5. Hectares under restoration schemes



Executed projects 2025

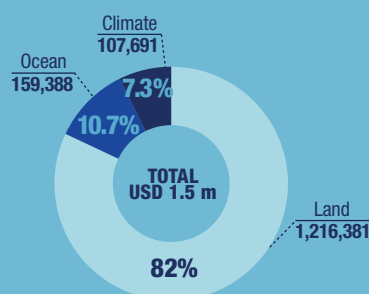
13

Regional projects

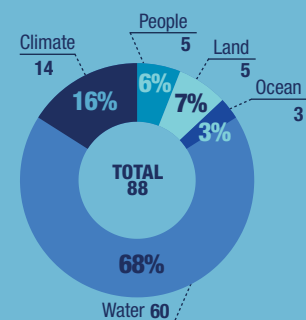
9

National projects

6. Investment in equipment, inputs or infrastructure



7. Contributions to knowledge and science



Budget and investment 2025

Total portfolio

USD 174

million +

Annual budget
2025**USD 28**

million +

Direct investment in territorial leadership

USD 2.7million in signed
contracts

Through small and medium-sized grants



Regional context: Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean

Living expression of global biodiversity

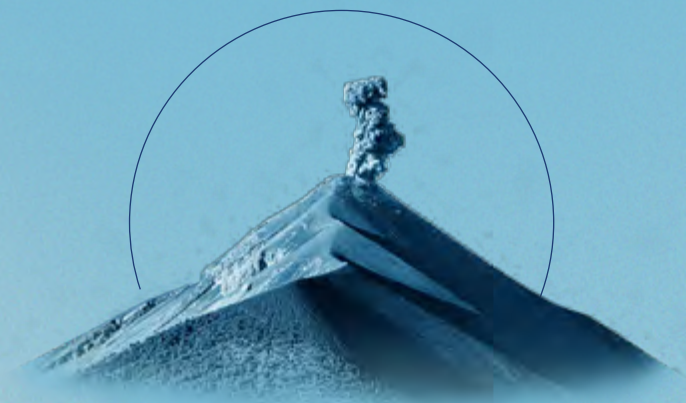
The region of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean plays a key role in the planet's future. Within **less than 2% of the Earth's land area**, it is home to some of the world's most diverse, fragile and globally significant ecosystems, ranging from tropical forests and mountain systems to coral reefs and island landscapes with high levels of endemism.

This region **brings together three critical dimensions for global conservation: exceptional biodiversity, profound cultural richness and high vulnerability to climate change.**

In Mesoamerica and the Caribbean, **Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant communities and local communities inhabit and manage nearly 40%** of forested areas, sustaining knowledge systems that have enabled the conservation of nature across generations. Biological diversity and cultural diversity coexist and reinforce one another.



Regional context



Critical ecosystems

Home to three of the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots.

Marine life

The second longest reef system in the world is located here.

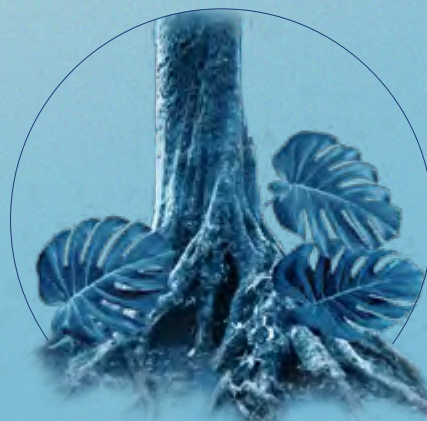


Community management

40% of forested areas are managed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Global biodiversity

The region holds between 7% and 12% of the planet's total biodiversity.





Three pillars, one shared action

Where global vision becomes
regional and territorial action



Lake Atitlán Sololá, Guatemala

©Christopher William Adach

In Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, nature expresses itself with a strength and exuberance essential for planetary balance and health. IUCN's global vision, vast tropical forests, mountain ranges and biological corridors sustain one of the greatest concentrations of biodiversity on Earth and connect ecosystems that transcend political

borders. In this interdependent and complex region, the three pillars of the Union—Members, Commissions and Secretariat—combine their capacities, knowledge and territorial action under the **One Programme** approach, translating the global vision of the IUCN into regional and local action.



01

Members

The regional foundation of the Union. States, national and subnational governments, Indigenous Peoples and civil society organisations define priorities, provide legitimacy and anchor conservation in the territories of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

02

Commissions

A network of experts at the service of the region. They provide standards, evidence and technical guidance to connect the regional agenda with IUCN's global knowledge.

03

Secretariat

Technical capacity that supports regional action. Translating agreements, knowledge and regional priorities into processes, partnerships and measurable impacts at local level.

The implementation of **Nature 2030** in the region is grounded in a core belief: **true conservation only happens when it originates within the heart of the territories and is strengthened through the efforts of their inhabitants.**

In a context where Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant communities manage a significant proportion of forests and high-value ecosystems, the Union promotes approaches that integrate territorial governance, rights, traditional knowledge and scientific evidence to sustain biodiversity over the long term.

Regional priorities **focus on conserving and restoring landscapes and strengthening ecological connectivity.** Maintaining functional biological corridors allows biodiversity, water, while livelihoods to flow beyond national borders, helping ensure the integrity of the land and a balance between conservation, production and human well-being.

In this region, water management is critical to life. IUCN works to safeguard watersheds, wetlands and hydrological systems that sustain biodiversity and reduce risks associated with water and food insecurity. At the same time, actions in oceans and coastal areas strengthen policy frameworks and support investments in the restoration of marine ecosystems, which are essential for the region's ecological and social resilience.

In one of the regions most vulnerable to climate change, climate action is integrated with conservation. IUCN promotes Nature-based Solutions that contribute to mitigation and adaptation, reduce climate risks and strengthen the resilience of ecosystems and communities, aligning biodiversity, development and climate stability.



Members

Aligning regional action with global goals

IUCN membership in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean serves as a regional platform for collective action that brings together territories, countries and decision-making levels in order to contribute to the achievement of global conservation goals.

The 118 Members in the region operate as an interdependent network that combines political authority, technical knowledge and territorial leadership, with the aim of translating IUCN's global frameworks, including Nature 2030, into concrete results.



118 Members articulated to conserve nature

A diverse and complementary regional network that integrates States, national and subnational governments, Indigenous Peoples' organisations and civil society to drive coordinated solutions to the region's environmental challenges.

118 Members in the region

4	States
7	Government agencies
4	Subnational governments
11	Indigenous Peoples' organisations
92	Non-governmental organisations



Regional coordination structures

2 Regional Committees

8 National Committees

A Union in the process of expanding and strengthening

15 New Members incorporated in the last year.

+ Greater participation of subnational governments, key to territorial action.

+ Greater leadership of Indigenous Peoples' Organisations in the regional agenda.

+ More diversity, more collective capacity to respond to global environmental challenges.

What does this membership bring to global ambition?



Leadership and political will to influence regulatory frameworks and public decisions.



Territorial knowledge to adapt global standards to local and regional contexts.



Regional collective action to conserve transboundary landscapes, watersheds and biological corridors.



Diverse voices that integrate science, rights and traditional knowledge into decision-making.

Collaborations for Members

2025

Members recorded

119

collaborations in:

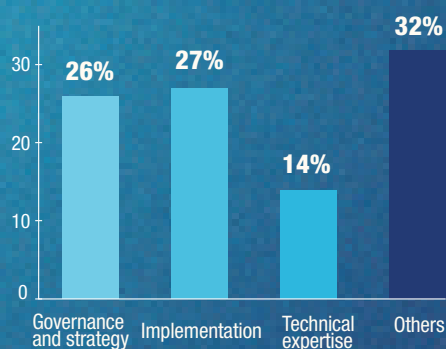
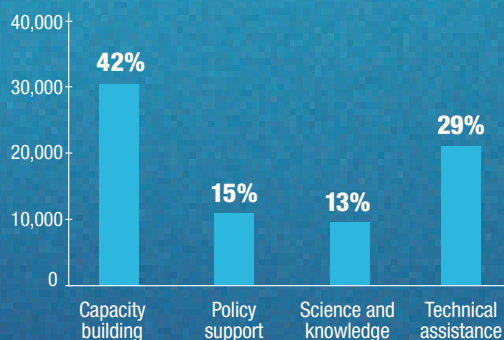
Benefits for Members

2025

Members recorded

229

benefits in:



18 countries

Strategic and coordinated action throughout the region.



Living geography of the Union

Bahamas

One non-governmental organisation.

Bahamas National Trust

NGO

Belize

Three non-governmental organisation.

Association of Protected Areas Management organisations

NGO

Belize Audubon Society

NGO

Protected Areas Conservation Trust

NGO

Bonaire

One non-governmental organisation.

Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance

NGO

Costa Rica

One Member State, one subnational government, 11 national non-governmental organisations.

Asociación Centro Científico Tropical (CCT)

NGO

Asociación Conservacionista de Monteverde (ACM)

NGO

Asociación Conservacionista Misión Tiburón

NGO

Asociación Coordinadora Indígena y Campesina de Agroforestería Comunitaria (ACICAFOC)

NGO

Asociación Costa Rica por Siempre (ACRXS)

NGO

Asociación de Organizaciones del Corredor Biológico Talamanca Caribe

NGO

Centro de Aprendizaje para la Conservación en Sarapiquí (CECOS)

N

NGO

Centro de Rescate de Especies Marinas Amenazadas (CREMA)

NGO

Fundación MarViva

NGO

MIGRAMAR

NGO

Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía (MINAE)

ST

Oficina de Protección del Ambiente - Municipalidad de Curridabat

SN

Preserve Planet

NGO

Cuba

One non-governmental organisation.

Fundación Antonio Núñez Jiménez de la Naturaleza y el Hombre

NGO

Curaçao

One non-governmental organisation.

Caribbean Research & Management of Biodiversity Foundation (CARMABI)

NGO

Dominican Republic

One government agency and eight non-governmental organisations.

Centro para la Conservación y Ecodesarrollo de la Bahía de Samaná y su Entorno (CEBSE)

NGO

Consortio Ambiental Dominicano (CAD)

NGO

Fundación Dominicana de Estudios Marinos (FUNDEMAR)

NGO

Fundación para el Mejoramiento Humano - PROGRESSIO

NGO

Fundación Plenitud

NGO

Fundación Sur Futuro, Inc.

NGO

Grupo Jaragua

NGO

Instituto de Derecho Ambiental de la Rep. Dominicana (IDARD)

NGO

Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales

GA

El Salvador

One Member State and three non-governmental organisations.

Asociación Salvadoreña Pro-salud Rural

NGO

Fondo de la Iniciativa para las Américas (FIAES)

NGO

Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales

ST

Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña

NGO

Guadeloupe

One non-governmental organisation.

SOS Faune Sauvage

NGO



Guatemala

Three government agencies, two subnational governments, six Indigenous Peoples' organisations, and 13 non-governmental organisations.

Alianza de Derecho Ambiental y Agua	NGO
Asociación Ak'Tenamit	IPO
Asociación Amigos del Bosque	NGO
Asociación Balam ONG	NGO
Asociación de Cooperación para el Desarrollo Rural de Occidente (CDRO)	N IPO
Asociación de Desarrollo Productivo y de Servicios Tikonel	IPO
Asociación de Reservas Naturales Privadas de Guatemala (ARNPG)	NGO
Asociación para el Desarrollo Sostenible SINERGIAS	N IPO
Asociación para la Protección de los Recursos Naturales Renovables	NGO
Asociación Programas de Gestión Ambiental Local (ASOPROGAL)	N NGO
Asociación Rescate y Conservación de Vida Silvestre (ARCAS)	NGO
Asociación Sotz'il	IPO
Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (CONAP)	N GA
Fondo para el Sistema Arrecifal Mesoamericano (MAR Fund)	NGO
Fundación Defensores de la Naturaleza	NGO
Fundación Laguna Lachúa (FUNDALACHUA)	IPO
Fundación para el Desarrollo Integral del Hombre y su Entorno CALMECAC	NGO
Fundación para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservación (FUNDAECO)	NGO
Fundación para la Conservación de los Recursos Naturales y Ambiente en Guatemala (FCG)	NGO
Fundación Patrimonio Cultural y Natural Maya PACUNAM	NGO
Instituto Nacional de Bosques (INAB)	GA
Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (MARN)	GA
Municipalidad de Acatenango	N SN
Municipalidad de Antigua Guatemala	N SN

Haiti

One non-governmental organisation.

Fondation pour la Protection de la Biodiversité Marine	NGO
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Honduras

Two government agencies, one Indigenous Peoples' organisation, and 10 non-governmental organisations.

Agencia para el Desarrollo de la Mosquitia (MOPAWI)	IPO
Asociación Ecológica de San Marcos de Ocotepeque (AESMO)	NGO
Asociación para el Manejo Integrado de Cuencas de La Paz y Comayagua (ASOMAINCUPACO)	NGO
Colegio de Profesionales Forestales de Honduras	NGO
Comité para la Defensa y Desarrollo de la Flora y Fauna del Golfo de Fonseca (CODDEFFAGOLF)	NGO
Fundación Hondureña de Ambiente y Desarrollo VIDA	NGO
Fundación para el Desarrollo Empresarial Rural (FUNDER)	NGO
Mancomunidad de Municipios del Parque Nacional Montaña de Celaque (MAPANCE)	NGO
Organización Para El Desarrollo De Corquín (ODECO)	N NGO
Proyecto Aldea Global (PAG)	NGO
Red de Manejo del Bosque Latifoliado de Honduras (REMBLAH)	NGO
Secretaría de Energía, Recursos Naturales y Ambiente (SERNA)	GA
Universidad de Ciencias Forestales	GA

Jamaica

One government agency.

National Environment & Planning Agency	GA
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Mexico

One Member State, one subnational government, two Indigenous Peoples' organisations, one international non-governmental organisation, and 25 national non-governmental organisations.

ALTERNARE A.C.	NGO
Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente (AIDA)	N NGO
Centro Intercultural de Estudios de Desiertos y Océanos (CEDO)	NGO
Centro Latinoamericano de Gestión Ambiental La Mano del Mono	N NGO
Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental (CEMDA)	NGO
Cooperativa AMBIO SC de RL	NGO
Earthgonomic México A.C.	NGO



Ecopil Arte Crea Conciencia A.C.	NGO
Faunam A.C.	NGO
Federación Indígena Empresarial y Comunidades Locales (CIELO)	N IPO
Fondo de Conservación el Triunfo A.C.	NGO
Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza A.C.	NGO
Fondo para la Biodiversidad (CONABIO)	NGO
Fondo para la Comunicación y la Educación Ambiental A.C.	NGO
Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)	IN
Grupo Autónomo para la Investigación Ambiental (GAIA)	NGO
Herpetario de la Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM)	NGO
Hombre Naturaleza A.C.	NGO
Instituto de Derecho Ambiental A.C.	NGO
Instituto de Medio Ambiente y Comunidades Humanas, Universidad de Guadalajara	NGO
Instituto para el Desarrollo Sustentable en Mesoamérica A.C.	NGO
Plataforma Integral de Desarrollo Sustentable (PIDES) C Minds	N NGO
PRONATURA Noreste	NGO
PRONATURA Península de Yucatán	NGO
PRONATURA México	NGO
Red Indígena de Turismo de México (RITA)	N IPO
Reforestamos México A.C.	NGO
Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT)	ST
Secretaría del Medio Ambiente de la Ciudad de México (SEDEMA)	SN
Unidad de Conservación y Desarrollo Forestal Integral Topia	N NGO

Panama

One Member State, two Indigenous Peoples' organisations and nine non-governmental organisations.

Asociación Adopta el Bosque Panamá (ADOPTA)	NGO
Asociación Centro de Estudios y Acción Social Panameño (CEASPA)	NGO
Asociación Nacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (ANCON)	NGO
Centro de Incidencia Ambiental (CIAM)	NGO
Fundación para la Conservación de los Recursos Naturales (NATURA)	NGO

Fundación para la Promoción del Conocimiento Indígena (FPCI)	IPO
Fundación para la Protección del Mar (PROMAR)	NGO
Fundación Parque Nacional Chagres	NGO
Ministerio de Ambiente (MIAMBIENTE)	NGO
Parque Natural Metropolitano	NGO
Red de Mujeres Indígenas sobre Biodiversidad (RMIB-LAC)	N IPO
Sociedad Audubon de Panamá	NGO

Puerto Rico

One non-governmental organisation.

Para la Naturaleza	NGO
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Saint Lucia

One non-governmental organisation.

Saint Lucia National Trust	NGO
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Turks and Caicos Islands

One non-governmental organisation.

Turks and Caicos Reef Fund	NGO
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New Members



National non-governmental organisation



International non-governmental organisation



Member State



Government agency



Subnational government



Indigenous Peoples' organisation





SOLUTIONS IN ACTION

IUCN Membership: a network of solidarity and mutual support

Following Hurricane Melissa on 28 October 2025—one of the most intense cyclones recorded in the Atlantic Ocean since the mid-19th century—**Jamaica suffered severe damage to infrastructure and homes, loss of life, significant impacts on coastal and forest ecosystems**, as well as major economic repercussions on agriculture and tourism.

In response to this critical situation, the network of IUCN Members in the Caribbean mobilised to provide relief support to the island. Para la Naturaleza, an IUCN Member

organisation in Puerto Rico, coordinated and oversaw the shipment of a container of supplies to the **National Environment and Planning Agency**, also an IUCN Member in Jamaica. The initiative included the collection, packing and shipment of supplies to meet basic food needs, as well as essential tools to support recovery efforts.

This response reflects the value of IUCN membership as a connected global community, where organisations from different countries collaborate and support each other in the face of common challenges.

Caribbean Members

© Para la Naturaleza





Manuel Mercado Martin

Security Coordinator at Para la Naturaleza

“In both human and non-human communities, the ability to connect is one of the key factors in recovering from a crisis.”





Commissions

Across Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, **763 experts are part of the seven IUCN Commissions.** This network contributes science, technical expertise and diverse knowledge to support decisions and processes that have a real impact on the ground.

Their role is essential for implementing **Nature 2030** with rigour, fairness and local sensitivity, integrating scientific evidence, regulatory frameworks and Indigenous and local knowledge. Together, the Commissions form a **living knowledge structure** that **connects global policies with solutions applicable to landscapes, ecosystems and communities.**

1 Commission on Education and Communication



90 specialists

Expert Team

2 Commission on Ecosystem Management



90 specialists

Expert Team

3 Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy



71 specialists

Expert Team

4 World Commission on Protected Areas



154 specialists

Expert Team



5 World Commission on Environmental Law



36 specialists

Expert Team

6 Species Survival Commission



361 specialists

Expert Team

7 Climate Action Commission



15 specialists

Expert Team



SOLUTIONS IN ACTION

When law engages with science

The complexity of environmental challenges in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean—from land degradation to growing climate vulnerability—requires responses that go beyond traditional technical specialisation and address both biodiversity loss and the social realities of the region's inhabitants.

For years, many courts across the region have been required to rule on environmental crimes and climate-related cases while facing a structural limitation: **the difficulty of integrating complex scientific knowledge into judicial decisions**. This is where the work of the **IUCN Commissions** takes on strategic relevance; not as theoretical spaces, but as **platforms connecting science and law**.

Through the **World Commission on Environmental Law**, IUCN has promoted an approach that recognises a growing reality: environmental and climate litigation requires more than just legal norms.

It requires **ecosystem understanding, scientific rigour and a rights-based approach** capable of interpreting the law in light of complex environmental contexts.

The synergy between **Members, Commissions and the Secretariat** made it possible to translate decades of knowledge on biodiversity, climate change, **Ecosystem-based Adaptation** and **Nature-based Solutions** into practical tools for judicial practice, geared towards concrete decision-making.

Ibero-American Judicial Summit

© IUCN





Judges 'Voces' workshop

© IUCN

From international recommendation to regional action

This process gained momentum following the recommendation issued in **July 2023 by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change**, who called for strengthening judicial capacities to address climate litigation from a human rights perspective, grounded in a more robust scientific foundation.

In response, IUCN and its **World Commission on Environmental Law** launched a regional capacity-building initiative aimed at judges and justice practitioners across Latin America. The **goal** has been clear from the start: **to bridge the gap between environmental science and judicial decision-making**, particularly in contexts where the impacts of climate change are already affecting fundamental rights.

One space, many trajectories

As part of this process, the **XXII Ibero-American Judicial Summit**, held in Santo Domingo, became a meeting point for judges, prosecutors, scientists and human rights experts. More than **75 justice practitioners from 15 countries** shared experiences, specific cases and common challenges, demonstrating that, although contexts vary, the principles of environmental justice can be shared.

The result is a body of applied knowledge that today underpins manuals, training programmes and new judicial capacity-building initiatives in the region, contributing to the **development of judicial reasoning informed by science and human rights**.

This case shows how **science is beginning to influence judicial rulings** and how the IUCN Commissions facilitate the intersection of knowledge, territory and justice.

This process has been driven by the **VOCES Project: Protecting Rights, Conserving Territories**, with support from the **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency**.

For **Dr Christina Voigt, Chair of the World Commission on Environmental Law**, this approach reflects the strength of IUCN:

“The ability to combine deep scientific expertise with comprehensive legal experience ensures that knowledge informs real-world decisions rather than remaining purely theoretical.”



Secretariat

People, presence and technical capacity in service of territories

The IUCN Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean is the technical driving force behind the Nature 2030 Programme in the region.

More than just an operational structure, it is a team of people working from within and alongside local communities, connecting science, public policy and local knowledge to ensure that the Union is a close, relevant and transformative presence.

With more than 35 years of experience, ORMACC supports Members, communities, Indigenous Peoples, governments and partners in implementing solutions that respond to the real challenges of biodiversity, climate and human well-being.

What does the Secretariat do?

From global strategy to concrete solutions

Drives and accompanies processes that integrate conservation, rights and sustainable development. Its work catalyzes Nature-based Solutions (NbS) as a key axis to address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and social vulnerability.

What makes the Secretariat possible?

Technical capacity to sustain the regional ambition



Implementation of the Nature 2030 Programme.



Coordination with Members, Commissions, and allies.



Project management in terrestrial, coastal, and marine territories.



Advocacy in biodiversity, climate, water, governance, and rights.



Human talent and inclusive leadership

Regional presence and territorial proximity

Close to the territories, where change happens

Closeness to local actors is key to driving sustainable transformations. Therefore, the Secretariat deploys its work from a flexible and connected regional presence:

- **Regional Office - San Jose, Costa Rica.**
- **National Offices in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.**
- **Project offices in different countries across the region.**

People at the center of action

154

professionals dedicated to conservation and sustainable development.

93

women

reflecting inclusive and diverse leadership.

61

men

Multidisciplinary team combining science, policy, territorial management and community work.



Guatemalan Quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*)
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Action and impact in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean

Projects connecting territories, people and the future

In Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, conservation does not happen in the abstract; it takes place in living landscapes, in communities that care for forests and water sources, in corridors that connect ecosystems and in public decisions that shape the region's future. There, IUCN brings its technical expertise, network of partners and accumulated experience to bear.

The **2025 Project Portfolio** reflects this approach: initiatives that cross borders, strengthen shared landscapes and watersheds, protect key species and ecosystems and consolidate more equitable and inclusive governance models. Each project is part of a broader effort: to build, from within the region, real responses to global environmental challenges.

Presence that translates into projects

From local to regional influence.

22 active projects

13 regional

9 national

Resources aligned with impact

Sustained investment for long-term solutions.

USD 174 million + total portfolio

Annual budget 2025:
USD 28 million +



A global network driving results

Diverse cooperation, shared objectives.

55% of the portfolio
funded by multilateral
organisations.

45% of the portfolio
funded by bilateral
cooperations.



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Sweden
Sverige



Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



Bundesministerium
für Umwelt, Klimaschutz, Naturschutz
und nukleare Sicherheit



WORLD
RESOURCES
INSTITUTE



**More than projects,
a system in motion**

The 2025 Portfolio articulates biodiversity, climate and human well-being, combining territorial action with regional advocacy and high-level alliances.

Investing in nature is investing in resilience, equity and the future.



Regional projects

Environmental challenges do not recognise borders.

Regional projects address shared challenges and make it possible to scale solutions, align national agendas and generate cross-border impact.

Through collaborative approaches, these initiatives leverage the diversity of contexts as a strategic advantage.

People |
 Water |
 Land |
 Ocean |
 Climate

1 People Ocean

People / Ocean

Closing the Caribbean Plastic Tap

Drives practical and effective solutions to stop plastic pollution at its source. It acts in small island States of the Caribbean, protecting key marine ecosystems and transforming the economies that depend on them.

Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.



Learn more

Donor

Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS).

2 People Land

People / Land

COLOURS — Communities, Local Outcomes and Regional Science

In the Caribbean, COLOURS focuses on strengthening Regional Biodiversity Centers as a tool to support the effective and equitable implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Caribbean Island + Belize



Learn more

Donor

European Commission, Directorate-General for International Partnerships

3 People Land

People / Land

Biodiversity Programme Linking the Central American Landscape

In the Caribbean, COLOURS focuses on strengthening Regional Biodiversity Centers as a tool to support the effective and equitable implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and El Salvador



Learn more

Donor

KfW German Development Bank



4



People / Land

Scaling up Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) Measures in Rural Latin America—EbA LAC

To address the high climate vulnerability of rural communities and ecosystems, EbA LAC implements Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) measures through innovative solutions, strengthening governance, capacities, financing and integrating EbA into climate planning. It operates at local, national and regional levels, connecting nature, livelihoods, and public policies.

Guatemala,
Costa Rica
and Ecuador



Learn more

Donor

German Agency for International
Cooperation (GIZ)

5



People / Climate / Land

Flagship: Promote the Restoration of Productive Ecosystems in the Central American Dry Corridor

In one of the most climate-vulnerable territories in the region, this flagship project drives the restoration of productive ecosystems in the Dry Corridor as a basis for climate resilience and food security. From a regional action, it promotes incentives, governance strengthening and sustainable solutions in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, aligned with the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

Honduras,
Guatemala and
El Salvador



Learn more

Donor

Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations (FAO)

6



People / Ocean

Biodiversity and Protected Areas management—BIOPAMA II

BIOPAMA II strengthens the management and governance of protected areas and key landscapes, connecting strategic information, monitoring and financing to ensure long-term conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Bahamas,
Barbados,
Belize, Jamaica,
Dominican
Republic and
Saint Lucia



Learn more

Donor

European Commission, DG
International Partnerships

7



Land / Water/ Ocean

Achieving 30x30 and Recognizing Fair and Effective Protected and Conserved Areas through the IUCN Green List Standard

The IUCN Green List, managed regionally by the regional office, promotes effective, equitable, and transparent management standards aligned with the Global Biodiversity Framework. With regional reach, the program strengthens governance, integrates Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures, and expands collaboration between countries in the region to scale up real impacts towards 2030.

Mexico, Central
America and the
Caribbean



Learn more

Donor

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

8



People / Land

Regional Coordination, Knowledge Exchange and Support Project for the Critical Forest Biome of Mesoamerica

Primary forests in Mesoamerica face increasing pressure. The project drives regional coordination and shared knowledge management to strengthen their governance, conservation, and restoration, protecting their value for biodiversity and communities. From Mexico to Panama, it builds a regional response to safeguard one of the region's most critical forest biomes.

El Salvador,
Guatemala,
Honduras, Mexico,
and Panama



Learn more

Donor

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

9



People / Land

Protection of Natural and Cultural Resources Selva Maya II

The Maya Forest faces increasing pressures on its forests and cultural heritage, jeopardizing one of the most important biocultural landscapes in Mesoamerica. The project drives an integrated and participatory management that strengthens the conservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources, prioritizing protected areas and key connectivity corridors. In Belize, Guatemala, and Mexico, it articulates 33 priority areas to maintain and restore intact forests, aligned with the Comprehensive Strategy of the Maya Forest 2030.

Belize, Guatemala,
and Mexico



Learn more

Donor

KfW German Development Bank



10



People / Ocean

GENERA+: Food Security, Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Biodiversity in Central America

Food insecurity and natural resource degradation threaten the resilience of rural communities in the Central American Dry Corridor. GENERA+ drives the sustainable management of biodiverse productive landscapes through Nature-based Solutions that integrate conservation, restoration and sustainable production. In El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, the project brings together actors and financing to strengthen food security and climate resilience in the territories.

El Salvador,
Honduras and
Guatemala



Learn more

Donor

KfW German Development Bank

11



People

Waving Networks for Conservation, Rights and Environmental Justice for the Great Forests of Mesoamerica

Belize, Costa Rica,
El Salvador,
Guatemala,
Honduras, Mexico
and Panama.



The Great Forests of Mesoamerica sustain climate stability and regional biodiversity, but they face increasing pressures and risks for those who protect them. This project weaves networks for conservation, rights and environmental justice, strengthening forest governance and the protection of environmental defenders under the framework of the Escazú Agreement. At a regional scale, it boosts the leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local organizations so that conservation advances with safety and participation in seven countries of the region.

Donor

European Union and Swedish International
Development Cooperation Agency (ASDI)



Learn more

12



Water / Climate

Rational Use of the Caribbean Wetlands for Climate Change Mitigation and Conservation of their Ecosystem Services

Caribbean wetlands, essential for biodiversity and climate resilience, face rapid degradation. The project strengthens their management through vulnerability assessments in Ramsar sites and scientific evidence that guides public decisions. At the regional level, it drives the wise use of wetlands in national policies, protecting the ecosystem services that sustain coastal communities and economies in the Caribbean.

Antigua and Barbuda,
Belize, Cuba,
Dominican Republic,
Grenada, Jamaica,
Saint Lucia and
Suriname.



Learn more

Donor

International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the Federal
Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation,
Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection of Germany.

13



People / Land

VOCES: Advancing towards Effective Conservation and Territorial Management with a Rights-based Approach, Strengthening Regional Indigenous Cooperation in Latin America

Ecuador, Honduras,
Peru + regional



In many territories of Latin America, conservation continues to advance without fully integrating the rights and voices of Indigenous Peoples. VOCES strengthens Indigenous leadership, especially of women and youth, by linking human rights, territorial management and Nature-based Solutions for more just and effective conservation. From the regional level, it drives Indigenous cooperation networks that connect territories, amplify advocacy and establish rights as the foundation for protecting biodiversity and livelihoods.

Donor

Swedish International Development
Cooperation Agency (ASDI)



Learn more





National projects

Effective conservation is rooted in the local context.

National projects translate global commitments into local realities, responding precisely to the unique ecological, social and political circumstances of each country.

● People
 ● Water
 ● Land
 ● Ocean
 ● Climate

1

Land / Climate / People

Preparatory Support for the Development of Instruments that Facilitate the Restoration Ecosystems and Agroecosystems through the Implementation of Environmental incentives for Climate Resilience in El Salvador

The degradation and high climate vulnerability threaten food security and ecological stability in El Salvador, where most ecosystems sustain national production. The project strengthens institutional capacities and designs environmental incentives and financial instruments that enable the restoration of key ecosystems and agroecosystems. It also creates the technical and governance conditions to advance towards the country's goal of restoring one million hectares and turning restoration into an engine of climate resilience and lasting well-being.

El Salvador.



Learn more

Donor Green Climate Fund

2

People / Land / Water / Climate

Strengthening Livelihood Resilience to Climate Change in the Upper Watersheds of the Guatemalan Highlands

Prolonged droughts and extreme floods threaten water and food security in the Guatemalan Highlands, one of the territories most vulnerable to climate change. The project drives smart watershed management through Nature-based Solutions, community restoration, and strategic climate information to strengthen water recharge and agricultural productivity. In the upper watersheds of the Highlands, it transforms adaptation into concrete territorial policy and a scalable resilience model for other vulnerable areas of the country.

Guatemala



Donor

Green Climate Fund
and Korea International
Cooperation Agency (KOICA)



3

People / Land

National Plastic Action Partnership Guatemala

Plastic pollution threatens key ecosystems and the country's competitiveness. The National Plastic Action Partnership Guatemala creates an innovative alliance between government, the private sector, academia and civil society to transform the national plastics system through a Roadmap based on evidence and equity. The project positions Guatemala as a regional reference in the circular economy, reducing waste leakage and generating opportunities for women, youth and Indigenous Peoples in the transition towards a more resilient model.

Guatemala



Learn more

Donor World Economic Forum



4

People / Climate

Promotion of Rights and Disaster Risk Reduction in Indigenous and Afro-descendant Territories of Honduras

Pressure on land tenure and high exposure to climate disasters deepen the vulnerability of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants in Honduras. The project strengthens territorial governance with a rights-based approach, promotes the recognition of land tenure, and integrates early warning systems with cultural relevance, placing women and youth at the center of the action. It also consolidates safer and more autonomous territories, connecting legal defense, traditional knowledge and risk management to increase community climate resilience.

Honduras



Learn more

Donor

Bread for the World

5

People / Land / Ocean

Community-based Marine-Coastal Biodiversity Conservation in Honduras

The degradation of marine-coastal ecosystems and pressure on livelihoods threaten biodiversity and the well-being of coastal communities in Honduras. The project integrates Nature-based Solutions with a human rights and gender justice approach, placing women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants at the center of governance and promoting sustainable economies such as artisanal fishing, cocoa and community tourism.

Honduras



Learn more

Donor

Global Affairs Canada

6

People / Land / Ocean

Sustainable Financing for New Natural Protected Areas in Mexico

The expansion of the Natural Protected Areas system in Mexico faces the structural challenge of ensuring stable financing and sufficient management capacities for protected area designations to translate into effective conservation. Through a strategic alliance with the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas and the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature, the project responds to this challenge by strengthening financial and institutional architecture, guaranteeing recurring resources, critical infrastructure and management excellence for new federal natural protected areas. The initiative consolidates ecological connectivity, protects natural heritage and contributes directly to achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework targets and the country's climate resilience.

Mexico



Learn more

Donor

KfW German Development Bank

7

People / Climate

Territorial Planning and Financial Innovation to Increase Mexico's Resilience to Climate Change—SABERES

In Mexico, where 85% of producers are small farmers highly vulnerable to climate change, territorial planning and access to financing for adaptation remain structural gaps. The SABERES project integrates Ecosystem-based Adaptation in the agricultural, livestock and forestry sectors, strengthening territorial planning instruments, promoting resilient productive practices and enabling innovative public and private financing mechanisms. With intervention in nine priority states, the initiative reduces the social and environmental vulnerability of the rural sector and promotes a functional landscape approach and contributes to the fulfillment of Nationally Determined Contributions, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Mexico



Learn more

Donor

International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection of Germany and World Resources Institute

8

People / Land / Climate / Water

Improving Environmental Management through Sustainable Land Management in Saint Kitts and Nevis

Following the closure of the sugar industry, the transformation of the economic model in Saint Kitts and Nevis redefined land use and increased pressure on high-value ecosystems. The project redirects this transition through integrated environmental planning, incorporating biodiversity conservation and Sustainable Land Management in key sectors and promoting climate-smart agriculture. The initiative restores degraded forest landscapes, strengthens environmental governance and consolidates a development model that generates economic opportunities while protecting ecosystem services and globally important biodiversity.

Saint Kitts and Nevis



Learn more

Donor

GEF and United Nations Environment Programme

9

People

Strengthening of Access and Benefit-sharing Policies and Institutional Frameworks through Demonstrative Models in Saint Lucia

In Saint Lucia, the absence of consolidated operational frameworks for Access and Benefit-Sharing limits the effective implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and the fair utilization of its biodiversity. The project strengthens the legislative and institutional framework, linking science, public policy and community participation through demonstrative models based on genetic resources. The initiative consolidates sustainable commercial protocols, ensures the equitable sharing of benefits and positions biodiversity as an engine for well-being, sovereignty and green economic recovery in the country.

Saint Lucia



Learn more

Donor

GEF and United Nations Environment Programme



Local impact, global action: channelling multilateral environmental funds in the region

In 2025, IUCN strengthened its role in the region as an implementing agency for multilateral donors linked to the Global Environmental Conventions, working alongside governments, civil society and Indigenous Peoples and channelling resources to the ecosystems and communities that need them most.

Protecting the irreplaceable: critical forests of Mesoamerica

The **Integrated Programme for Critical Forest biomes in Mesoamerica, funded by the Global Environment Facility, seeks to reverse forest loss in the region** by strengthening regional integration, promoting sustainable value chains and fostering the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in decision-making.

The Programme supports five national projects and one regional project. The five national projects implemented in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama, by IUCN and FAO, will intervene in the Trifinio forests, the Selva Maya, the Honduran Moskitia and the Darien. The regional project, implemented by IUCN, will scale up the efforts of the national projects to a regional level, maximising their impact by defining regional priorities, as well as developing capacities and synergies to improve the conservation of these key ecosystems.

During 2025, memoranda of understanding were signed with the countries and implementation agreements were finalised with the executing partners.

The regional Programme was launched in June 2025 in Petén, Guatemala, by the Ministries of the Environment of Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama; the Central American Commission on Environment and Development; the Central American Agricultural Council; the Trifinio Plan Tri-national Commission; the National Commission on Protected Areas of Mexico; the states of Yucatán, Campeche and Quintana Roo; Mexico's National Forestry Commission and the programme's implementing partners.

At this event, environmental, agricultural and forestry authorities from the region reviewed progress and strategic challenges in the conservation of these biomes and reaffirmed their existing commitment—both at the national and regional levels—to forest conservation as a fundamental pillar of action for the region's sustainable development.

Learn more:



Protecting the irreplaceable: Mexico and Central America join forces to conserve critical forest biomes with a new USD 65 million investment from the GEF



The Programme's target in figures:

5 million hectares of protected areas with improved management effectiveness.

1.3 million hectares with improved landscape management.

61,000 hectares of high-priority lands for connectivity restored.

176,500 people directly benefited, **79,500** of whom are women.

58 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) mitigated.

Critical Forest Biomes Programme Launch

© IUCN





“

Creating synergies among allies, as well as strengthening regional cooperation, is essential to ensuring a more integrated, efficient and coherent action across the region. ”

Pedro Álvarez-Icaza
Head of Mexico's National
Commission of Protected Areas



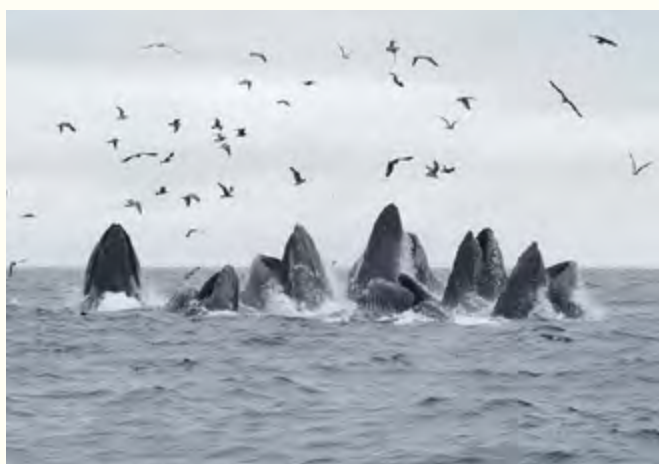
Sustainable cities and the blue economy: new priorities for the region



Guatemala City

© Kelly pexels

As part of the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) **Integrated Sustainable Cities Programme**, IUCN will implement the project **"Towards Resilient Cities in Guatemala: Addressing Biodiversity Loss and Recovery through Integrated Urban Planning and Development."** This initiative will promote transformative changes in urban systems through urban planning and integrated land-use policies and by mobilising investment for sustainable, nature-positive and climate-resilient urban development, with specific actions in Guatemala City and Huatenango. The project was officially launched by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and IUCN in January 2025 and its design phase has already been completed, allowing the implementation phase to begin.



Humpback Whale
(*Megaptera novaeangliae*)

© James Maughn (CC BY-NC)

Likewise, design work has been completed on the project **"Blue Corridor: Connectivity for the Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Marine Ecosystems of Global Importance in the Southern Caribbean of Costa Rica"**, funded by the **Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBF)**, whose objective is the creation and effective, sustainable management of a marine corridor between the Cahuita National Park and the **Gandoca-Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge**.



Small- and medium-sized grants

Direct investment in territorial leadership

Regional transformation is also driven by direct investments on the ground. Through its small- and medium-sized grant mechanism, IUCN channels resources directly to first- and second-level organisations, strengthening local capacities, community leadership and Nature-based Solutions.

In 2025, this financial instrument had mobilised more than **USD 2.7 million** in signed contracts, distributed across 12 small and **12 medium-sized grants**, consolidating a network of **24 partner organisations** that are currently implementing concrete actions in their territories.

Beyond the numbers, the strategic value of these grants lies in their focus:

13 beneficiary organisations belong to Indigenous Peoples.

8 are women's organisations.

6 organisations are youth-led.

3 organisations are IUCN Members

(CALMECAC, CDRO and SOTZIL), which strengthens the link between membership and on-the-ground action.

In 2025 alone, small grants directly benefited **16,850 people, 75% of whom were women** and **98% belonged to Indigenous Peoples**.

The mechanism prioritises those who have historically sustained nature with fewer resources and less formal recognition.

In 2025, the **VOCES** and **Altiplano Resiliente** projects completed their grant cycles, consolidating lessons learned that now inform new programmes. At the same time, other IUCN initiatives such as **Selva Maya II, GENERA+, Tejiendo Redes and Sustainable Financing for New Protected Natural Areas** launched new calls for proposals that will begin implementation in 2026, thereby **expanding the scope** of the mechanism towards trinational **conservation, food security, the circular economy** and the defence of territories.

The true value of the mechanism is best understood in the territories. Below we present two stories that marked 2025.





SOLUTIONS IN ACTION

Territorial governance becomes effective conservation

Indigenous communities in South and Central America face multiple threats that endanger their territories, cultures and ways of life. Compounding this is the lack of effective recognition of their territorial rights and their limited participation in decision-making processes.

In this context, the regional project **“VOCES: Advancing towards effective conservation and territorial management with a rights-based approach: strengthening regional Indigenous cooperation in Latin America”**, funded by the **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency** and implemented by the **International Union for Conservation of Nature**, based on a clear premise: **there is no effective conservation without rights and no guaranteed rights without strengthened territorial governance.**

To make this possible, the project created the Small Grants Mechanism, an instrument designed to place resources directly in the hands of Indigenous and community

organisations, enabling them to lead processes of territorial defence, communication, protection of defenders and economic empowerment based on their own vision.

With the support of the Mechanism, Indigenous communities in Ecuador, Peru and Honduras strengthened the defence of their territories through comprehensive processes that integrate training in community surveillance, the use of monitoring technologies and the development of collective protection agendas. These actions were complemented by the strengthening of community communication networks, the production of content in Indigenous languages and outreach strategies to highlight threats through the voices of the peoples themselves. At the same time, economic sustainability initiatives based on ancestral knowledge, such as fish farming, meliponiculture and traditional ceramics, were promoted, fostering autonomy, women's leadership and development models that integrate environmental conservation, cultural identity and community well-being.



The numbers speak for themselves, but the change runs deeper.

Between 2024 and 2025

11 organisations implemented projects in **Ecuador, Peru and Honduras.**

1,181 people participated directly, of whom **1,174 were Indigenous Peoples.**

48.89% of participants were **women.**

19 Indigenous Peoples or nationalities participated directly in the process.

58 Indigenous organisations coordinated their efforts through action networks.

As a result of the process:

11 governance and protection tools were developed.

6 community communication tools were created.

65 workshops were held to strengthen territorial capacities.

The Small Grant Mechanism footprint

The Small Grants Mechanism did not operate as a simple fund. It functioned as a catalyst for governance.

It enabled Indigenous communities to:

Design their own territorial defence tools.

Strengthen women's and youth leadership.

Generate sustainable production models.

Build regional Indigenous cooperation networks.



La Moskitia

© Priscilla Mora

The impact was structural:

strengthened community protocols, territorial monitoring, protection of environmental defenders, production of Indigenous narratives and consolidation of regional Indigenous networks.



Heily Karina López, member of MIMAT, Miskito Indigenous women's organisation, Honduras.

“Knowing that our culture does not make us any less. Being women and belonging to an Indigenous People means always being at the forefront to defend our rights, our culture and our worldview.”

Yolanny Cooper, President of MIMAT, Miskito Indigenous women's organisation, Honduras.

“Now we are the ones leading the change.”





SOLUTIONS IN ACTION

Miskitu women and the defence of the Karataska Lagoon System

In **Puerto Lempira**, in the department of **Gracias a Dios**, the largest coastal lagoon in Honduras sustains the livelihoods, food security and identity of the **Miskitu people**. The **Karataska Lagoon System** is a strategic ecosystem not only for Honduras but for all of Central America. However, for years, the lack of waste management turned its waters into a direct receptor of solid waste.

Environmental degradation affects fisheries, aquifers and public health, becoming a threat to territorial autonomy.

With support from the **Small Grants Mechanism of the VOCES project**, the Indigenous organisation **Mairin Indian Miskitu Asla Takanka** launched the project “**Miskitas in Action: Waste management for the sustainability of the Karataska Lagoon System.**”

What began as a waste management initiative became a women-led governance process.

Concrete results:

56 women and **4 men** participated directly.

105 families receive community waste collection services.

A community composting facility was built to transform waste into fertilizer.

Educational campaigns were carried out in schools and local media.

Formal community commitments were established for integrated waste management.

But the deepest change was symbolic and political: Miskitu women assumed public leadership in environmental governance.

Waste collection became social infrastructure; environmental management became an exercise in autonomy and territorial sovereignty.

Learn more:



**Small Grants Mechanism -
VOCES project**



SOLUTIONS IN ACTION

Climate adaptation from the heart of the territory

In the western highlands of Guatemala, where valleys, volcanoes, hills and lakes form one of the country's most emblematic cultural and natural landscapes, Maya Indigenous Peoples are demonstrating that nature is a key ally in confronting climate change. This territory, which covers 18% of the country and constitutes the living space of Maya culture, is also one of the areas most vulnerable to extreme climate events such as prolonged droughts, frost and floods.

Faced with this challenge, the project **Resilient Highlands: Strengthening Livelihood Resilience to Climate Change in the Upper Watersheds of the Guatemalan Highlands** promoted a transformative response based on local action, strengthened livelihoods and Ecosystem-based Adaptation. Through an approach that integrates gender

and social inclusion, community organisations have found in Nature-based Solutions an effective pathway to adapt to increasingly adverse climate conditions while protecting and restoring the ecosystems on which they depend.

To mobilise this ambition, the project implemented a direct financing scheme that allowed resources to be grounded in territorial management. With an investment of USD 2,345,200 from the **Korea International Cooperation Agency**, the initiative exceeded the restoration targets projected for the region. In total, the project's Steering Committee, chaired by the **Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources**, awarded 53 grants to 45 community organisations, aimed at ecosystem conservation and the diversification of biodiverse productive systems.

Resilient Highlands Project

© IUCN





Climate governance from the territory

Key results

More than **USD 2.3 million invested** with support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency.

53 projects implemented by community organisations for climate change adaptation.

45 community organisations strengthened.

More than **3,000 hectares** under **Ecosystem-based Adaptation** measures.

More than **30,000 people benefited** from the Maya K'iche', Kaqchikel and Mam Indigenous Peoples.

The grants were selected by a **Steering Committee chaired by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala**, with scientific guidance from the **IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management**.

Beyond financing, the organisations received **technical support from IUCN and from the Fundación para la Conservación de los Recursos Naturales y Ambiente en Guatemala**, an IUCN Member, strengthening their capacity to implement EbA with verifiable criteria.

Adaptation ceased to be an isolated action and became a territorial policy articulated among government, international cooperation, science and community organisations.

Adaptation becomes practice

Organisations implemented:

Agroforestry systems.

Integrated watershed management.

Soil and water conservation.

Integration of early warning systems.

Productive diversification with a gender perspective.

More than adaptation, planning the future

Resilient Highlands demonstrates that climate finance can be structured with a territorial approach without compromising technical standards. The project established a network of organisations with technical expertise, institutional cohesion and local climate governance capacity. In this way, a climate financing model was consolidated that places local communities and Indigenous Peoples at the centre of the solution, demonstrating that local action, rooted in nature and culture, is key to building resilience to climate change in one of Guatemala's most vulnerable regions.



Guadalupe Zapeta, Asociación de Desarrollo Integral de Guatemala

“As a women’s organisation, we were able to establish 40 hectares of agroforestry systems and join the early warning system in six communities, directly benefiting a total of 300 people.”

Sangjin Dong, Korea International Cooperation Agency, Director

“We support rural communities in building a more resilient future for everyone.”

Learn more:



Small Grants Mechanism
Resilient Highlands Project

From Antigua
to Abu Dhabi:
the Union's governance
in action

03

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112th meeting of the IUCN Council, Guatemala 2025

For the first time in more than 75 years of history, the IUCN Council, the Union's highest governing body, convened in Latin America.

The Council guides the Union's leadership, oversees its performance and charts the course towards the World Conservation Congress. At its 112th meeting, discussions focused on key decisions for the Union's institutional future and for international conservation priorities.

It was a moment of strategic clarity on how conservation must respond to the climate crisis and biodiversity loss through science, cooperation and a long-term vision.

A key achievement for the region

The fact that this meeting took place in Guatemala held profound significance. The region comprising Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean is home to some of the planet's most strategic ecosystems while also facing structural climate, water and social challenges. Here, where biological corridors, ancestral cultures and nature-dependent economies converge, the management of these ecosystems is woven into the region's social and productive fabric. This experience enriched the Council's discussions and served as a reminder that the Nature 2030 Programme only makes sense when it translates into concrete action.

The decision to hold the Council in Central America reflects years of technical positioning, a well-established regional presence and the coordination efforts of IUCN and its constituents in the region.

IUCN Council - Guatemala

© Giulia Clerici - IUCN





“

Hosting the IUCN Council in Guatemala is a milestone that reaffirms our region's capacity to lead global environmental dialogue.

Mesoamerica is not only a biological bridge; it is a laboratory for Nature-based Solutions and an example of how shared governance among States, civil society and Indigenous Peoples can chart the path towards the sustainability the world urgently needs.

”

Úrsula Parrilla
**Regional Director, IUCN Mexico,
Central America and the Caribbean**



During the visit, the Council held meetings with national authorities, including the President of the Republic of Guatemala and representatives of the Congress, at a time when the country was making progress on key decisions related to its environmental agenda; these included new legislation and the strengthening of marine protected areas.

In a ceremony symbolising the connection between local commitment and global responsibility, the Municipality of Antigua Guatemala presented the keys of the city to IUCN President Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak and Director General Dr Grethel Aguilar.



IUCN President & Antigua Mayor

© Antigua Municipality

Razan Al Mubarak, President, International Union for Conservation of Nature

“This city has inspired us. It has demonstrated that commitment to sustainability and innovation can coexist with the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, showing the world how local leadership can drive global action.”

Grethel Aguilar, Director General, International Union for Conservation of Nature

“Guatemala is an extraordinary country that reminds us why we work tirelessly for nature. Holding this session here strengthens ties with our Members and reaffirms that the solutions emerging from Mesoamerica are essential to the global agenda.”



Giulia Clerici - ©IUCN

Looking towards Abu Dhabi

The 112th meeting laid out a clear roadmap towards the 2025 World Conservation Congress. The events in Guatemala linked the Union's current operations with its long-term vision.

In a context that demands measurable results and effective cooperation, the Council session in Latin America reaffirmed confidence in the region's ability to help shape international environmental decisions.

With this conviction, the Union entered 2025 with a shared vision and a clear direction. The next step would be to bring that vision to a broader arena for dialogue, validation and collective decision-making: the World Conservation Congress. This was a turning point that propelled the region onto the global stage.



Antigua Municipal Council

© Antigua Municipality



World Conservation Congress Abu Dhabi 2025

The global stage of environmental governance

The World Conservation Congress is the IUCN's premier forum for deliberation, decision-making and public outreach. It brings together governments, civil society organisations, Indigenous Peoples, the private sector, the scientific community and multilateral institutions to chart the collective course of conservation.

In 2025, the Congress was held in Abu Dhabi, bringing together more than 10,000 in-person participants from 203 countries, and cementing IUCN's role as the most influential platform for environmental governance.

**The power
of the Union:
The global
mandate of
Abu Dhabi
2025**

**An
unprecedented
assembly to
redefine our
relationship with
the planet.**

1 The scale of our influence

+10,000
participants

+1,300
sessions

+140
display stands

+1,000
members

148
resolutions



2

Strategic priorities of the Abu Dhabi Action Plan

Resilient action:

Scale up conservation with adaptive capacity in a changing environment.

Equity and justice:

Place rights and inclusion at the center of every environmental agreement.

Innovation and leadership:

Foster disruptive solutions for the most complex challenges of our era.

Risk mitigation:

Reduce the threats of climate overshoot through science-based solutions.

Nature-positive economies:

Accelerate the transition towards societies that value and regenerate natural capital.

3

The impact of our voice in the world

+210
million
people

Total reach of our
digital narrative



30,000
mentions



Presence in the world's
most influential media.

CNN

BBC

NYT

1.87
million
impressions



Consolidation of IUCN
as the global technical
reference.



IUCN
World
Conservation
Congress
Abu Dhabi 2025



The 2025 World Conservation Congress established a renewed strategic framework to address the climate crisis and the accelerating loss of biodiversity. The agreements reached provide the Union with a solid foundation for implementing solutions based on science, cooperation and inclusive governance.

Key outcomes include:

Strategic Vision 2045

Unite for Nature on the Path to 2045. A two-decade commitment to address the drivers of nature loss, as well as to transform systems, values and economies on a global scale.

Work Programme 2026—2029

The operational framework that will guide the Union's collective action, strengthening the relationship between nature, development and strategic economic sectors.

Normative and Ethical Mandate

The adoption of 148 resolutions by the Members' Assembly, including advances in synthetic biology and the recognition of ecocide, consolidates IUCN's role as a technical and ethical guide.



The Americas Pavilion

When territorial leadership becomes global action

The path towards the 2025 World Conservation Congress was built on regional milestones that strengthened the collective voice of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

In April 2024, the **Regional Conservation Forum** enabled the regional membership to reach a consensus on technical and governance priorities that would be brought to the global stage. This process culminated in **January 2025** with the **historic 112th meeting of the IUCN Council in Antigua Guatemala**, where the Union's highest governing body defined its strategic direction in Latin America for the first time in more than 75 years.

Building on this foundation, the Abu Dhabi Congress served as the venue where this regional vision was fully integrated into the Union's global agenda.

The shared ambition of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean was reflected at the 2025 World Conservation Congress as a proven capacity to translate territorial priorities into global outcomes.

In Abu Dhabi, the region demonstrated its ability to mobilise financing, innovate conservation frameworks and consolidate

processes that increase resilience, improve governance and strengthen local economies.

One of the central milestones was the **official launch** of the **Forest Action Facility**, created in **2024** by **IUCN and the KfW German Development Bank**. With an **initial allocation of €19 million from Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development**, the Forest Action Facility represents a new scale of financing for forest and landscape restoration in Latin America, beginning in Central America and Ecuador. With the support of the **Organization of American States**, the initiative **strengthens the role of Indigenous Peoples** and local communities as central actors in restoration.

This regional ambition was also reflected in high-impact policy advances. During the Congress, **Panama's Minister of Environment, Juan Carlos Navarro, signed the ministerial resolution formally recognising Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures in the country**. This milestone sets a precedent for other governments in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean, expanding conservation beyond traditional protected areas and contributing to the **global 30x30 target**.

This initiative was complemented by the presentation of the results of the **BIOPAMA Programme**—which, after more than a **decade of implementation, has strengthened biodiversity governance in the Caribbean**. Through data-driven tools, regional observatories and small funding mechanisms, BIOPAMA has helped reduce gaps in knowledge, financing and institutional capacity, transforming technical information into concrete action for communities and local institutions.

Learn more:



Connected by nature: The Americas Pavilion stands out at the Congress



Voices from governance

The implications of the World Conservation Congress extend beyond formal agreements and are also reflected in the expert perspectives of those directly involved in the Union's governance. The following interviews feature strategic reflections from councillors and regional leaders who, drawing on their diverse backgrounds, interpret the significance of Abu Dhabi for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

Their voices offer a complementary perspective on how global decisions translate into regional priorities, strengthen multilevel governance and shape the region's role in the future of IUCN.

From accumulated experience to emerging perspectives, these conversations reflect the diversity and maturity of the region's work.

The Americas Pavilion

© Oscar Villeda - IUCN







IN CONVERSATION WITH:

Ramón Pérez-Gil Salcido

What remains when agendas change

A conversation with Ramón Pérez Gil Salcido on institutional memory, decisions that matter and the long journey of IUCN

Ramón Pérez-Gil is not only a witness to the history of IUCN in the region; he is one of its architects. With a career spanning decades of commitment, he holds the unique perspective of someone who understands that conservation is a process of governance and perseverance. In this interview, we discuss the evolution of the Regional Office, the impact of bringing the World Council to Central American soil for the first time in 75 years and the ethical imperative for the Union to reclaim its role as the compass guiding the global environmental agenda.

After decades of IUCN presence in the region, how would you describe the evolution of the Regional Office and its capacity to integrate realities as diverse as those of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean?

It has been a fascinating process of maturation. Originally, Mesoamerica and the Caribbean were separate, but the decision to unite them under a single Regional Office was strategic. We have managed to ensure that Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean speak the same institutional language. The most powerful element today is our membership: we have an increasingly strong and participatory union of Members. Moreover, the fact that the Director General of IUCN comes from our region makes things much easier; there is intuitive communication and a shared identity that allows us to move forward without having to explain our individual idiosyncrasies at every step.



Recently, Antigua Guatemala hosted a session of IUCN Council. What real impact do milestones like this have on a country and on the region as a whole?

It was a historic event. It was the first time in more than seven decades that the Council had met in our region and the impact was immediate. In Guatemala, this triggered legislative reforms that further boosted interest in conservation across different sectors of the country. But it doesn't end there; we are positioning the region on the map of major decisions. We are already looking towards Panama 2027, where we will host the World Protected and Conserved Areas Congress. Mesoamerica is not only present in global governance; it is leading key forums, with robust representation that includes Indigenous voices and highly qualified technical experts.

The Nature 2030 Programme and the long-term vision are the current roadmap. How does IUCN ensure these documents are not just words on paper but are actually adopted by Members on the ground?

The key is "ownership." These documents are not imposed from an office in Switzerland; they are the result of in-depth consultations with the membership. When Members feel that their voice is reflected in the Vision and the Programme, a natural sense of ownership emerges. Implementation on the ground is far more organic because the mandate feels like their own. If the membership is convinced, execution stops being a burden and becomes a shared goal.

From your perspective, what are the non-negotiable issues on which the region should focus its efforts in the coming years?

First, land-use planning. It is essential for meeting international commitments such as the 30x30 targets; without planned land use, conservation is fragmented. Second, the shared responsibility of the business sector. Companies must understand that conserving nature is a matter of survival for their own business models. And third, education in the broadest sense. I'm not just talking about going to school, but about fostering an awareness that safeguards our culture and sovereignty against external influences seeking to undermine our sustainable management practices.

You have mentioned that IUCN must "reclaim its role." Where should the Union be heading in the coming years?

IUCN must recover its place as the organisation that sets the standard, that breaks new ground and coins the terms the world later adopts. We have blazed many trails, but the key is to keep doing so. It's not just about knowing more, but about setting the course. Hopefully, the Union will persevere in that mission, because today more than ever the world needs direction, it needs a clear path and we have no time to waste.



IN CONVERSATION WITH:

Fernando Lloveras

Caribbean resilience and the power of community action

A dialogue with Fernando Lloveras, IUCN Councillor for the Caribbean

Fernando Lloveras, Councillor-elect for the Caribbean region, offers a clear perspective: the protection of mangroves and coral reefs is ineffective unless it is driven by strong community-based action. With a roadmap aligned with the Union's 20-Year Vision, Lloveras highlights how the Caribbean is exporting models of food sovereignty and energy resilience that could redefine marine conservation at the global level.

Mr Lloveras, from your position as Councillor, how do you perceive the influence and voice of island nations in IUCN's current governance? Has the Caribbean succeeded in placing its priorities on the global agenda?

We have made significant progress. Internal communication within the Union has increased, making it easier for the Caribbean's specific challenges to be understood in their proper dimension. Today, IUCN policies regarding the protection of oceans and mangroves—these vital connectors among our islands—reflect the priorities we have championed. The Caribbean is no longer a peripheral voice in the environmental debate; it is a laboratory of solutions that the world is beginning to observe closely.



Following the adoption of the 20-Year Vision in Abu Dhabi, what distinctive role does our region play as we move towards 2045, particularly in relation to the blue economy?

Our vision is fully aligned with the Union's goals. The Caribbean's role is to demonstrate that the blue economy and marine and coastal protection are two sides of the same coin. Our ecological reality compels us to take a leading role in protecting coastal resources because our climate stability depends on them. The Caribbean brings a sense of urgency to the 2045 Vision, but also a spirit of innovation in managing ecosystems that are critical for carbon sequestration and mitigating extreme impacts.

What do you think is the most urgent institutional step we must take for IUCN to be an even more effective actor in the region?

We must expand our base. The challenge is to integrate more organisations into IUCN; the magnitude of the challenges we face requires us to join forces. There are not many of us in the region, so it is essential to bring Members together with Commission members in a truly collaborative structure. IUCN's relevance in the Caribbean will depend on our ability to act as a united and multidisciplinary bloc.

In the Nature 2030 Ocean and Climate areas, what regional management outcomes would you highlight as replicable models for other island states?

I would highlight the comprehensive protection of natural infrastructure: reefs, coastal forests and mangroves, which is always linked to the defence of the communities that inhabit them. A particularly powerful model is climate adaptation based on community resilience, as we saw in the wake of recent hurricanes, where the establishment of renewable energy and local food production for food sovereignty proved to be the best defence against external vulnerability.

Finally, if you had to define a goal for IUCN in the Caribbean by 2030, what would be your priority?

My top priority is the community-led conservation movement. There is no way to achieve the goals we have set without the direct and leading participation of communities. This requires building deep and solid relationships on the ground. My goal is that by 2030 conservation in the Caribbean will be a process led by its people, supported by IUCN science and policy.



IN CONVERSATION WITH:

Onel Masardule

Conservation as an act of justice

A dialogue with Onel Masardule, IUCN Indigenous Councillor

Indigenous stewardship is a cornerstone of global ecological integrity. Indigenous territories cover 38 million square kilometers (28% of the Earth's land surface) and overlap with 35% of the planet's protected areas and intact ecosystems. In Central America, this reality takes on strategic importance, as 48% of forests coincide with Indigenous and Afro-descendant lands.

In this context, the work of Onel Masardule, a Guna leader from Panama, as Indigenous Councillor on the IUCN Council, reaffirms an institutional governance approach that recognises traditional knowledge as an essential scientific system.

In this interview, Onel reflects on the responsibility of representing this vision and his goal of consolidating the principle that “conservation without rights is simply not conservation”.

Mr Masardule, your election as a Councillor comes at a time when the world recognises that there is no climate future without Indigenous Peoples. What does it mean for you—and for your people—to hold this position on the IUCN Council?

For me it represents a profound responsibility for intercultural leadership. For Panama—and for my people—it means visibility and global recognition of our rights. Being on IUCN's governing body ensures full and effective participation, where our proposals are not only heard but become fundamental pillars of international decisions.



It is often said that Indigenous knowledge systems are the key to real solutions. What specific role do these systems play in the current crisis?

They offer proven strategies for adaptation, mitigation and resilience. These are forms of knowledge transmitted through generations that integrate ecological, cultural and spiritual dimensions. They allow us to anticipate changes and manage resources sustainably based on a deep connection with the land. In Mesoamerica and the Caribbean, this is vital: Indigenous governance has guaranteed the biological connectivity of our most critical biomes.

From your position on the Council, what will be the priorities of your agenda to strengthen rights-based governance?

I will remain vigilant to ensure the strengthening of Free, Prior and Informed Consent, as well as the protection of environmental defenders and gender justice. IUCN has the capacity to influence global policies and my role is to ensure that these policies respect the autonomy of Indigenous Peoples and promote conservation that recognises our systems of life.

What is the most significant change you would like to see in IUCN regarding Indigenous Peoples by the end of your term?

I have clear goals: to secure direct access to funding for communities, increase Indigenous membership within the Union and above all, strengthen the principle that conservation must integrate traditional knowledge as a valid scientific system. We want Indigenous priorities to be an intrinsic part of IUCN's global agenda.

Finally, for young leaders who see you as a reference, what expectations do you have for the role of new generations in this journey?

My greatest hope is that young Indigenous leaders will be recognised as active agents of change and indispensable pioneers. This path, which began in global governance, seeks to ensure that their voices and proposals form the foundation of planetary sustainability. Generational renewal is what will keep the defence of our territories alive.



IN CONVERSATION WITH:

Oscar Mora

The power of local action in the global agenda

A dialogue with Oscar Mora, IUCN Regional Councillor

The incorporation of subnational governments defines a new era for IUCN. Oscar Mora, from the Municipality of Curridabat (Costa Rica)—a global reference for the “*Biodiversciudad*” concept—represents this historic transition. In this conversation, we explore how local management and urban innovation are injecting new vitality into the Union’s regional strategy.

Mr Mora, you represent one of the newest figures on the Council. What does it mean for local governments, and specifically for a municipality like Curridabat, to have a seat at the table where the world’s environmental policies are defined?

As a representative of the first subnational government following the implementation of the membership category approved in Marseille, and now in my role as Councillor, this seat means assuming a profound responsibility: bringing the local voice to the heart of global decisions.

It is not a decorative privilege. It is an opportunity to remind ourselves that biodiversity is protected on the ground, within the territories. In Curridabat, we have learned that the relationship between the city and nature is built in every park, in every urban biological corridor and in every coexistence policy. Global policies run the risk of remaining merely as aspirations; but when the local level sits at the table, decisions begin to resemble the world we actually inhabit.



From your perspective, what is the unique “added value” that a municipal government brings to an organisation whose membership has traditionally been composed of States and NGOs?

The fundamental added value is that we are the land managers. We are on-site, we have direct contact with the people, and we manage spaces that fall exclusively under local jurisdiction.

This generates immense value for IUCN because it allows for greater direct impact. While national governments manage protected areas or national parks, subnational governments manage the territory where people live. Achieving global goals is something we must all do together, and we are the missing piece in that execution.

You come from a management background that understands nature not as something “outside,” but as part of the urban infrastructure. How do you plan to transfer that vision to the IUCN World Council?

It is time to give back to nature what it has given to us. We urbanise and invade territories, but nature is persistent: you lay down concrete, and life sprouts from that concrete. We must let it out.

My goal is to collaborate so that IUCN’s technical capacity helps subnational governments adjust their strategic plans, whether they call them Regulatory Plans, Master Plans, or Urban Plans.

What challenges do you identify in motivating other local governments in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean to join IUCN and strengthen this local bloc?

The main challenge is understanding that the municipal world is immensely vast and unequal. There are economic and legislative barriers; not all countries have the same election systems or the same jurisdictions.

My goal is for IUCN to help understand these local needs to form a single bloc for the protection of nature from the territories—which is where life is ultimately managed.

At the regional level, how can the experience of “*Biodiverciudades*” influence the new IUCN Programme 2026–2029?

The experience in Costa Rica, where nearly 70 municipalities have already implemented pollinator protection policies, proves that the model is scalable. The new IUCN Programme must embrace urbanisation not as a threat, but as a restoration opportunity. Central American “*Biodiverciudades*” can serve as a lighthouse to demonstrate that the alignment between urban planning and ecological integrity is the shortest path towards climate resilience.

Contributions

04

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Global ambition for biodiversity is sustained by what territories are able to turn into reality. In Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, IUCN works at the intersection where international agreements move beyond mere promises and translate into decisions, practices and measurable results.

This section brings together those contributions through two complementary approaches. First, it shows how the region contributes to the implementation of the **Global Biodiversity Framework**: strengthened governance, ongoing restoration, funding reaching those who sustain nature and effective protection translated into concrete actions on the ground. Second, it organises this same progress under the pillars of the **IUCN Nature 2030 Programme—People, Land, Water,**

Ocean, Climate—to demonstrate the coherence between on-the-ground action, policy advocacy and verifiable evidence.

It is a map of contributions: stories, figures and lessons that show how a biodiverse and complex region **contributes systemic solutions** to an urgent global agenda. These international goals are implemented at the territorial level; and in turn, by reaching these goals, territories **strengthen the Union's global reach**.

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Broad-billed hummingbird (*Cyanthus latirostris*)

© Christian Schwarz (CC BY-NC)

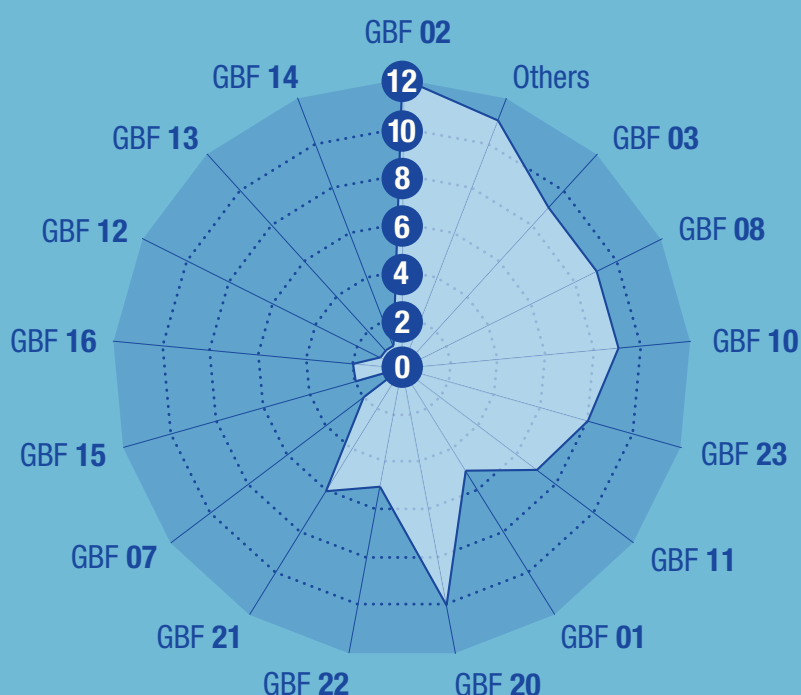


Global Biodiversity Framework

Transforming global goals into
territorial realities

Contributions to the Global Biodiversity Framework 2025

IUCN ORMACC Contribution to the Global Biodiversity Framework





The priority axes of contribution in the Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Strategic Focus	Projects
Target 2: Restoration	Ecosystem restoration with outstanding results in Guatemala and Costa Rica.	12
Target 3: Conservation (30x30)	Strengthening of protected areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures.	9
Target 8: Climate resilience	Ecosystem recovery and protection of water sources to reduce exposure to adverse climate effects.	9
Target 10: Sustainable production	Nature-based Solutions to improve food security.	9
Target 23: Gender equality	Capacity building for women's networks.	8

Our roadmap: from global targets to change

People - justice, rights and knowledge	Targets 22 and 23 Participation, environmental justice and gender equality.	Targets 13, 20 and 21 Fair benefit-sharing (Nagoya Protocol), capacity building and accessible science.
Land - integrity and productive landscapes	Targets 1, 2 and 3 Territorial planning, restoration and conservation (30x30).	Targets 10, 14 and 15 Sustainability in agriculture/forestry, integration of biodiversity in governments and private sector impact reporting.
Water and Ocean - life and ecosystem health	Target 2 Restoration of freshwater and coastal ecosystems.	Target 7 Fight against pollution (reduction of plastic leakage into the ocean).
Climate	Target 8 Resilience and mitigation.	



Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus ssp*)

© Hagerty Ryan, USFWS - PIXNIO (CC0)



The Global Biodiversity Framework is the global roadmap for conservation. Adopted in 2022 under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), this historic agreement sets out urgent goals and actions to halt and reverse the loss of nature by 2030, with the vision of living in harmony with nature by 2050.

In Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, IUCN has transformed this mandate into a practical roadmap to decide what to restore, what to protect and what to transform—ensuring that every step is taken with technical rigour and full social legitimacy.



In 2025, IUCN translated this roadmap into concrete action. Through the projects implemented in the region, the Union contributed directly to the achievement of 16 of the 23 targets set out in the Global Biodiversity Framework, advancing landscape health, conservation effectiveness, productive sustainability and environmental justice as conditions for success.

The result is evident in the region's established capacity for conservation, which translates into institutions that plan better, territories that govern with better tools, communities that sustain solutions and public policies that increasingly align with the real pace of urgent needs and the challenges facing landscapes.

Impact figures

14,093

hectares

undergoing active restoration
(Target 2)

4.8 million

hectares

under strengthened management schemes
(Target 3)

90

key actors

coordinated within the first national platform against plastic
(Target 7)



Healing and protecting: the 30x30 commitment

Targets 2 and 3

In 2025, conservation advanced as a process of land reparation. The recovery of degraded ecosystems reached 14,093 hectares, through the implementation of agroforestry systems, restoration with native species and management practices that rebuild soils, water systems and vegetation cover.

At the same time, the 30x30 commitment was grounded in a key principle: it is not enough to declare protection; it must be managed effectively. For this reason, regional work supported strengthened management schemes across 4.8 million hectares, connecting planning, financing and management effectiveness.



© IUCN

Producing for life: sustainability and circularity

Targets 7, 15 and 16

The year 2025 marked an important shift: biodiversity is not protected only in remote areas—it is also defended in cities, in consumption patterns and in waste that ends up in rivers. For this reason, the region positioned the circular economy as a priority for nature conservation.

In **Guatemala**, the **National Plastic Action Partnership** platform brought together **more than 90 stakeholders** from the public and private sectors, non-governmental organisations, academia, waste pickers and Indigenous

organisations to develop a national roadmap to tackle plastic pollution, joining corporate responsibility, public policy and more dignified conditions for grassroots waste collectors.

The platform was officially launched under the leadership of the **Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources**, an IUCN Member, and the project's key institutional structure was consolidated through the establishment of the Steering Committee, ensuring political leadership, territorial coordination and alignment with national priorities



for integrated solid waste and residue management. In parallel, the **Metrics Advisory Group** was established to support, inform and validate the baseline analysis, scenario modelling and the development of the national plastic action roadmap. The **Inclusion Working Group** complements this effort by ensuring that technical and governance processes incorporate the country's territorial, social and Indigenous diversity—a critical element for understanding the differentiated impacts of pollution on rural regions and vulnerable communities. The coordination among these three mechanisms—the Steering Committee, the MAG and the IWG—constitutes the technical and political framework that enables the **National Plastic Action Partnership platform** to guide informed decision-making to reduce plastic pollution in priority territories and move towards levels that are no longer harmful to biodiversity.

This vision of circularity has gained significant traction in the Caribbean Island States through the **Closing the Caribbean Plastic Tap** initiative, funded by the **Italian Agency for Development Cooperation**. The intervention focused on five key countries: **Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**. In these territories, the urgency is palpable: Caribbean coasts record an average of **2,014 pieces of trash per kilometre**, a fifth of which are plastic bottles that threaten the health of reefs and the integrity of marine ecosystems.

During 2025, this initiative directly contributed to **Target 7 of the Global Biodiversity Framework** by strengthening policies, building capacities and implementing strategic actions aimed at reducing pollution. Technical work during the period included supporting national and regional legislative waste management processes in these nations, as well as designing a **Sustainable Small Grants Programme** aimed at funding local reduction solutions.

Simultaneously, the active involvement of various sectors allowed for the co-design of circular business models for the conversion of polymers into products with commercial value, such as garden pavers, plastic wood for urban furniture and hydroponic systems.

By the end of 2025, the initiative had made progress in the **scientific quantification of waste flows, providing the evidence necessary for the business sector**—especially in the tourism and fishing industries—to **assess its biodiversity-related risks**. These actions consolidate the enabling conditions to decrease pollution risks and mitigate the negative impacts of plastics on biodiversity and resilience in the Caribbean.

“This work is more than an intervention in waste management; it is a call to reimagine economies, rethink production and consumption patterns, and transform plastic from a burden into a resource.”

Colincia Levine, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment of Saint Kitts and Nevis





The right to conserve: justice and inclusion

Targets 13, 21, 22 and 23

In 2025, contributions to the Global Biodiversity Framework were also expressed through culturally relevant **Free, Prior and Informed Consent** protocols, strengthened protection networks for environmental defenders and improved tools that allow global science to be useful on the ground.

One particularly significant technical contribution was the intercultural adaptation of the **STAR** metric (Species Threat Abatement and Restoration). This adaptation was not cosmetic—it represented a methodological reinterpretation ensuring that results reflect local threats, Indigenous governance and territorial perspectives. The integration of worldviews and traditional knowledge does not merely “accompany” science; **it enhances it.**



(*Pitta megarhyncha*)

© JJ Harrison

In the field of **genetic resources**, 2025 marked a **breakthrough in the generation of specialised technical knowledge in the Caribbean**. The **Pit Viper** (*Bothrops caribbaeus*) **Distribution Assessment Curriculum** was developed, and guidelines for **the safe handling of these snakes** were updated. These materials strengthen national biodiversity monitoring in Saint Lucia and establish the scientific basis necessary for future research processes, biotechnology and **Access and Benefit-Sharing** permits.



Safe snake handling workshop with the Saint Lucia Boa (*Boa ophioides*)

© IUCN



IN CONVERSATION WITH:

Dr Lenn Isidore

Island biodiversity and the strategic potential of genetic resources

A dialogue with Dr Lenn Isidore on the conservation of the Saint Lucia pit viper (*Bothrops caribbaeus*)

Under Target 13 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the international community has prioritised fair access to and sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.

Protecting endemic species not only safeguards ecological balance; it also ensures the permanence of unique genetic libraries with potential for global medicine.

Dr Lenn Isidore is a conservation biologist and expert in wildlife management, as well as in the handling of venomous snakes. His work with the pit viper (*Bothrops caribbaeus*) in Saint Lucia is a benchmark for how managing high-risk species can become a driver of scientific knowledge. In this interview, Isidore details how conserving this reptile is framed within access and benefit-sharing derived from genetic resources, and highlights how this work connects biodiversity conservation with risk management for communities.

Dr Isidore, to situate the importance of this species in the context of the Lesser Antilles' biodiversity, what makes the Saint Lucia pit viper biologically unique and what is its role within the island ecosystem?

Bothrops caribbaeus is a critical exponent of island endemism. Although the genus *Bothrops* is present on the mainland, this species evolved exclusively in Saint Lucia. Locally known as sepa, which means “snake” in Creole, it is our only venomous snake. Despite historical stigma, it plays an indispensable ecological role as an apex predator in forests and dry woodlands, regulating rodent populations that affect crops and may be associated with disease transmission.



Under the Global Biodiversity Framework targets on genetic resources, is there a documented medical or pharmacological value in the venom of this species?

Definitely. Currently, in Saint Lucia, we rely on antivenoms produced from related species, but research towards a specific antivenom for our viper would optimise the clinical response. Beyond emergencies, snake venoms have contributed to the development of medical treatments, particularly in the cardiovascular field. In the case of this species, its specific pharmacological value is not yet known, although it represents a promising area for research. Conserving the species in its habitat helps preserve these genetic resources and their potential for future research.

How has the perception of the local community evolved, and what role does traditional knowledge play in the transition from fear to respect for the sepa?

Historically, human-snake conflict ended with the elimination of the specimen. In the framework of the project **“Strengthening of Access and Benefit Sharing policies and institutional frameworks through demonstrative models in Saint Lucia,”** we have sought to demystify the species without ignoring its danger. We have integrated local knowledge to foster a model of coexistence. Conservation is only effective when civil society becomes the first line of protection for its own natural heritage.

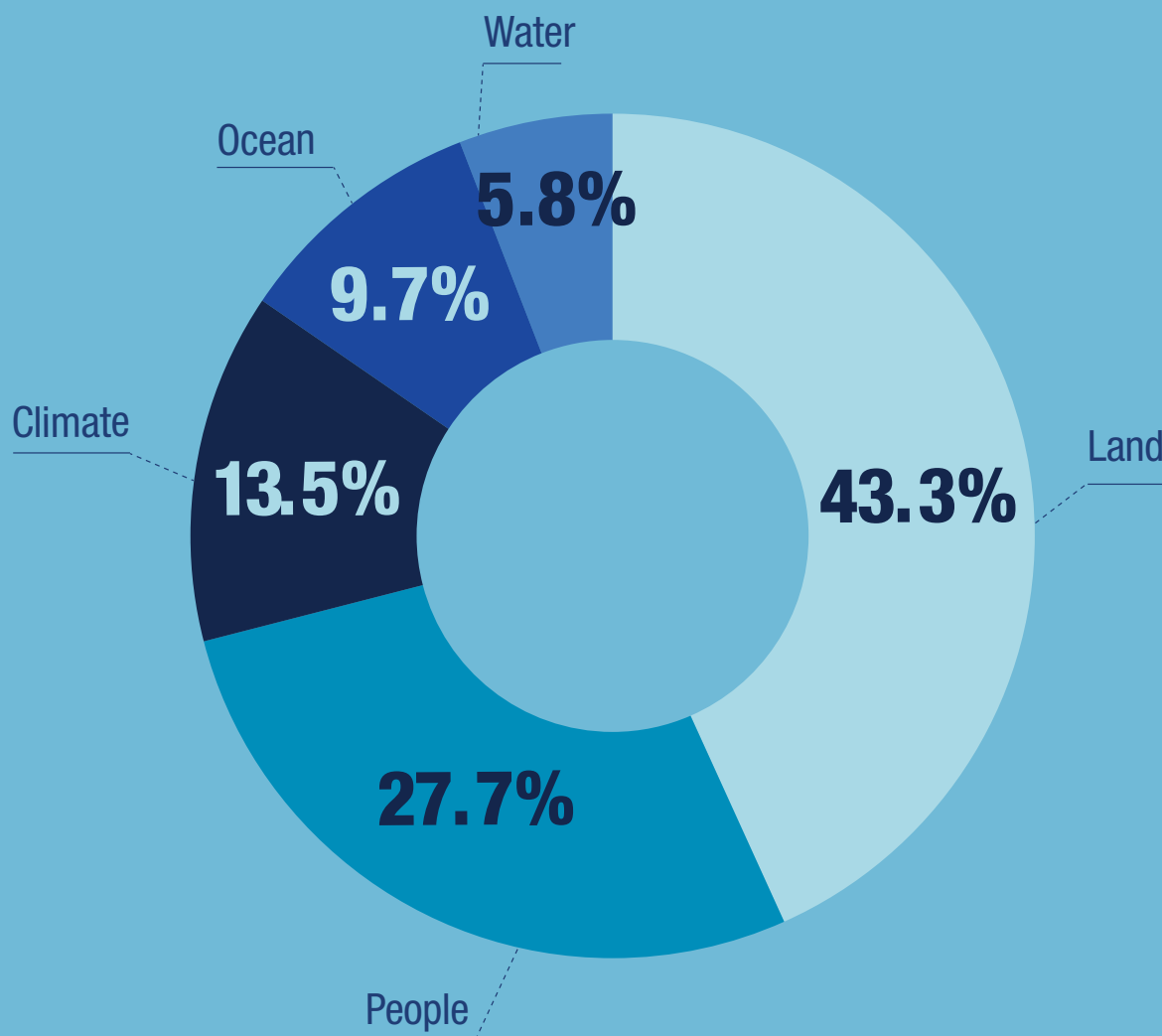
To conclude, Lenn, what message does the management of the Saint Lucia pit viper send regarding the region’s leadership in the biodiversity agenda?

The message is that there can be no selective conservation. Environmental authority is demonstrated by protecting even those species that present a logistical or social challenge. Protecting the Saint Lucia pit viper is an act of sovereignty over a genetic code that exists nowhere else on the planet. My commitment is to ensure that this resource, which is the heritage of Saint Lucia and the world, continues fulfilling its role in the ecosystem and in the advancement of science.



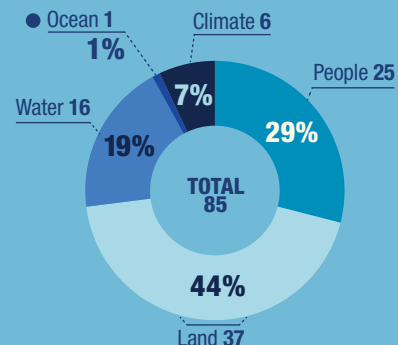
Nature 2030

Contributions from the regional portfolio to the programme areas

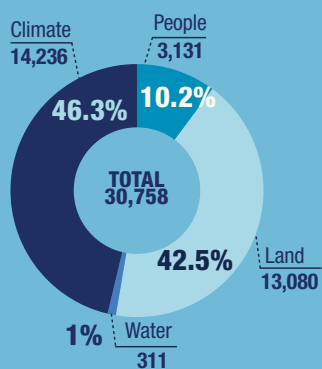




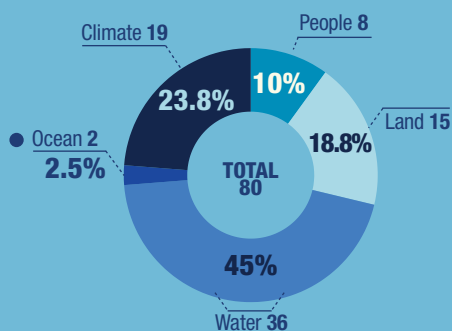
1. Policies, laws and governance mechanisms created, improved or implemented



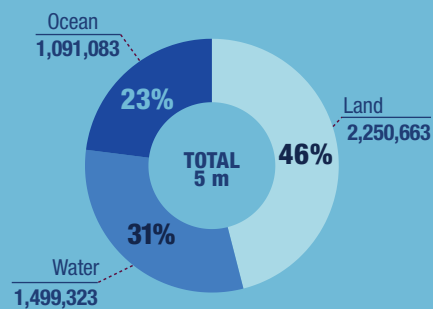
2. People trained



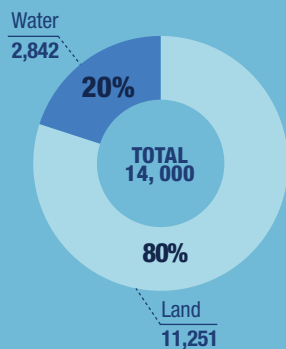
3. Strategies, action plans and guidelines created or improved



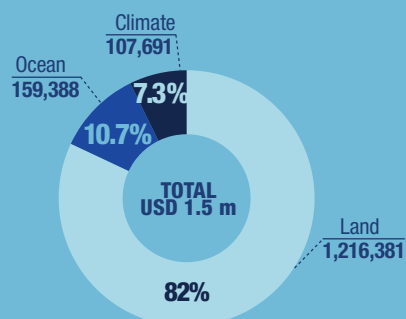
4. Hectares protected, managed or conserved



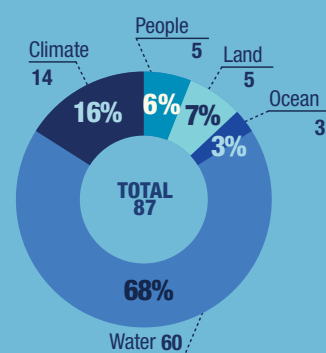
5. Hectares under restoration schemes



6. Investment in equipment, inputs or infrastructure



7. Contributions to knowledge and science





People

People, the origin of conservation

Rights, governance, justice and capacity building

Contributions of the regional portfolio to the programmatic areas

Investment

27.7%

of the total for 2025

25

policies, laws and governance mechanisms created, improved and implemented

8

strategies, action plans and guidelines created or improved

10%

of the total for 2025

People trained

3,131



10%

of the total for 2025

5

contributions to knowledge and science

6%

of the total for 2025



The human dimension of conservation

In Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, conservation is defined in the daily lives of those who safeguard forests, rivers, wetlands and coastlines under social, economic and climate pressures. For this reason, the regional contribution to the IUCN Nature 2030 Programme is grounded in a conviction: without rights there is no conservation; without legitimate governance there are no sustainable results; and without justice there is no future for those who defend life.

In 2025, this agenda translated into results that connect multiple scales—from national public policy to community assemblies, and from high-level jurisprudence to technical monitoring in the field.



Guatemala

© IUCN

The work focused on three strategic goals:

01

Guarantee

the full exercise of rights to create a fair and inclusive conservation framework.

02

Strengthen

governance in contextual and culturally appropriate ways for effective natural resource management and conservation.

03

Expand

the application of environmental rule of law and the protection of environmental defenders.



Global frameworks and territorial governance



Honduras - La Moskitia

© Priscilla Mora - IUCN

The starting point in 2025 was the transformation of global commitments into frameworks applicable to the diverse realities of the region, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendant communities are recognised as **key actors** in the conservation of the territories they have historically safeguarded.

In **Honduras**, this commitment materialised through the development of the **National Strategy of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources**. This instrument, developed in collaboration with the **Instituto de Conservación Forestal**, an IUCN Member, and with the leadership of Indigenous Peoples, created the conditions to operationalise Free, Prior and Informed Consent and recognise models of collective territorial ownership.

The strategy takes shape in **La Moskitia**, where IUCN supported the organisation **MOPAWI**, also an IUCN Member, in strengthening the **seven territorial councils of the Karataska Lagoon System**. Through protocols for the protection of environmental defenders, regulations for resource administration and territorial monitoring systems, the initiative connected biodiversity protection with the defence of territorial rights. Together, these tools strengthen local capacities and leadership, consolidate governance processes and enable more effective responses to territorial pressures.

This approach also fostered the **First Indigenous Monitors Gathering**, where technical exchanges between Amazonian Indigenous Peoples and the Miskito people facilitated the adoption of digital tools (ODK and ONA) to document socio-environmental threats in remote areas, supporting community decision-making with high-precision technical evidence.



Along the Caribbean coast, governance integrates cultural identity and marine-coastal conservation. IUCN's collaboration with the **Garífuna People** in Honduras strengthened organisational processes and decision-making spaces such as the **Second National Assembly of Garífuna Community Councils**. This event enabled the identification of conservation priorities built directly from community voices, which were incorporated into the garífuna Participation Plan.

IUCN's work has also placed special emphasis on Afro-descendant women's leadership. In coordination with the **Organización de Desarrollo Ético Comunitario (ODECO)**, spaces such as the **International Forum of Black and Afro-descendant Women** and the **XIII National Gathering of Afro-Honduran Women** were promoted, strengthening advocacy capacity and political participation for women.

These initiatives reinforced spaces for coordination, advocacy and decision-making based in the territories themselves.

Additionally, a scholarship agreement was formalised between the Universidad Nacional de Ciencias Forestales, an IUCN Member, and the Federación de Patronatos Garífunas de la Bahía de Tela, ensuring that garífuna youth assume the generational transition in technical territorial management.

In El Salvador, conservation took shape through the systematisation of the Tacuba Indigenous People's knowledge. The result was a biocultural landscape map integrating archaeological sites and sacred places within the Barra de Santiago – El Imposible Conservation Area. This tool strengthens governance and facilitates the identification of Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures, recognising that natural and cultural heritage are inseparable.

Learn more:



When the land speaks: Indigenous territorial monitoring in Latin America



© Pilar Cáceres - IUCN



IN CONVERSATION WITH:

Elsser Brown

MOPAWI: four decades of territorial governance and regional projection

La Moskitia in Honduras is a mosaic of life and culture, a multiethnic region where **four Indigenous Peoples** coexist in a delicate balance now facing **multiple pressures and threats**.

In this landscape of beauty and vulnerability, **MOPAWI has stood for 40 years as a leading organisation** in defending rights and promoting conservation. After four decades of uninterrupted work, the organisation not only celebrates its legacy but projects itself across Central America as a regional NGO capable of exporting a successful model based on territorial autonomy.

To better understand this impact, we spoke with **Elsser Brown**, Technical Director of the organisation. Born in La Moskitia and with 25 years of experience within the institution, Brown represents the bridge between technical-scientific knowledge and the Indigenous worldview that MOPAWI strongly defends.

MOPAWI recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. How has the organisation's mission evolved to transcend the borders of La Moskitia and project itself at the Central American level?

MOPAWI celebrated forty years of work in La Moskitia this June. Recently, we reformed our statutes to work in other regions of Honduras and across Central America as a regional NGO. Our work is based on two main pillars: the defence of human and Indigenous rights and the conservation of biodiversity and nature. This accumulated experience allows us to scale our work in democratic governance and climate change management to a broader level.



From MOPAWI's experience, what technical approach allows natural resources to be managed using a territorial, integrated perspective?

In Indigenous territories, resources are not seen in a fragmented way; rivers are not disconnected from forests. For this reason, our lines of action focus on strengthening local organisational structures so that resource management becomes holistic, rather than dependent on institutions that see only one “layer” of the ecosystem.

La Moskitia faces strong external pressures. What concrete tools have you developed to protect territorial integrity?

We have facilitated the creation of instruments such as the Biocultural Consultation Protocol, recognised by the government in 2019 as the official mechanism for projects in La Moskitia. In addition, in response to threats such as land acquisition and the introduction of cattle into unregulated territories, we have developed monitoring protocols and protection mechanisms for environmental defenders. These instruments are technically robust and scientifically grounded, validated by IUCN and are being translated into the local language to ensure effective use by territorial monitoring commissions.

You mention that even within communities there is a risk of losing traditional perspectives. How does MOPAWI ensure that processes remain legitimate and participatory?

We must be honest: sometimes Indigenous organisations also lose their ancestral perspective and negotiate resources in isolation. To avoid this, the development of our instruments is highly participatory, through intercommunity and territorial assemblies.

Our initiatives are designed from years of collaboration with Indigenous structures and deep knowledge of the territories. They are not ideas imposed by us; they emerge after long processes of observation, discussion and dialogue with Indigenous leadership.

As a professional and resident of the region, what direction should conservation take to secure the future of La Moskitia and MOPAWI?

The direction is justice and sovereignty. There is a clear principle: **“La Moskitia belongs to the Miskito People.”** Our technical work now incorporates digital tools and partnerships with human rights organisations to protect environmental defenders. My conviction is that people are the strongest link in conservation. If we work with the territorial councils—the true stewards of the forest—we will ensure a greener world for future generations. We have no time to lose; the balance of life depends on this persistence.



Environmental justice: the law as infrastructure for conservation

In a region where defending the environment entails persistent risks, strengthening the rule of law is a direct contribution of the Nature 2030 Programme. In 2025, research on Judicial Good Practices **linked to the Escazú Agreement** systematised standards for access to justice and public participation, strengthening the role of the judiciary as a guarantor of environmental peace.

This approach was extended during the **Regional Gathering of Environmental Defenders** in Antigua, Guatemala. More than 70 leaders from 60 organisations shared self-protection protocols, territorial monitoring tools and experiences in community communication and Indigenous governance. The initiative culminated in the document “Horizontes Comunes,” which lays the groundwork for a regional community of practice and for coordinated regional responses to the common threats faced by human rights defenders and their territories.

“Finally, it is about finding a community that connects different territories and different issues, but that seeks to build a shared understanding of this collective good that is the conservation of nature.”

Armando Hernández, Mexico

Regional Gathering of Environmental Defenders

© Pilar Cáceres - IUCN





Global science with territorial legitimacy: the intercultural application of STAR

Regional innovation also lies in adapting global tools to local realities. In 2025, the region led the intercultural adaptation of the **STAR** (Species Threat Abatement and Restoration) **metric** in Indigenous territories of Mesoamerica.

The process, with technical support from the **Instituto para el Desarrollo Sustentable en Mesoamérica, A.C.**, an IUCN Member organisation from Mexico, integrated **Indigenous governance as an analytical variable and incorporated an interpretation of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species through Indigenous worldviews.**

By correlating Red List categories with traditional knowledge, the tool moved beyond being purely technical and became a bridge for dialogue between global science and community-based management.



Caribbean Reef Shark
(*Carcharhinus perezii*)

© R Vasconcellos

Learn more:



Discover the keys to applying
STAR in Indigenous territories



Land

Restoring land to sustain life

The infrastructure that supports the region's development

Contributions of the regional portfolio to the programmatic areas

Investment

43.3%

of the total for 2025

25

policies, laws and governance mechanisms created, improved and implemented



People trained

13,080



43%

of the total for 2025

15

strategies, action plans and guidelines created or improved

**11,251****hectares
restored****80%**

of the total for 2025

2,250,663.29**hectares
protected,
managed or
conserved****46%**

of the total for 2025

6**contributions to
knowledge and
science****7%**

of the total for 2025

USD 1,216,381.92**invested in
supplies,
equipment or
infrastructure****81%**

of the total for 2025

Impact 2025

24**protected areas
strengthened**
(more than 2 million hectares)**45+****protected area
management and planning**
tools developed



Healthy ecosystems, living soils and restored landscapes: the infrastructure that sustains regional development

In Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, land is the vital infrastructure upon which regional development and security depend. It sustains food security, landscape stability and the livelihoods of millions of people.

For IUCN, **conservation in this area is a tangible practice reflected in the vitality of soils, forest regeneration, territorial governance and the effective management of protected areas.**

During 2025, the organisation's regional management focused on safeguarding this ecosystem integrity through two strategic contributions to the **Nature 2030 Programme**: strengthening regional technical capacity to achieve the Global Biodiversity Framework targets and scaling restoration and sustainable production models across the territory.

The work for the **Land** area was organised around three strategic goals:

01

Strengthening

management and effectiveness of protected areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures.

02

Accelerating

forest and productive landscape restoration under ecosystem resilience criteria.

03

Consolidating

sustainable agricultural practices



Protected areas: the core of regional resilience

From site to landscape: technical architecture and governance for effective management

The region strengthened the management of **24 protected areas (more than 2 million hectares)** through **planning and governance instruments**.

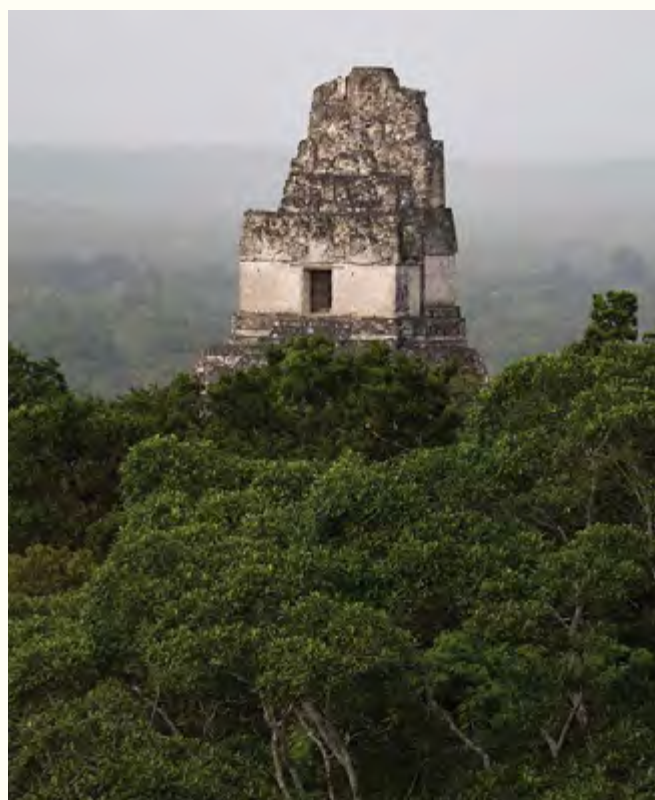
In 2025, IUCN supported the development of **13 management plans, 10 public use plans, three research and monitoring plans and three climate change adaptation and mitigation plans** for protected areas in **Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica, including the Southern Honduras Protected Areas Subsystem (ZAPZsurH)** and emblematic sites such as **Tortuguero National Park (Costa Rica)**.

This technical architecture was complemented by larger-scale planning efforts: three **Integrated Landscape Management Plans**, the binational management plan of **La Amistad International Park (PILA, Costa Rica–Panama)** and the trinational management plan of the **Gulf of Honduras (TRIGOH)** to strengthen cross-border coordination.

IUCN also consolidated its role as a facilitator of trinational governance in the Selva Maya, the largest continuous tropical forest in Mesoamerica. By reactivating formal coordination mechanisms between Mexico, Guatemala and Belize, through the **Regional Strategic Coordination Group** and the **Operational Coordination Group**, the organisation facilitated the transfer of the GEC presidency from Mexico to Guatemala and promoted joint activities including workshops and experience exchanges.

These processes included the development of the **Calakmul Agreement Roadmap**, which prioritised transboundary management, institutional governance, community participation and financial sustainability of the forest massif. Finally, support was provided for the fifth meeting of the Executive Council of the Great Selva Maya, bringing together the authorities responsible for managing protected areas in the three countries.

With technical and financial support, 22 local governance platforms for protected areas were strengthened in Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras and Panama, promoting the active participation of women and youth in decision-making and natural resource management. **As part of this effort to institutionalise equity, the “Methodological Guide to Improve Social Participation with Gender and Intersectionality Approaches in Planning, Implementation and Evaluation Instruments for Protected Area Management in Costa Rica” was developed.** Tools such as this guide, together with initiatives like the environmental monitoring camp in Tortuguero and scientific diving training for youth in Belize, demonstrate the institutional commitment to generational renewal and inclusion in environmental management.



Selva Maya

© Luis Ecker - IUCN



Equipment, standards and data: the “invisible infrastructure” of conservation

When crises intensify, whether through wildfires, territorial pressures or ecosystem degradation, conservation depends on shared capacities and common standards. For this reason, in 2025 IUCN implemented several processes aimed at strengthening regional capacities. In Costa Rica **25 park rangers** from across the region obtained universal certification under the standards of the **National System of Conservation Areas**, strengthening prevention and response capacities while creating a new regional force based on best practices and shared protocols.

The region also advanced in the adoption of IUCN standards, including new processes linked to the **Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas** and the promotion of **Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures** as a pathway to achieve national, regional and global conservation targets related to the 30x30 commitment.

OECCMs Caribbean Workshop

© IUCN





Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas

Parque Natural Metropolitano, an IUCN Member, became the first site in Panama to submit its Expression of Interest, thereby activating the Green List process at the national level.

An Action Plan was developed for the five sites in Honduras currently at the candidacy stage: Celaque Mountain National Park, Cerro Azul Meámbar National Park, El Jilguero Water Production Area, Lancetilla Botanical Garden and Research Center and Montaña de PUCA Wildlife Refuge.

Progress was made in the evaluation of emblematic sites in Costa Rica, including Chirripó National Park and the Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve.

The Belize Green List Evaluation Expert Group was established and trained.

In addition, the **Regional Biodiversity Center** was launched as part of the **Central American Commission on Environment and Development**, with financial support channelled by IUCN and the **KfW German Development Bank**. The centre will monitor progress towards the **Global Biodiversity Framework** using metrics based on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas.

To strengthen operational capacity in the field and expand conservation infrastructure, IUCN mobilised more than USD 750,000. This investment included the reconstruction of docks and operational bases in Belize, the modernisation of water and electricity systems at ranger stations in Costa Rica, and the delivery of advanced technological equipment such as drones, camera traps and radiocommunication systems for patrols and wildfire prevention.

Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure

Panama became the first country in Mesoamerica to establish a regulatory framework recognising Other Effective Conservation Measures, while Honduras developed its National Other Strategy to integrate conservation efforts led by Indigenous Peoples and private landowners into the targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

In the Caribbean, a regional workshop supported participating countries in understanding Other Effective Conservation Measures and their contribution to Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework, reviewing enabling conditions for their recognition, management and evaluation in the region, and analysing the current status of monitoring and national reporting to the Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures.

“The workshop results will help us bring greater structure to the management and potential recognition of Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures that may already exist in Trinidad. This will allow us to better align our efforts with the Convention on Biological Diversity.”

Julius Smith, Environmental Specialist,
Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and
Development of Trinidad



From knowledge to action: the legacy of BIOPAMA in the Caribbean

From 2012 to 2025, the **Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme (BIOPAMA)** has supported countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific to strengthen and improve the management and governance of their biodiversity and natural resources. Through data-driven tools, technical services and financing, this programme strengthened the capacities of conservation actors and helped improve decision-making regarding regional priorities.

In the Caribbean, a biodiversity hotspot, this programme has transformed conservation efforts thanks to its comprehensive and multilevel approach. In addition to contributing to global targets through data, knowledge exchange and evidence-based advocacy, the programme provided technical support and policy guidance to governments to improve national-level implementation. At the local level, it strengthened institutional and community capacities through grants targeting specific conservation needs.

By connecting governments, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions and community organisations, the programme promoted collaborative conservation approaches that transcend borders. The **Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway** reflects this legacy by facilitating regional cooperation mechanisms that will continue beyond the programme.

In figures

+ 800 professionals trained.

Improvement in management effectiveness across **71 protected areas** and conserved areas, with a total coverage of **2,129,893 hectares.**

+ 300 datasets related to protected areas and biodiversity conservation published and available.

7,766 members of local communities benefited through the grants component.

6,791 people with strengthened socio-economic benefits.

21 endangered species benefited through specific actions.

Learn more:



BIOPAMA's Caribbean Legacy - IUCN



The Great Blue Hole Lighthouse Reef, Belize

© Adobe Stock/James



Restoration for resilience and mitigation

Forest and productive landscape restoration reached 11,200 hectares across seven countries (Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama and Saint Kitts and Nevis) through the implementation of agroforestry and silvopastoral systems, soil conservation practices, forest plantations and reforestation for both protection and production purposes.

Across 2,535 restored hectares, a carbon capture modelling exercise was conducted, projecting **288,521 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) to be captured** over two decades. Of this total, 199,503.61 tonnes would result from productive restoration actions and 89,018.36 tonnes from ecological restoration, reflecting the differentiated and complementary contributions of both restoration approaches.

These results provide evidence that restoration is an effective climate mitigation measure that also stimulates the ecological economy and regenerates soils.



© IUCN





Regenerating the land to secure the future: sustainable agriculture

In the **Central American Dry Corridor**, 150 small-scale producers transformed their relationship with the land through field schools designed for exchanging knowledge on organic agriculture in small plots.

Through direct implementation in production plots, sustainable agricultural practices were promoted, including crop rotation and diversification, the production of organic fertilisers, the incorporation of trees into production systems, the use of traditional seed varieties and the creation of seed banks.

Additional techniques were introduced to reduce soil erosion, improve water efficiency in crops, build water reservoirs, restore springs and protect watersheds, strengthening both environmental and productive resilience in communities of the **Central American Dry Corridor**. Agricultural good practices identified in the three countries of the Trifinio region (Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras) were compiled into a compendium documenting experiences and guiding sustainable agricultural practices.

This process culminated in the event **“Regional Dialogue: Towards Productive, Sustainable and Biodiverse Landscapes in Mexico and the SICA Region”**, a space for collective reflection on the role of agriculture as an engine of development and as a key sector for addressing the growing environmental challenges of the region. The meeting brought together Ministries of Agriculture from members of the **Central American Integration System** countries alongside producers from various sectors (family agriculture, Indigenous knowledge systems and commercial agriculture).

“For me, as a young person starting in agriculture, it is very important to encourage other young women because we are the future. We cannot depend only on older producers; they are gradually leaving, and we are the ones who remain and must learn the ancestral knowledge they hold. It is important that we become involved in agriculture, in conserving our natural resources and caring for our land for our children and our future.”

Angela Mai, watermelon producer, Belize



The exchange and integration of knowledge allowed participants to analyse the enabling conditions needed to transform production systems and recognise that **Nature-based Solutions** are essential for building inclusive and resilient food systems.

This dialogue builds on an established trajectory, including collaboration since 2019 with the **Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU)** platform of the **Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)** and more than a decade of engagement with the **Bonn Challenge**.



Angela Mai

© Oscar Villeda - IUCN

Historical fact

Between 2011 and 2021, the region restored more than one million hectares in Guatemala, Costa Rica and El Salvador. This progress is monitored through the Restoration Barometer and positions the region within the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.



The Land programme in 2025 confirms that effective conservation is the result of combining technical infrastructure, political legitimacy and productive soils.

From cross-border coordination to the daily pulse of farming plots in the Dry Corridor, the region strengthened the conditions necessary for nature to remain the foundation of life and for global decisions to be sustained on land that has begun to breathe again.



Popocatepetl Volcano - Mexico

wirestock / Envato Elements (Item ID: BZEKXPSFT)



Water

Protect water from its source

**Contributions
of the regional
portfolio to the
programmatic
areas**

Investment

5.8%

of the total for 2025

16

**policies, laws and governance
mechanisms created, improved
and implemented**

1,499,323

**hectares protected,
managed or
conserved**

31%

of the total for 2025

**People
trained**

311



2,842



**hectares
restored**

20%

of the total for 2025

60

**contributions to
knowledge and science**

68%

of the total for 2025

36

**strategies,
action plans
and guidelines
created or
improved**

45%

of the total for 2025

Impact 2025

23

wetlands of international importance

under strengthened management (1.49 million hectares)
across 8 Caribbean countries.

20

micro watershed councils

in Guatemala with active management plans.



Water governance and wetland conservation to secure the future

Water is the element that connects social stability with ecosystem health; it is the natural infrastructure that sustains food security, local economies and biological integrity. In 2025, IUCN concentrated its regional action on three mutually reinforcing fronts:

01

Strengthening

participatory water governance and micro-watershed management.

02

Implementation

of international standards for resilient wetland management, including transboundary wetlands.

03

Coordination

of science and alliances capable of slowing the accelerated loss of freshwater species: water must be protected at the source (watersheds) and sustained within the living systems (wetlands), while biodiversity is defended across rivers, lagoons and continental freshwater systems.



Jabiru (*Jabiru mycteria*)

© Maury Eldridge

Water governance: community-based

Water security is often determined at the local level: through assemblies, water committees, community agreements and micro-watershed management plans. In Guatemala, the IUCN supported the strengthening of 20 micro watershed councils through technical training and organisational support. Management Plans were implemented that integrate agroforestry systems, soil and water conservation, as well as practices aimed at sustaining water recharge. A key element of this support was the promotion of women's participation and leadership in land management, as water governance is only sustainable if it incorporates those who sustain this resource on a day-to-day basis.

In Costa Rica, work focused on community-based management of drinking water. IUCN supported four Associations of Community Aqueduct and Sewerage Systems in implementing Ecosystem-based Adaptation measures designed specifically to protect water sources, ensure service continuity and reduce vulnerability to environmental variability.



Caribbean wetlands: a regional protection network

In the Caribbean, the challenge was to strengthen each country's capacity while maintaining a shared regional vision. The IUCN encouraged the wise use of 23 wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites), covering 1.49 million hectares across Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Suriname. One of the most significant advances was translating international standards into concrete roadmaps towards the development and adoption of national action plans that incorporate the principles of wise and sustainable use into public policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks in sectors where water intersects with tourism, environmental management, coastal planning and water governance.

This strengthening process combined technical expertise with political feasibility. It began with a regional workshop that developed a multicriteria analysis tool to evaluate proposed reforms, followed by virtual validation workshops where national legal frameworks and priorities were reviewed to translate both national and regional ambitions into actionable plans.

On the basis of this shared framework, a comprehensive capacity-building process was implemented as a cross-cutting component. Through this process, technology-use plans were implemented, management schemes were improved and training programmes were delivered to support vulnerability assessments and monitoring system design.

As a result, a set of practical tools was implemented across the 23 wetlands:

23 vulnerability assessments

conducted to prioritise interventions according to the ecological conditions of each site.

12 management effectiveness evaluations

carried out using the **R-METT** framework (Ramsar Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool), aligned with **Resolution 12.5** of the Ramsar Convention.

8 monitoring programmes with early warning systems

one per country, for monitoring biological components.

8 integrated coastal zone management plans,

developed through the review of marine spatial planning processes and national validation.

“Our Ramsar site is located in an area strongly oriented towards development, and we are working to mitigate some of those negative impacts together with developers, as well as through public policy decisions that support conservation. We seek to build a win-win situation, because as a small island state we need development to go hand in hand with conservation.”

Anthony Jeremiah, Acting Chief Forestry Officer, Grenada





Freshwater ecosystems: science in response to the crisis

The freshwater crisis is one of the most complex and urgent environmental challenges facing the region. In recent years, the rapid loss of freshwater ecosystems has generated critical impacts both for people and for biodiversity.

Across Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, freshwater ecosystems are disappearing **three times faster** than terrestrial and marine ecosystems, leading to a situation in which approximately one quarter of the species assessed on the **IUCN Red List** are now threatened.

Faced with this urgent challenge in 2025, the region responded with science and collaboration. IUCN led the **First Mesoamerican Symposium on the Conservation of Freshwater Biodiversity and Ecosystems** in Guatemala, bringing together **more than two hundred** experts, conservation practitioners, community representatives, civil society organisations, government authorities and representatives from the private and academic sectors from Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, the United States and Italy.

Participants gathered to explore innovative strategies for the protection and sustainable use of freshwater ecosystems. The symposium created a space for dialogue on conservation and restoration of freshwater ecosystems in Mesoamerica in alignment with the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Discussions addressed critical pressures including the impacts of climate change on endemic species, ecosystem degradation caused by pollution, the displacement of native species by invasive or exotic species and the unsustainable exploitation of freshwater resources.

The symposium also examined the importance of disseminating information and scientific advances related to freshwater biodiversity conservation and restoration in order to support informed decision-making.

The event concluded with a strategic outcome: the creation of the **Mesoamerican Alliance for Freshwater Species**

Conservation, focused on promoting the integrated conservation and management of freshwater biodiversity and ecosystems.

“We aim to create a space where people can connect, build networks of collaboration and, especially, inspire young people who may feel motivated when they see the work of professionals with long-standing experience.”

Yasmín Quintana, member of the IUCN Species Survival Commission

The Water 2025 initiative confirms that water security is the result of strong governance and dedicated science.

From the **Micro-Watershed Councils** in the highlands of Guatemala to the network of **Ramsar Sites** in the Caribbean and the creation of an alliance to defend freshwater biodiversity, IUCN has strengthened the natural infrastructure and institutional framework necessary to ensure that water continues to flow as a foundation for regional prosperity and resilience.





Ocean

Collective action for our oceans

**Contributions
of the regional
portfolio to the
programmatic
areas**

Investment

9.7%

of the total for 2025

1

**policy, law and governance
mechanism created, improved and
implemented**

1,091,083.35

**hectares
protected,
managed or
conserved**

23%

of the total for 2025

**People
trained**

16



3

**contributions to
knowledge and science**

3%

of the total for 2025

USD 159,388

**investment
in supplies,
equipment or
infrastructure**

11%

of the total for 2025

2

**strategies, action plans and
guidelines created or improved**

3%

of the total for 2025



Coastal management and community sovereignty: conserving biodiversity to sustain life

In Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, the ocean represents work, food, identity and future. Mangroves buffer storms, coral reefs sustain biodiversity, marine resources support the livelihoods of millions of people and coastal wetlands protect entire cities.

In 2025, **IUCN** consolidated a regional strategy combining technical precision with community leadership so that marine and coastal conservation translates into real well-being, particularly for Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant communities such as the Garífuna and small-scale coastal economies.



Striped marlin (*Kajikia audax*)

© Fernando Olea

Regional action within the Ocean programme was structured around three priorities:

01 Strengthening

participatory governance in critical ecosystems such as mangroves, reefs and coastal wetlands.

02 Professionalising

the management of marine protected areas through operational management instruments and strategic equipment.

03 Promoting

sustainable value chains that dignify the work of women and youth in coastal territories.





Community leadership in Honduras: conservation architecture with a local face

In 2025, Honduras marked a turning point with the launch of the project **Community-Based Marine-Coastal Biodiversity Conservation in Honduras** (2025–2030), implemented by IUCN in partnership with the **Secretariat of Natural Resources and Environment** and with support from the Government of Canada. The mission is clear: to protect and restore marine and coastal biodiversity while **placing** coastal families, women and youth **at the centre** of the governance processes that shape decisions.

The project operates in areas where pressures such as deforestation, pollution, coastal erosion and urban expansion threaten both ecosystems and the livelihoods of the communities that inhabit and protect them. For this reason, the model combines **Nature-based Solutions** with an explicit human rights approach, gender equity, social inclusion and intercultural dialogue.

The initiative aims to conserve 150,000 hectares of critical ecosystems in 14 coastal municipalities, covering 10 protected areas and eight Ramsar Sites. It also plans the restoration of approximately 250 hectares, benefiting around 4,000 people directly, including an estimated 50% Indigenous and Afro-descendant representatives, 35% women and at least 25% youth.

“This project will work closely with the Government of Honduras, municipalities, territorial councils, women’s organisations, youth groups and Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities to ensure that decisions are made in a participatory manner, from the local level to the national level.”

Pascal Medieu, Head of Cooperation,
Embassy of Canada in Costa Rica, Honduras
and Nicaragua

“We are very excited in our communities about this new project because we truly need it. I know that IUCN will continue supporting and encouraging us to make our initiatives with women and youth a reality.”

Marlen Thomas, Garífuna community leader,
La Rosita



CONSERVACIÓN DE LA
BIODIVERSIDAD COSTERO-MARINO
Y LA COMUNIDAD

SOLUCIONES BASADAS EN LA NATURALEZA Y
DERECHOS EN LA CONSERVACIÓN

Protección

Uso Sostenible

Marlen Thomas





Small-scale fisheries: sustaining the ocean economy

Marine governance begins by recognising those who sustain the ocean economy.

In Honduras, the IUCN supported the organisational strengthening of the fisheries sector through assistance to the **Constitutive Assembly of the National Table of Artisanal Fishers**, along with specific support to the **Women's Committee**, aimed at increasing visibility and strengthening women's leadership in conservation. For 2026, the process is expected to advance towards **formal legal recognition** and the implementation of the platform's programme of work.

“A female fisher isn't just someone who goes out in a boat to fish... The challenge is for us to be visible, to empower ourselves... and to ensure that the work of female artisanal fishers is valued.”

Carmen Escoto, Board Member, National Board of Artisanal Fishers

Marine Protected Areas: strengthening marine conservation infrastructure with practical tools

Effective conservation also depends on operational capacity. In Mexico, IUCN supported capacity strengthening within the **National Commission of Natural Protected Areas**. Through an investment of **USD 159,388** in strategic equipment, including software licenses, computers, drones, binoculars, safety equipment, flares, communication systems and diving equipment, the operational capacity of three marine protected areas was strengthened: the Pacific Islands Biosphere Reserve, Revillagigedo National Park and the Mexican Caribbean Biosphere Reserve. The investment also supported the **Ranger Training Centre** at the **Islas Marias Biosphere Reserve** and the General Directorates of the **National Commission for Protected Natural Areas**.

This strengthening process was accompanied by management instruments designed to sustain long-term governance:

Mexico: development of the **Management Programme** for the Pacific Islands Biosphere Reserve of the Baja California Peninsula, together with its Public Consultation Strategy (draft expected in 2026).

Belize: update of the **Port Honduras Marine Reserve Management Plan**, incorporating governance mechanisms to ensure long-term effectiveness.

The Ocean 2025 initiative underscores a simple yet demanding principle: **conserving the ocean means sustaining life**. Honduras is leading the way with a funded, community-based, and intercultural model that protects critical ecosystems while strengthening livelihoods; Mexico is making progress by strengthening operational capacities and management tools so that marine areas do not rely on ad-hoc solutions.

Together, these efforts consolidate a **regional architecture of blue prosperity**, in which biodiversity is defended through science, community sovereignty, dignified work and a shared future.



Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*)



Climate

Climate resilience with a local face

**Contributions
of the regional
portfolio to the
programmatic
areas**

Investment

13.5%

of the total for 2025

6

**policies, laws and
governance mechanisms
created, improved and
implemented**

14

**contributions to
knowledge and
science**

16%

of the total for 2025

**People
trained**

14,236



46%

of the total for 2025

USD 107,691

**investment
in supplies,
equipment or
infrastructure**

7%

of the total for 2025

19

**strategies, action
plans and guidelines
created or improved**

24%

of the total for 2025

Impact 2025

25,000

hectares

under Ecosystem-based
Adaptation measures.

USD 2,345,200

**mobilized for community climate
action in the Guatemalan highlands.**



Ecosystem-based adaptation and mitigation: protecting life, sustaining livelihoods and reducing risk across territories.

In Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, climate change has real and critical implications for both nature and people. Climate disruptions are reshaping crop cycles, altering water sources, increasing the frequency of wildfires and affecting the safety of communities. In 2025, IUCN consolidated a regional response built on a clear principle: **resilience is built through healthy ecosystems and governance capable of sustaining them**. Climate work therefore advanced along three mutually reinforcing directions: **Ecosystem-based Adaptation** to reduce vulnerability; **Nature-based Solutions** to restore and maintain natural infrastructure; and **technical evidence + local capacities** to enable anticipatory decision-making.

Within the Climate programme, the regional contribution is reflected in two key outcomes:

01

Scaling

Nature-based Solutions to contribute to climate mitigation.

02

Grounding

climate responses in scientific assessments and knowledge, avoiding adverse impacts on nature and people.

The strength of the territory: Ecosystem-based Adaptation visible in the landscape and felt in people's lives

Climate adaptation isn't something that's simply decreed: it's **tested, measured** and **learned** on the ground. In **Guatemala, Costa Rica and Mexico**, IUCN supported **small-scale farmers and livestock producers** in implementing Ecosystem-Based Adaptation measures such as water and soil management in production systems, good production practices for the recovery of degraded soils, agroforestry

systems, agrosilvopastoral and silvopastoral systems, forest plantations, forest conservation for productive and protective purposes and landscape restoration. In Guatemala and Mexico, a significant portion of these benefits reaches **Indigenous Peoples**, linking climate resilience with rights and territorial tenure.



La Suerte Biological Corridor: a reconnected territory for resilience

In the canton of Pococí, in Limón province on the northern Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, extreme climate conditions intersect with everyday pressures: intensive agricultural production, ecological fragmentation, territorial expansion and growing service demands. The response was collective. The **La Suerte Biological Corridor, now integrated into the National System of Biological Corridors**, was built through a participatory approach that placed local realities at the centre of planning conservation, sustainable production and governance.

Covering approximately **75,000 hectares** (nearly one third of the district) and home to around **48,000 inhabitants**, the corridor operates as a “living network” connecting Protected Areas, farms, rivers and communities in order to restore ecological connectivity and strengthen key ecosystem services (water regulation, soil and biodiversity).

“The community feels that the corridor belongs to them, because they built it with their own hands and decisions. And that is what makes it strong.”

Luis Alejandro Vega Vargas, Environmental consultant, Municipality of Pococí

Learn more:



**Storymap
Biological Corridor La Suerte**



Science and timely decisions: agroclimatic information to strengthen food security

In the eight countries that form the **Central American Integration System**, anticipating climate conditions is an essential component of food security. For this reason, in 2025 IUCN strengthened the **Agroclimatic Technical Roundtables**, spaces where science, technical expertise, public policy and farmers interpret climate variability scenarios in order to generate practical recommendations.

The initiative included a regional exchange workshop held in Panama City, coordinated with the **Executive Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council** and the **Alliance between Bioversity International and Centro Internacional Agricultura Tropical**, resulting in a five-year action plan aligned with the **Climate-Adapted Sustainable Agriculture Strategy 2018–2030**.

Regional strengthening also included an exchange of experiences between Guatemala and Panama, where a delegation from **Panama's Ministry of Agricultural Development** and the **Executive Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council** worked with **Guatemala's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food** and the **National Institute of Seismology, Volcanology, Meteorology and Hydrology** to deepen understanding of the interinstitutional coordination that enables the functioning of the **Agroclimatic Technical Roundtables**.

“We take with us the idea of generating climate information by climatic regions in order to produce much more accurate forecasts, as well as the experience of working with Indigenous Peoples to build a much stronger Agroclimatic Technical Roundtable for Panama.”

Jorge Carlos Hernández Jaén,
Agro-Environmental Unit, Ministry of
Agricultural Development of Panama



In the western highlands of Guatemala, the **Altiplano Resiliente Project** specifically **supports** the **Agroclimatic Technical Roundtables** of the Quiché, Quetzaltenango, Totonicapán and Chimaltenango peoples, providing ongoing technical assistance for the implementation of adaptation practices in agricultural and forest plots.

As a cornerstone of this support, a **Local Climate Communicators Network** was created in partnership with National Institute of Seismology, Volcanology, Meteorology and Hydrology. The network brings together **43 participants from Indigenous communities in the highlands**, translating complex scientific data into local languages so that meteorological information reaches communities directly and effectively.

“What could be better than having weather data translated into your own language, so you can understand the information firsthand from people within your own community?”

Gilma Gómez, Head of Meteorological Research, National Institute of Seismology, Volcanology, Meteorology and Hydrology

Members of the network developed four communication plans, one for each Agroclimatic Technical Roundtable, focused on raising awareness about watershed management.

“We seek to inform, train, raise awareness and mobilise communities to promote more responsible watershed management and climate action.”

Silviamaria Emperatriz, Member, Local Climate Communicators Network



Local Climate Communicators Network

© IUCN



Preparing is also preserving

When climate impacts strike, the difference between disaster and response lies in organisation.

In the **Honduran Moskitia**, IUCN supported the consolidation of **three Indigenous Territorial Emergency Councils** as governance platforms to coordinate emergency responses with national authorities, activate early warning systems and sustain climate action plans with cultural relevance and a rights-based approach.

Incorporating traditional knowledge into risk management is a condition for effectiveness when working in Indigenous and Afro-descendant territories.

Beyond immediate response, resilience in 2025 was strengthened through the institutionalisation of nature within development planning instruments. In Costa Rica and Guatemala, as a result of participatory processes involving state institutions, Indigenous Peoples and civil society, **Ecosystem-based Adaptation** was incorporated as a strategic axis in territorial planning instruments at both local and national levels. A notable milestone is Costa Rica's **National Rural Territorial Development Plan 2024–2030**, a tool designed to guide public investment that includes climate change considerations.

“The National Plan is a fundamental tool for transforming rural communities into prosperous and resilient territories. It will make it possible to guide public investment more effectively, strengthen local capacities and stimulate the rural economy through joint work with the Territorial Rural Development Councils, local governments and the private sector.”

Ricardo Quesada Salas, Executive President,
National Institute for Territorial Development

To ensure the development of these instruments, IUCN provided support through the preparation of **specialised methodological guidelines**. These tools enable the mainstreaming of the **Ecosystem-based Adaptation** approach in territorial planning and land-use management at both cantonal and national levels, ensuring that climate adaptation has a clear technical pathway towards implementation.

In Guatemala, this institutionalisation effort reached the level of **public policy** with the proposal of the **National Policy for Compensation of Ecosystem Services Associated with Forests**. This initiative was led by the **National Forest Institute** and driven through a multi-stakeholder process that included members of academia and representatives of Indigenous Peoples.

The policy seeks to establish a solid institutional framework to value and protect the services that ecosystems provide to society, closing the loop between territorial planning and the financial sustainability of conservation.





SAbERES Seedbed: sowing resilience so that knowledge remains in the community

In the Highlands, Sierra Madre and Lacandon Jungle of Chiapas (Mexico), climate change is already translating into productive losses and increasing pressure on rural livelihoods. Out of this reality emerged the **SAbERES Seedbed**, a participatory training programme designed to provide tools, networks and capacities for adapting livelihoods through Ecosystem-based Adaptation, with specialisation in productive value chains such as beekeeping, the milpa farming system, non-timber forest products, community ecotourism and sustainable coffee production.

Designed and implemented by the **Instituto para el Desarrollo Sustentable en Mesoamérica (Institute for Sustainable Development in Mesoamerica)**, an IUCN Member organisation, the programme engaged **more than 250 participants, 60% of whom identified as Indigenous Peoples**, representing **27 organisations**. The results are measurable. More than **90%** of participants now understand key concepts such as climate risk, ecosystem services and Ecosystem-based Adaptation (compared to 30% at the beginning of the programme). The initiative has also led to the adoption of agroecological practices such as organic fertilisers, crop rotation and water conservation.

“Every time I attend a workshop, I return to my community and gather my colleagues to share and replicate what we learned...”

Lucía Jiménez, Honey producer,
Highlands of Chiapas

Resilience became a network. The SAbERES Seedbed consolidated an active exchange among more than **200 producer leaders**, who maintain continuous communication to share climate information, technical recommendations and emergency support, while also strengthening local leadership and the participation of women and youth.

The Climate 2025 initiative confirms that adaptation is not an isolated project, but a capacity embedded in the territory. From the corridor reconnecting landscapes in Costa Rica's Caribbean region to the SAbERES programme professionalising adaptation practices in Chiapas; from agroclimatic roundtables translating science into agricultural decisions to Indigenous councils coordinating emergency responses, IUCN strengthens the natural and social infrastructure that enables communities to resist, recover and move forward in the face of the global climate crisis.



Great-tailed grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

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Voice and regional visibility

In 2025, IUCN's work in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean also made a mark in the public sphere. Strategic communication was established as a tool for advocacy that enabled the translation of technical evidence into accessible formats, amplified the voices of local communities and brought to light the challenges and solutions shaping the conservation agenda.

In this regard, IUCN's digital presence reflects its ability to bring these debates into the public sphere and to transform specialised knowledge into useful, accessible and relevant content for decision-makers, cooperation partners, Members, communities and broader audiences interested in biodiversity and sustainability.

The footprint of knowledge

The regional website established itself as a repository of technical and narrative reference. During 2025, IUCN published **40 articles**, building a steady flow of analysis, evidence and stories about conservation, restoration, territorial governance, rights, climate adaptation and biodiversity in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean.

These contents helped build bridges between public policy, applied science and concrete experiences from the territories.

Impact in numbers: an expanding digital community

Consolidated digital impact

The growth of the digital community reflects a greater capacity for connection and advocacy.

Total views:

2,320,977

Global community:

40,654
followers



A regional voice with projection

Taken together, this content ecosystem allowed IUCN to expand the public circulation of knowledge, strengthen its regional positioning and reach new audiences with an agenda grounded in evidence, local contexts and solutions.

The 2025 report highlights a region that not only faces complex challenges but is also developing responses based on science, governance and collective action.

From landscape restoration and water management to ocean protection, territorial rights and climate resilience, IUCN reaffirms its role as a facilitator of knowledge, advocacy and cooperation to sustain biodiversity and well-being in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.



Guatemala

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XVIII Encuentro de Juventud
Afrocentroamericano
y de la Diáspora.
Septiembre 2016 La Ceiba, Honduras

XVIII Encuentro de Juventud
Afrocentroamericano
y de la Diáspora.
Septiembre 2016 La Ceiba, Honduras



To learn more about conservation initiatives, stories and progress in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, we invite you to follow IUCN's digital channels and stay connected with the evolution of the work in the region.



IUCN Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean

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2025



REGIONAL OFFICE
MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

ormacc@iucn.org
Tel. + (506) 2283-8449
www.iucn.org/ormacc