



## PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

### **In spite of budget cut Ecosystem Alliance welcomes Funding for People and Nature**

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The Ecosystem Alliance - a partnership between IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands, Both ENDS and Wetlands International - is very happy to announce that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to partially (65%) co-fund its programme 'Empowering People and Nature'. Even though the Alliance did not get all the requested and urgently needed funds.

The proposal concerns a five-year programme in which the three organizations will jointly work on sustainable use of nature in developing countries where people strongly depend on healthy ecosystems for water and food security, and the threats of climate change or disasters like floods. The goal of the Ecosystem Alliance is: 'to improve the livelihoods of the poor and create an inclusive economy, through participatory and responsible management of ecosystems.'

The programme addresses three overall themes: ecosystems and livelihoods; greening the economy on a local, national and global level in the North and the South; and climate and ecosystems.

The ultimate target group of this programme are the poor in rural communities who live in, depend on, have an impact on or otherwise interact with (semi) natural ecosystems. This includes for example farmers, nomadic graziers, fishermen and forest dwellers.

To reach and support them in their struggle to fight the degradation of their own environment, the Ecosystem Alliance wanted to work with 200 local civil organisations in nine ecoregions, spread over 26 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. For nature knows no national borders.

'We understand the difficult decision the ministry was forced to take due to the budget cuts. Since we won the appeal in July, we are still happy that we are partially able to continue our work with rural people living in depleted ecosystems. We have to work out the consequences for our programme and will inform our partners as soon as possible', said Willem Ferwerda, director of lead applicant IUCN NL.

'The loss and degradation of ecosystems is affecting people everywhere. This continuing trend especially undermines the development opportunities of the rural poor, who for example depend on fisheries in rivers and lakes, on food and water supplies safeguarded by wetlands and forests. There is increasing international recognition and evidence, including in economic terms, that wiser use and restoration of these ecosystems should be given high priority in tackling poverty. Although we will not be able realise our ambitions for supporting rural communities in this work, we will still be able to make a significant difference', said Jane Madgwick, CEO of Wetlands International.

Danielle Hirsch, executive director of Both ENDS: 'it is our aim to connect and support local civil society organizations in rural areas. With our complementary networks of local organizations we are able to be efficient and address the needs of those people who are struggling in depleted ecosystems.'

Willem Ferwerda: 'the challenge is to focus, be efficient and build bridges. Cooperation with local organisations, while also seeking the dialogue with business, governments and IUCN members in the Netherlands and beyond is a difficult task, but the only way forward.'