

IUCN

10 YEARS OF TIGER CONSERVATION ACTION

Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme

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10 YEARS OF TIGER CONSERVATION ACTION

Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme

About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,400 Member organisations and around 16,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development.

Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being.

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FOREWORDS



Ms Christiane Laibach

Member of the Executive Board, KfW

Tigers are among the most majestic animals living on Earth. Their beauty and strength leave none of us unmoved. And yet, over the last century, human interventions have made a world without tigers an all too plausible scenario, putting these magnificent cats on the verge of extinction. In light of this alarming situation, recent years have also seen concerted efforts to protect this iconic species, successfully leading to a reversed trend in tiger numbers.

This report marks the 10-year anniversary of launching the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP), a multi-country grant programme funded across Asia by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW Development Bank. Since its start in 2014, ITHCP, under the overall management of IUCN, has closely worked with government agencies, NGOs, and civil society organizations in support of tigers, their habitats, and the communities living in surrounding areas.

ITHCP was established to contribute to the Global Tiger Recovery Programme, a milestone agreement signed in 2010 by the thirteen tiger range countries with the aim to double the number of tigers by 2022. Tiger numbers had dropped to an all-time low of 3,200 in 2010 – a decline by 97 percent compared to 100 years ago caused by habitat destruction, poaching, illegal trade and depletion of prey species. Recent figures indicate that while the actual doubling of tiger numbers has not been met, significant advancements have taken place. Around 4,500 are now estimated to be living in the wild.

For more than 25 years KfW Development Bank on behalf of the German government has provided financial support for the protection of biodiversity around the globe, contributing to the equitable and sustainable management of protected areas and adjacent corridors, while fostering the socio-economic development of local communities. Support to the recovery of tiger populations is an outstanding example of KfW's commitment to biodiversity protection, with a total of 47.5 million EUR provided for tiger conservation over the last decade.

ITHCP has focused on six selected tiger range countries, offering financing for tiger conservation and community support in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Nepal. Tiger conservation measures benefit not only a single species. By providing equipment and training to organizations engaged in tiger conservation, support is also given to the protection of valuable natural landscapes and countless other species, such as elephants and rhinos, living therein. ITHCP has also contributed to better institutional coordination at local and national levels and, with that, to the improved governance of nature conservation per se. Lastly, ITHCP has placed special emphasis on engaging closely with the often marginalized and vulnerable communities living near tiger habitats, fostering their well-being and sustainable livelihoods, and contributing to less conflictive human-wildlife co-existence.

Despite the important achievements made, a series of challenges remain. To name a few: Recovery of tiger populations has been uneven, with numbers having declined close to zero in parts of South-East Asia. Tiger habitats continue to diminish due to human pressure, fragmentation of landscapes, and the destruction of corridors that connect tiger populations. Where tiger numbers have increased, sustainable solutions for population management call for further action as does the need to ensure the safety of local communities.

I congratulate all stakeholders involved in the ITHCP for their considerable accomplishments both in terms of preserving this iconic cat and supporting the livelihoods of local communities. Hope is restored that tigers will continue to roam the lands of Asia. The achievements made serve as an encouragement to all of us: With dedication, coordination, and sufficient funding, it is indeed possible to halt the loss of biodiversity.



Dr Grethel Aguilar

Director General, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

This year, we proudly celebrate a decade of the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP), launched in 2014 as a collaboration between the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the German Cooperation via KfW Development Bank. This is a significant occasion to reflect on our collective journey and the strides we have made in tiger conservation. The ITHCP has evolved over the years and has truly become a model of effective conservation action, showcasing what can be achieved through dedicated effort, strategic planning, and unwavering commitment.

The urgency of protecting biodiversity has never been clearer. Our very existence depends on the health of nature. Tigers, as apex predators, play a crucial role in maintaining the health of our ecosystems. Their decline not only threatens the species itself but also signifies deeper ecological imbalances affecting countless other species, including humans.

The ITHCP has been at the forefront of addressing these challenges. From conserving habitats and curbing poaching to empowering local communities, our holistic approach is making a tangible difference. Our projects have restored critical habitats, reduced poaching incidents, promoted sustainable livelihoods and fostered harmonious coexistence between tigers and local communities. Furthermore, by partnering with Indigenous Peoples, the ITHCP supports traditional knowledge and practices that enhance community stewardship. This approach not only helps protect tiger habitats, but also empowers these communities, fostering a shared commitment to preserving both cultural heritage and biodiversity.

The ITHCP's success is deeply rooted in IUCN's extensive network, institutional knowledge, and scientific expertise. Leveraging IUCN's global reach and technical resources has enabled us to develop and implement effective conservation strategies, leading to positive and measurable impact. Our work contributes to the Global Biodiversity Framework by promoting species recovery, enhancing habitat connectivity, and ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources. Additionally, our efforts have significantly contributed to the Global Tiger Recovery Programme (GTRP), an international initiative aimed at doubling the wild tiger population. Following the launch of GTRP 2.0 in 2023, IUCN and the ITHCP remain committed to reversing the decline of tigers, addressing global issues like climate change, and securing resources for conservation efforts.

Our achievements would not have been possible without the invaluable support of our partners and donors, the German Cooperation via KfW Development Bank, the dedication of local communities, governments, the broader conservation community, and the implementing partners of this programme – our grantees. Together, we have demonstrated that conservation is not just a necessity but a practical and achievable goal.

As we look to the future, our resolve remains stronger than ever. The next decade will bring new challenges, but it also holds the promise of continued progress to save tigers from extinction. We are committed to expanding our efforts, exploring new frontiers in conservation action, and further engaging with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to ensure that the legacy of the tiger – and the health of our planet – endures for generations to come. Together, we can protect this majestic species and the world we share.

1. Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP)

The importance of tigers for biodiversity, climate and health

Tigers are an umbrella species and a key indicator of biodiversity health. Their protection indirectly ensures the conservation of thousands of other species within the same habitat and the overall health of the ecosystem. This, in turn, is essential for addressing climate change, protecting biodiversity and benefiting human communities through essential ecosystem services.

As apex predators, tigers regulate prey populations and help maintain the delicate balance within ecosystems. Protecting and restoring tiger habitats, which are often vast and diverse landscapes, prevents deforestation and is a critical climate change mitigation strategy, as these forests and grasslands are vital carbon sinks. Additionally, healthy ecosystems protect communities against natural or human-made disasters and can help prevent the emergence of zoonotic diseases and future pandemics.

Tiger landscapes are critical for human well-being, providing essential resources like food, water and medicinal plants for hundreds of millions of people. Tiger conservation efforts can improve economic security and environmental stewardship, leading to sustainable livelihoods that support conservation and empower communities.

Tigers transcend political boundaries, serving as powerful ambassadors for transboundary conservation. Their presence in multiple countries has fostered international cooperation to protect these magnificent creatures and their habitats.

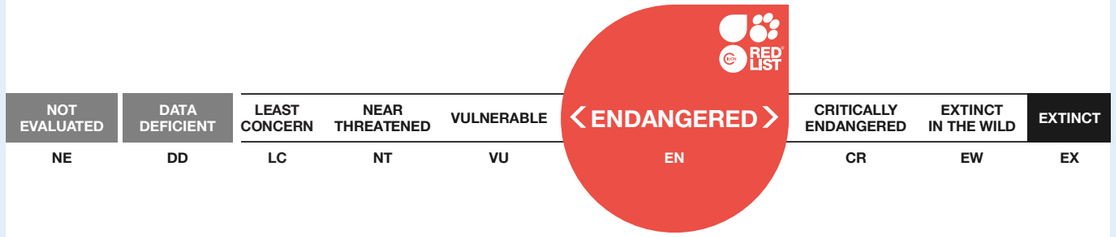
Besides their key role in ecosystems, these iconic creatures also hold a profound significance in many Asian countries. Considered symbols of power, strength and good fortune, they are deeply embedded in many cultural and religious beliefs.

By focusing on tiger conservation, we invest in the health of our planet and the well-being of future generations, contributing to global and national agendas on biodiversity, climate and health. The decade-long commitment of the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP) has yielded significant results, demonstrating the power of collaborative efforts to ensure a thriving future for tigers, their habitats and the communities that live in and around them.


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THE STATUS OF THE TIGER *(Panthera tigris)*

Listed as Endangered by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, tigers have declined by almost 97% over the last century, from around 100,000 individuals at the beginning of the 20th century, to an all-time low of approximately 3,200 individuals in 2010. The main threats to tigers in the wild are poaching, habitat loss and fragmentation, and human-wildlife conflict. The latest IUCN Red List Assessment, which was published in 2022, estimated that around 4,500 tigers remain in the wild, but while tiger numbers have increased in some sites (particularly India and Nepal), they have declined in others, especially in South-east Asia. Despite progress made in tiger conservation in the last years, today tigers occupy less than 7% of their historic range. Within the remaining tiger habitat, 63 Tiger Conservation Landscapes in ten countries have been identified as critical for the survival of tigers, eight of which are transboundary.



ITHCP multidimensional approach


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The Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP) is a flagship initiative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), funded by the German Cooperation (BMZ) through KfW Development Bank. The programme was created in 2014 to contribute to the Global Tiger Recovery Programme, a landmark agreement adopted by 13 countries in 2010 that aimed to double tiger numbers in the wild by 2022.

Since its inception, ITHCP has showcased the transformative potential of collective conservation efforts, through the collaboration of governments, international, regional and national NGOs, and most importantly, Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

The programme consists of a portfolio of large-scale projects in key Tiger Conservation Landscapes across Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Myanmar and Thailand.

ITHCP promotes a multidimensional approach, addressing the interconnected issues of species, habitats and people. This strategy ensures the long-term success of tiger conservation efforts demonstrating how holistic solutions can lead to lasting positive change.



PROTECTING SPECIES



PRESERVING HABITATS



SUPPORTING PEOPLE

Species: protecting tigers and their prey by strengthening anti-poaching efforts, wildlife monitoring and human-wildlife conflict mitigation measures. This directly addresses the decline in tiger populations, ensuring coexistence with humans.

Habitats: preserving tiger habitats through the effective management of protected areas, buffer zones and corridors, and the restoration of degraded areas. This ensures the long-term survival of tigers by providing them with the space and resources they need to thrive.

People: supporting and empowering Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) through the promotion of sustainable livelihoods and awareness raising programmes, while following a participatory, rights-based approach that places IPLCs at the center of ITHCP projects. This reduces pressure on critical habitats, while fostering a sense of shared responsibility and respect for tigers that is sustained beyond project duration.

ITHCP acts as a catalyst for change at the policy level, supporting Tiger Range Countries in their efforts to achieve species recovery goals. This includes aligning national strategies with the Global Tiger Recovery Programme, National Biodiversity Action Plans (NBSAPs), the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Climate Agreement, and prioritising conservation efforts within key tiger landscapes.

Leveraging its unique position as a union, IUCN works closely with its Commissions and Member organisations to drive supportive policies inspired by on-the-ground action. This ensures that policy decisions are informed by practical experiences and contribute to long-term conservation success.

ITHCP aims to foster knowledge sharing and exchange across different organisations and countries. Through workshops, trainings and exchange programmes, project teams supported under ITHCP have the opportunity to learn from each other, discuss common challenges and identify best practices.

All funded projects are aligned to the ITHCP Monitoring Framework and report on the same set of indicators, enabling the tracking of progress and evaluation of intervention effectiveness at the programme level.

Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS)

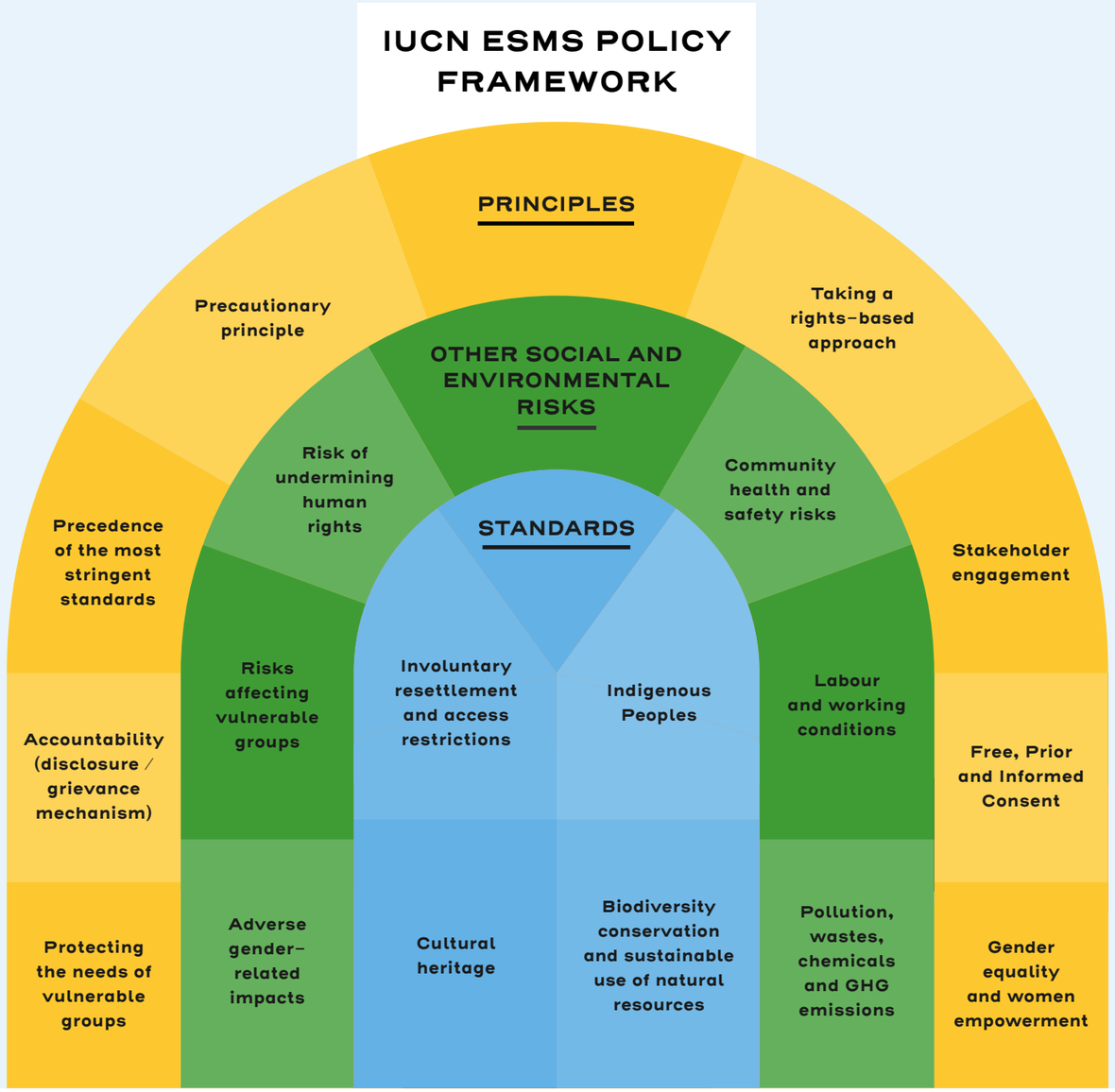
As part of its accountability and due diligence, ITHCP has a strongly embedded Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS), to ensure that potentially negative environmental and social impacts are identified and assessed prior to commencement and then mitigated through implementation, while at the same time aiming to enhance positive impacts. This rigorous, safeguard process is applied throughout the project cycle, through Environmental and Social (E&S) Screening, development of E&S safeguard instruments and their implementation and progress reporting.

ITHCP follows the IUCN ESMS, alongside KfW's Sustainability Guideline and the relevant Standards contained therein, including the World Bank Environmental and Social Standards, which serve as obligatory frameworks for safeguarding its projects. These standards are applied for the proper management of the identified E&S risks and impacts that arise primarily from project activities. These impacts encompass issues related to access restrictions, human–wildlife conflict, IPLC participation, human rights issues (especially related to law enforcement and patrolling), labour and working conditions, benefit sharing, among others.

All ITHCP projects have an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), which includes the necessary elements and tools required to manage E&S risks and impacts that have been identified to be associated with the project. It is mandatory for each project to seek Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), to ensure communities are provided with sufficient information about the project's nature and scope and give their consent for its implementation, without any form of coercion. Whenever any project has components of law enforcement, the ESMP includes Standard Operating Procedures and the Memorandum of Understanding with the law enforcement agency. If the project involves small scale construction works (including in livelihood programmes), an Environmental and Social Code of Practice is required. Similarly, the ESMP also includes Process Framework and Community Engagement Planning Framework to address any access restriction issues that might arise out of, or be aggravated by the project activities. There are also special safeguard requirements in case projects takes place on lands, waters, or territories of Indigenous Peoples or other local communities with legal (including customary) rights and entitlements to such lands, waters, or territories. Further, village specific plans are also formulated to ensure site-specific and relevant mitigation measures, and engagement protocols are in place. Other mitigation measures include security risk assessments, leverage assessments, and various training modules catered to project teams, partners and broader stakeholders.

Each project needs to conduct stakeholder engagement in a manner consistent with the IUCN and KfW Standards and each ITHCP project also has a dedicated Grievance Mechanism in place. Community engagement protocols and grievance management processes implemented through the ESMS enable ITHCP projects to operate accountably, to ensure they are implemented in a socially and environmentally responsible manner and benefit the people living in the target areas.


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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES (IPLCs) AND THEIR ROLE IN TIGER CONSERVATION

IPLCs are the key players in conservation, with their profound knowledge of, and relationship with, the natural world. They have unique cultural values, spiritual practices and ways of life embedded deeply within nature, which contribute to shaping their landscapes. IPLCs are usually the first to be affected by environmental degradation and are often marginalised, socio-economically vulnerable and excluded from decision-making processes. However, their knowledge of the natural world is indispensable when it comes to conservation, and it is only through their engagement and participation that conservation efforts can be successful. Working closely with IPLCs for tiger conservation allows ITHCP to address interrelated issues associated with habitat fragmentation, unsustainable resource use and depletion, climate change and biodiversity loss, in a way that protects both wildlife and the livelihood of the local communities living in and around tiger habitats.

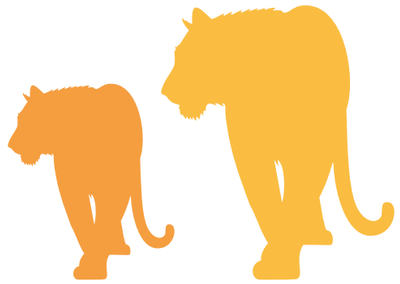
Our impact in numbers

€47.5 million
provided by the German Cooperation



€13 million
match funding provided by partners

ITHCP contributed to the estimated
40%
increase in tiger numbers globally
between 2015 and 2022



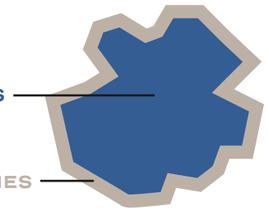
44
protected and conserved areas supported

=

over
69,000 km²

71%
CORE AREAS

29%
BUFFER ZONES



More than
2,300 km²



of corridor areas supported

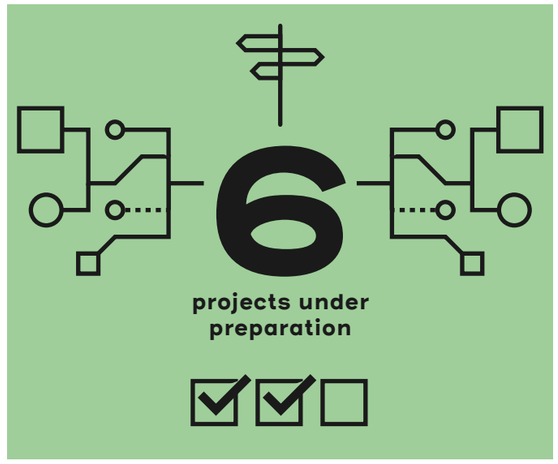


32
awarded grants

17
projects completed

12
projects ongoing

3
studies funded



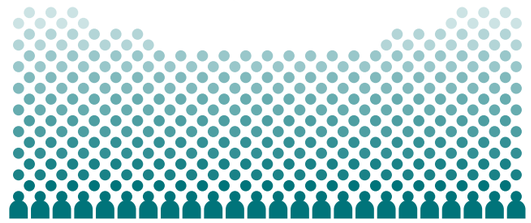
6
projects under preparation

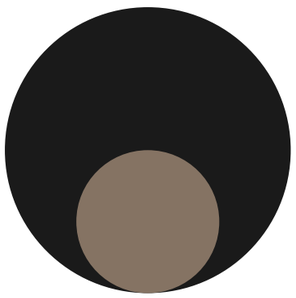
More than
10,500 ha
of habitat restored

with over
500,000
trees planted



10,000+
people trained
to strengthen law enforcement and improve the management of tiger habitats





Average grant size between
€500,000
and
€2 million



16
grantees supported

95,000+
people
benefitted from development of
sustainable livelihoods

54% are women



675,000+
people
reached through awareness raising activities

22% are children



ITHCP and the Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, all 193 United Nations member states unanimously agreed upon the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), setting forth a transformative agenda to address the world's most urgent social, environmental, and economic challenges by 2030. These 17 Goals (and their associated targets) outline concrete ambitions to create a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future, and require collaborative efforts, bold actions, and innovative solutions from governments, the private sector, civil society, and individuals.

The conservation of tigers and their habitats both directly and indirectly contribute to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by conserving biodiversity, supporting sustainable development and preserving and improving ecosystem health.



ITHCP works with local communities to develop alternative, sustainable income sources, reducing their dependence on forest resources and creating long-term jobs.



ITHCP assists communities in improving their food security by supporting sustainable food production and resilient agricultural practices, as well as promoting the diversification of incomes.



Within rural areas, infectious diseases in livestock, wildlife and human populations can be detrimental to communities with limited access to veterinary and healthcare service. Several ITHCP projects include outreach activities, helping communities access this care.



Most ITHCP projects incorporate income generating activities, which can be vital for local communities to afford an education for their children. Awareness raising activities also contribute to educating children and adults about biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.



All ITHCP projects incorporate gender equality and women's empowerment, involving women in decision-making and income generation.



Many ITHCP projects operate in remote areas, with limited sanitation access. ITHCP provides infrastructure to ensure access to clean water and proper sanitation.



By providing clean energy to communities living near protected areas, ITHCP reduces reliance on firewood, lowering human-wildlife conflict and promoting coexistence between humans and tigers.



ITHCP projects focus on sustainable employment by offering support for the development of alternative livelihoods which utilise accessible and sustainable resources. Thereby improving local economies and creating vital job opportunities.



ITHCP projects strive to incorporate the construction of lasting, sustainable and eco-friendly infrastructure to support conservation activities and sustainable livelihoods.



Through ESMS, projects address any existing or potential inequalities in their landscapes, by considering the needs and ensuring meaningful participation of marginalised and vulnerable groups.



ITHCP contributes to this goal by providing sustainable and low-impact fuel alternatives and ensuring ecologically sound and resilient buildings are constructed, utilising local materials.



ITHCP projects focus on the efficient and sustainable management of natural resources which help local communities reduce dependence on forest resources and promote a more sustainable and harmonious lifestyle with nature.



By protecting natural areas and reforesting lands, all ITHCP projects are mitigating impacts of climate change, while strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity of local communities living in and around tiger landscapes.



ITHCP supports the preservation of mangrove ecosystems, the adoption of sustainable fishing practices and the reduction of pollution from agricultural activities, which contribute to the protection of aquatic species.



By conserving tigers, ITHCP projects contribute to the preservation of many other species, as well as the protection and restoration of tiger habitats. As a result, every project has a positive and direct impact on the entire ecosystem in which tigers live.



ITHCP promotes inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making across all its project activities, and it advocates for the development of effective and accountable institutions across Tiger Range Countries.



ITHCP focuses on strengthening partnerships, promoting collaboration and enhancing knowledge sharing among public, private, and civil society sectors.

ITHCP and the Global Biodiversity Framework

Kunming-Montreal
GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted in December 2022 during the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity. This landmark framework aims to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and outlines an ambitious roadmap to realise the global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050. The GBF has four long-term goals for 2050 and 23 action-oriented targets to be reached by 2030.

ITHCP contributes to the GBF targets 1 to 8 by reducing threats to biodiversity

ITHCP projects support governments in developing management plans for protected areas to guide the protection and management of these important habitats, ensuring the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities are respected.

Land, forest and ecosystem protection and restoration, along with the creation of corridors within the project sites, plays a vital role in preserving and expanding tiger habitats, thereby supporting their long-term survival and genetic diversity.

To halt the decline of tiger popoulations and diversity, ITHCP projects establish robust monitoring of tigers and their prey, addresses poaching threats and minimise human-wildlife conflicts, while promoting sustainable practices that reduce local communities' dependence on tiger habitats.

ITHCP also strengthens collaboration between local governments, communities and NGOs to achieve success in the protection of tigers.

TARGET 1
Plan and Manage all Areas To Reduce Biodiversity Loss

TARGET 2
Restore 30% of all Degraded Ecosystems

TARGET 3
Conserve 30% of Land, Waters and Seas

TARGET 4
Halt Species Extinction, Protect Genetic Diversity, and Manage Human-Wildlife Conflicts

By assisting local communities in accessing sustainable, alternative sources of income, ITHCP projects ensure that the use, harvesting or trade of wild species is sustainable, safe and legal, preventing overexploitation and minimizing impacts on species and ecosystems. Healthier ecosystems in turn contribute to reducing the risk of pathogen spill-over.

Several ITHCP projects have contributed to the removal and control of invasive species in project sites.

Projects have also introduced alternative energy sources, which simultaneously conserve remaining forests and contribute to climate change mitigation, enhance resilience, and reduce carbon dioxide emissions and pollution.

TARGET 5
Ensure Sustainable, Safe and Legal Harvesting and Trade of Wild Species

TARGET 6
Reduce the Introduction of Invasive Alien Species by 50% and Minimize Their Impact

TARGET 7
Reduce Pollution to Levels That Are Not Harmful to Biodiversity

TARGET 8
Minimize the Impacts of Climate Change on Biodiversity and Build Resilience

ITHCP contributes to the GBF targets 9 to 13 by meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing

ITHCP activities aim to reach the most vulnerable and resource dependent communities, while ensuring the respect and protection of traditional knowldge and customary sustainable uses.

ITHCP projects support the adoption of sustainable and innovative agricultural, fishing and forestry practices for local communities to protect biodiversity and natural resources.

Many projects also promote the diversification of income sources, for example, through the promotion of ecotourism and other sustainable livelihoods that incentivise species conservation.

TARGET 9
Manage Wild Species Sustainably To Benefit People

TARGET 10
Enhance Biodiversity and Sustainability in Agriculture, Aquaculture, Fisheries, and Forestry

TARGET 11
Restore, Maintain and Enhance Nature's Contributions to People

TARGET 12
Enhance Green Spaces and Urban Planning for Human Well-Being and Biodiversity

TARGET 13
Increase the Sharing of Benefits From Genetic Resources, Digital Sequence Information and Traditional Knowledge

ITHCP contributes to the GBF Targets 14 to 23 by implementing and mainstreaming key tools and solutions

Through engagement with national and local governments, protected area managers and policy makers, ITHCP ensures biodiversity is integrated into key decision-making.

In all ITHCP projects, promoting the sustainable use and consumption of natural resources is a crucial element of livelihood initiatives.

A key aspect of ITHCP's projects involves conducting awareness-raising initiatives to educate local communities on the critical importance of biodiversity, sustainable resource management, and the prevention of illegal activities.

ITHCP promotes capacity-building, fosters knowledge exchanges and the use of innovative technologies between governments, NGOs and conservation experts to strengthen effective tiger monitoring and science-based conservation action.

Through ESMS, ITHCP advocates for women to have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute equally at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity and local land management.

TARGET 14
Integrate Biodiversity in Decision-Making at Every Level

TARGET 15
Businesses Assess, Disclose and Reduce Biodiversity-Related Risks and Negative Impacts

TARGET 16
Enable Sustainable Consumption Choices To Reduce Waste and Overconsumption

TARGET 17
Strengthen Biosafety and Distribute the Benefits of Biotechnology

TARGET 18
Reduce Harmful Incentives by at Least $500 Billion per Year, and Scale Up Positive Incentives for Biodiversity

TARGET 19
Mobilize $200 Billion per Year for Biodiversity From all Sources, Including $30 Billion Through International Finance

TARGET 20
Strengthen Capacity-Building, Technology Transfer, and Scientific and Technical Cooperation for Biodiversity

TARGET 21
Ensure That Knowledge Is Available and Accessible To Guide Biodiversty Action

TARGET 22
Ensure Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice and Information Related to Biodiversity for all

TARGET 23
Ensure Gender Equality and a Gender-Responsive Approach for Biodiversity Action

IUCN in collaboration with partners developed the **Global Species Action Plan** (GSAP) to support implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The GSAP outlines strategic interventions and actions to conserve and sustainably manage species while ensuring equitable benefits. ITHCP activities are aligned to the actions identified in the GSAP and therefore provide a crucial contribution to achieving GBF goals and targets.

Timeline

JANUARY 2010
1st Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation is held in Bangkok, Thailand

NOVEMBER 2010
The Global Tiger Recovery Program (GTRP) 2010–2022 is endorsed in the St. Petersburg Declaration on Tiger Conservation at the International Tiger Forum ('Tiger Summit') held in St. Petersburg, Russia

OCTOBER 2012
2nd Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation is held in Thimphu, Bhutan

DECEMBER 2013
IUCN and BMZ/KfW signed a funding agreement of €20 million for the implementation of the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP)

APRIL 2016
3rd Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation is held in New Delhi, India

OCTOBER 2017
1st ITHCP Grantees Workshop is held in Pench Tiger Reserve, India

DECEMBER 2018
BMZ/KfW commits an additional €7 million for ITHCP Phase II

DECEMBER 2020
BMZ/KfW commits an additional €5 million for ITHCP Phase III

JULY 2021
ITHCP Phase I Impact Report is published

JANUARY 2022
4th Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation is held virtually hosted by the Government of Malaysia

MAY 2022
BMZ/KfW commits an additional €15 million for ITHCP Phase IV

JULY 2022
IUCN Red List of Threatened Species reassess the status of the Tiger (*Panthera tigris*) as Endangered

SEPTEMBER 2022
The Vladivostok Declaration on Tiger Conservation is adopted at the 2nd International Tiger Forum held in Vladivostok, Russia

DECEMBER 2022
Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is adopted at the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15) in Montreal, Canada

JUNE 2023
Final Evaluation of ITHCP Phase I is conducted

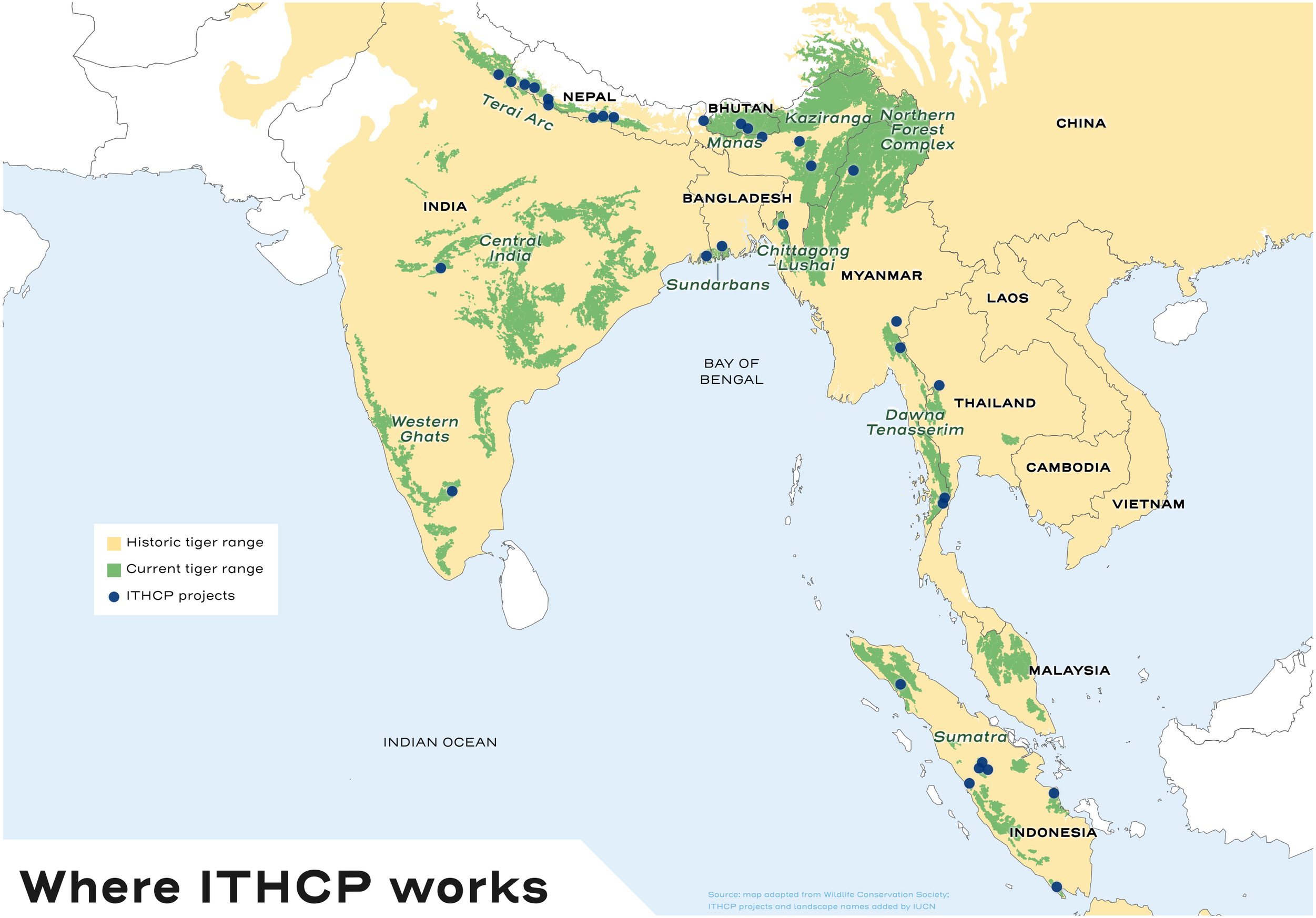
JUNE 2023
The Global Tiger Recovery Program (GTRP) 2.0 for the period 2023 to 2034 is released

AUGUST 2023
ITHCP Phase IV Call for Concept Notes is launched

JANUARY 2024
2nd ITHCP Grantees Workshop is held in Bangkok, Thailand

2. The ITHCP portfolio

Where ITHCP works



Source: map adapted from Wildlife Conservation Society; ITHCP projects and landscape names added by IUCN

Monitoring tigers and their prey

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Effective conservation requires a clear understanding of the status of the species we aim to protect. Understanding their numbers, distribution and movements is crucial to assess the effectiveness of conservation efforts and to make informed decisions about their protection. For tigers, this requires the implementation of a robust and regular monitoring programme, which extends beyond tigers themselves. In fact, monitoring their prey base – the diverse species tigers rely on for sustenance (primarily large ungulates such as wild boars, deer and wild cattle) – is critical to provide a complete picture of the health of ecosystems they inhabit.

WHAT IS ITHCP DOING TO ADDRESS THIS?

A key component of ITHCP is monitoring tigers and their prey in project sites, to assess population dynamics, as well as to understand habitat use and potential threats. This data, which is also shared with relevant government authorities, is crucial to support decision-making and adaptive management.

Tiger and prey assessments are conducted using extensive camera trap surveys, as individual tigers can be identified by their unique stripe patterns in camera trap photographs. Additionally, other techniques are also employed, including eDNA sampling to detect the presence of species, sign surveys (identifying pugmarks, scratch marks, scat and urine) and line transect surveys to visually detect animals.

ITHCP projects have contributed to nationwide assessments of tiger populations, as well as regular monitoring in key hotspots, and tracking tiger movements in corridors between protected areas and across countries. Monitoring has also allowed detection of negative impacts on tiger habitats, including poaching, habitat destruction, illegal activities and human–wildlife conflict. By actively involving communities in survey efforts, ITHCP has contributed to building local knowledge and fostering a sense of responsibility towards tigers and the environment.

ITHCP projects have enhanced the capabilities of rangers and local communities in data collection and analysis, and provided equipment such as camera traps, handheld GPS units and drones to conduct monitoring activities. In addition, safety protocols have been developed and first-aid training and supplies provided for the security of monitoring teams.

Several initiatives have also contributed to the development of standardised monitoring protocols for tigers and their prey, and supported governments of tiger range countries to develop and implement national tiger conservation action plans to ensure long-term strategic planning for the protection of tigers.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PROJECTS

In **Myanmar**, two projects implemented in the Dawna Tenasserim Landscape have conducted systematic camera trap surveys to collect important baseline information for the first time in these remote areas and monitored the movement of tigers between Thailand and Myanmar.

In **Nepal**, ITHCP supported national tiger surveys at key sites by providing technical assistance and training for park staff. Following this, a project implemented across four protected areas recorded a near 60% increase in the tiger population between 2018 and 2022.

In the **Bangladesh Sundarbans**, ITHCP supported the first comprehensive survey on tiger prey species density, abundance and distribution, to provide a baseline for future monitoring and support the assessment of the carrying capacity of tigers in this landscape.

In **Manas National Park, India**, annual monitoring of tigers conducted since 2016 has shown an increase in the tiger population from 15 to 21 individuals within the study area. In addition, monitoring data contributed to assessments of threats to tigers and their prey, and joint monitoring of tigers in transboundary areas was carried out with Bhutan.

In **Sumatra, Indonesia**, ITHCP assisted with the development of a standardised survey protocol for four protected areas, trained park staff in tiger monitoring methods and conducted camera trap surveys to estimate tiger and prey population trends.



© Kamlesh K Maurya, WWF India

> “ITHCP funding has been instrumental in driving innovative conservation strategies and improving livelihoods in Royal Manas National Park. The project’s success, evidenced by increased tiger populations and effective livelihood-based investments, positions us strongly for even more impactful conservation interventions with the ongoing project”
>
> Sonam Wangdi, Chief Forestry Officer, Nature Conservation Division, Department of Forests and Park Services



© DoFPS Bhutan

Case study

Bhutan boasts an unparalleled expanse of pristine and uninterrupted forest cover across the country, offering an extraordinary opportunity for the conservation of Bengal tigers. The Himalayan kingdom is home to a globally significant tiger population. The most recent national tiger survey, conducted between 2021 and 2022, revealed a population estimate of 131 individuals, signifying a remarkable 27% increase since 2015. Tigers in Bhutan are distributed widely across the nation, inhabiting elevations ranging from as low as 100 meters to soaring heights of 4,500 meters above sea level. Bhutan’s success in preserving its tiger population can be attributed to a well-structured network of protected areas covering over 50% of the country, an unbroken forest canopy encompassing 70% of the land, and an unwavering commitment to conservation.

ITHCP has supported the Department of Forests and Park Services of the Royal Government of Bhutan to implement tiger conservation measures since 2015 in Royal Manas National Park, and since 2023 within five protected areas and five forest divisions, which together are home to more than half of the tigers in the country.

The project aims to establish long-term, standardised monitoring of tiger populations, prey and their habitats in project sites. This includes nationwide tiger surveys, as well as using camera traps and non-invasive eDNA sampling in hotspot areas each year. eDNA is the genetic matter that organisms naturally shed in their environment, which can be extracted from water, soil or faeces and used to detect all living organisms in an ecosystem.

The project is also strengthening the capacity of frontline rangers by providing training on camera trapping, eDNA sampling and data management methods, as well as providing the equipment to set up a genetics laboratory.

Monitoring of tiger and prey populations has been fundamental to understanding the presence and relative abundance of tigers and prey species, and eDNA results are compared with those from camera trapping to provide a benchmark for future conservation research and action.

Tigers in high altitudes

Recent camera trap records of tigers at higher altitudes (up to elevations of about 4,500 m) suggest that tigers are expanding their range as a possible consequence of climate change and other anthropogenic pressures. In 2019, ITHCP supported the Global Tiger Forum, an intergovernmental body working for the conservation of tigers, to assess the potential of high-altitude tiger habitats. Recognising the need to step up tiger conservation in these areas, the study was followed by the development of an action plan for the conservation of tigers in high-altitude ecosystems in Bhutan, India and Nepal. To support implementation of the plan, ITHCP funded three projects in these landscapes, implemented by the National Trust for Nature Conservation in Western Nepal, the Department of Forest and Park Services in Bhutan, and the Global Tiger Forum in Sikkim, India. These projects are strengthening the capacity of local authorities and communities to effectively monitor and protect tigers, maintain critical wildlife corridors and generate sustainable livelihoods. By safeguarding tiger populations in mountainous regions, these projects are contributing to knowledge and data for biodiversity protection, while enhancing climate resilience in the wider Indo-Himalayan area.



© Global Tiger Forum

























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Addressing poaching and illegal trade

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Poaching is one of the greatest threats to the survival of tigers in the wild and a main driver of tiger populations decline. Tigers are hunted for their body parts, including skin, bones, teeth and other organs, which are used for traditional medicine, ornamentation and as a status symbol. Since 1975 the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has prohibited all international commercial trade of tigers and their parts. However, poaching and illegal trade continue to be a serious issue and effective law enforcement remains a challenge, with approximately 150 tigers seized per year globally.

WHAT IS ITHCP DOING TO ADDRESS THIS?

To prevent the poaching of tigers and their prey in project sites, ITHCP supports the training of rangers, as well as the establishment of community-based groups to undertake anti-poaching patrols. During patrols, wildlife signs are documented, evidence of illegal activities is recorded, and snares and traps are removed.

ITHCP has promoted the adoption and streamlining of SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) and other monitoring systems such as MSTrIPES (Monitoring System for Tigers: Intensive Protection and Ecological Status) in several protected areas, to record and analyse data from the patrols, such as tracks, animal sightings and other important observations. These systems help standardize data collection, analysis and reporting, making it easier for key information to get from the field to decision-makers. They enable protected area managers to identify poaching hotspots, understand species distribution and habitat changes over time, as well as planning, monitoring and adaptively managing patrols effectively.

ITHCP has promoted vital collaborations between park staff and local communities, including joint patrolling and the establishment of community-based anti-poaching units and ranger teams. These joint efforts help foster positive relationships and a sense of shared responsibility in protecting wildlife.

Equipment such as field gear, GPS and cameras have been provided to support effective anti-poaching patrols. Critical infrastructure such as housing for rangers, guard posts and watchtowers have been built and maintained to support law enforcement activities.

To compliment patrol efforts, several projects collaborate with trustworthy community observers that report on wildlife sightings, and provide community feedback to park management on illegal activities and wildlife trade. ITHCP has been building capacity in wildlife crime investigation and evidence collection, addressing illegal wildlife trade cases, and strengthening collaboration among authorities to tackle cross-border wildlife crimes. Some projects have also implemented rehabilitation programmes for former poachers, assisting them to become wildlife guardians by providing alternative livelihoods and raising awareness.

As part of all anti-poaching activities, ITHCP is committed to ensuring the rights and safety of Indigenous Peoples and local communities are respected through the rigorous safeguards process applied by all projects. This ensures that risks associated with law enforcement, including human rights issues and access restrictions, are avoided or mitigated. ITHCP also prioritises the security of patrol members and community observers through the operationalisation of safety protocols.

The combination of these initiatives has contributed significantly to reducing poaching of tigers, their prey and other endangered species, and controlling illegal activities within project sites, while following a rights-based approach.





© DoFPS Bhutan

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PROJECTS

In **Karen State**, **Myanmar**, two community ranger teams have been established, trained and equipped to conduct forest monitoring and patrols to protect wildlife and reduce poaching and other illegal activities.

In **Maharashtra**, **India**, MSTRiPES patrolling protocols were developed and implemented in five protected areas, with training provided to 200 Special Tiger Protection Force staff.

In **Nepal**, more than 500 frontline staff completed training in SMART and were provided with critical equipment needed for patrolling within four protected areas. A total of 38 community-based anti-poaching units were supported to reduce illegal activities in buffer zones and conduct awareness raising campaigns with local communities.

In **Valmiki Tiger Reserve**, **India**, law enforcement practices were improved by providing human rights training and mental health counselling to forest officials, as well as sensitisation of the judiciary on the need for a balanced approach to ensure conservation and community well-being.

In **Sumatra**, **Indonesia**, a project established and trained a community-based forest monitoring unit to conduct biodiversity monitoring and SMART-based patrols. Community observers were trained to identify tiger trafficking networks operating in the area and gather information related to illegal wildlife trade.

In **Bhutan**, ITHCP has supported the "Hunter to Hermit" programme through the construction of a retreat centre for former poachers who renounce hunting to become nature protectors, and by providing alternative livelihood opportunities.

> "Being a part of the community patrol group has allowed us to protect our wildlife and ensure the safety of our villagers. We have seen a positive impact on the tiger population and increased awareness among the community about conservation efforts. Tigers are a vital part of the ecosystem; by conserving them, we automatically protect the environment and maintain the balance of our natural world"
>
> U Htay Aung, Patrol Team Leader of Chaung Nauk Pyan Village Conservation Group



© Fauna & Flora

Case study

The Tanitharyi region in southern Myanmar is a globally important area for biodiversity, where recent field surveys have confirmed the presence of tigers and a rich diversity of prey species. However, this area is severely threatened by poaching and illegal trade, and habitat loss from land use conversion for agricultural expansion. Due to political instability in the country, regular law enforcement operations have been suspended and it is critical that community-based monitoring and protection measures are put in place to preserve this important tiger landscape.

An ITHCP-funded project implemented by Fauna & Flora International has established a local village conservation group to carry out regular monitoring patrols in forest areas near villages to protect tigers and their prey. The project has also contributed to the development of standard operating procedures and a code of conduct for community patrolling. These measures ensure the safety of rangers, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, while minimising risks to the environment.

The community patrol group was trained in wildlife species identification, survey techniques, SMART patrolling, deploying camera traps and first aid. Necessary equipment such as communication devices, field gear and safety supplies were also provided to ensure effective and safer patrolling activities. While the group does not have a mandate for law enforcement, patrols focus on monitoring wildlife populations, identifying signs of poaching and other illegal activities, and raising awareness among local communities about the importance of conservation.

Promoting human–wildlife coexistence

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

As tiger habitats shrink and human and tiger populations grow, competition for space and resources increases, which leads to more frequent encounters and conflicts between humans and wildlife. Due to habitat fragmentation and disturbance, tigers roam beyond protected areas and into human settlements in search of food. This can lead to livestock depredation and human injuries or even deaths. Crop destruction by prey species can also result in devastating economic losses for local communities and jeopardize their food security. In addition, conflicts can fuel resentment, erode local support for tiger conservation and potentially lead to retaliatory killing of tigers.

WHAT IS ITHCP DOING TO ADDRESS THIS?

Recognising the critical linkage between human and tiger well–being, ITHCP actively promotes an integrated approach to human–wildlife coexistence. This requires consideration of the unique ecological, cultural, social, historical, physical, economic and political characteristics of each situation in order to develop effective human–wildlife conflict management strategies.

Amongst the measures promoted by ITHCP projects is the establishment and mobilisation of response teams, often composed of people from local communities who volunteer their time to assist in wildlife emergencies, for example by rescuing tigers and other wild animals that enter villages, releasing them back into their natural habitat. These teams stand as the first line of defence in conflict situations, contributing both to the safety of local communities and the protection of tigers and other animals.

Projects have also installed preventive measures such as early warning systems, deterrents and street lights to reduce animal forays in villages. Physical barriers such as mesh–wire, electric or bio–fences have been used to restrict wildlife from accessing crop fields and human settlements, while predator–proof corrals, together with improved animal husbandry methods, limit the risk of livestock depredation by large carnivores.

Financial mechanisms have been developed to offset economic losses and other costs, thereby increasing tolerance and reducing the risk of retaliatory killings. For example, ex gratia payments aim to compensate victims after a depredation case or human fatality has occurred, while quick relief mechanisms are intended to provide immediate support to victims of human–wildlife conflict. Projects have also raised awareness among local communities about compensation schemes and improved their capacity to prepare compensation and insurance claims.

Awareness raising programmes have improved local knowledge on wildlife behaviour and effective human–wildlife conflict mitigation measures, through street drama, exposure visits and school programmes. In addition, sustainable livelihoods have been promoted as an alternative to accessing resources in forest areas, such as fuelwood collection or hunting. This has helped to reduce the time spent in the forest, therefore lessening the chances of encountering large carnivores, while having a positive impact on tiger habitats.

In 2018, ITHCP commissioned a study to collate information on best practices for managing conflicts between people and tigers. Drawing on the experience of several ITHCP projects, the study concluded that there is no simple and universal recipe to mitigate human–wildlife conflict, and solutions should always be adapted to the context of each situation. Overall, the best strategies were considered to be those involving communities, strengthening collaboration and communication between all stakeholders, and ensuring their long–term commitment.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PROJECTS

In the **Sundarbans**, ITHCP has supported 50 Primary Response Team members in India and 177 Village Tiger Response Team members in Bangladesh. These teams collaborate with the Forest Department to respond to human–wildlife conflict occurrences and handle wildlife emergencies.

In **Nepal**, ITHCP has assisted with the establishment of six human–tiger conflict mitigation committees, the installation of early warning systems to prevent crop destruction, and the provision of more than 750 predator proof corrals to help reduce livestock predation.

In **North–East India**, ITHCP supported the installation of 66 solar–powered lights in seven tea plantations, strategically located to reduce threats to human safety, while simultaneously allowing for dark passages to facilitate movement of wildlife.

In the **Leuser ecosystem**, **Indonesia**, 60 tiger–proof enclosures were constructed in village areas to protect cows and other livestock from large carnivore attacks.

In **Maharashtra**, **India**, ITHCP contributed to establishing 115 Primary Response Teams to deal with human–tiger conflicts on the ground, as well as the construction of over 25 km of fencing around villages and agricultural fields to reduce crop depredation.



© WildTeam

> “I am satisfied and thrilled after the support received for the installation of the predator-proof corral, which has addressed a significant challenge pertaining to leopards and tigers entering our village at night and killing our goats in the shed, causing substantial financial losses. Goat farming has been our primary source of income, essential for covering daily expenses, supporting our children’s education, and managing our household. The introduction of these corrals has mitigated the economic distress we previously endured”
>
> Januka Pathak, Thori Rural Municipality-2, Ichhanagar



© Katjuscha Dörfel, WWF Germany

Case study

The Terai Arc Landscape, spanning across northern India and southern Nepal, is home to several endangered species, including tigers, rhinos, elephants and leopards. Over the last decade, and as a consequence of increased wildlife and human populations, this landscape has seen a rise in human-wildlife conflicts incidents, leading to crop damage, livestock loss, human casualties and injuries.

With support from ITHCP, WWF has adopted a multifaceted approach to promote human-wildlife coexistence in the Chitwan-Parsa-Valmiki complex in India and Nepal. Since 2016, the project has provided several preventative measures to communities affected by human-wildlife conflict. For example, in Valmiki Tiger Reserve in India, 50 solar street lights and 25 early warning systems were installed at strategic locations identified in collaboration with local communities. On the Nepal side, the project has supported the construction of more than 1,000 predator-proof livestock corrals for households living on the forest fringes within buffer zones, to protect cattle and goats from leopard and tiger attacks.

The project has also established, equipped and mobilised Rapid Response Teams and Primary Response Teams in conflict prone areas to respond to human-wildlife conflict incidences. These teams are trained in conflict management, including wildlife handling, rescue, and rehabilitation. Awareness activities such as street dramas and youth engagement programmes have been implemented to promote community awareness of wildlife behaviour and how to prevent human-wildlife conflict.

The project has also facilitated access to government compensation schemes and established other types of compensation mechanisms for human-wildlife conflict victims. An endowment fund has been established in eight Buffer Zone User Committees in Nepal. The fund provides a rapid financial relief mechanism when human casualties or injuries occur, and also provides scholarships for children of human-tiger conflict victims.


© Satyaki Naha

Managing protected and conserved areas effectively

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Over 60% of tiger subpopulations occur within protected areas. Such areas are at the core of tiger conservation, as they provide safe havens for tigers, offering them the space, resources and prey base they need to survive. In addition, protected areas ensure the protection of other endangered species, such as leopards, rhinos and elephants. However, existing protected areas require extensive human and financial resources to guarantee that they are effectively managed and equitably governed. Without well-defined management plans, dedicated resources for their implementation and regular monitoring, protected areas can fail to achieve their conservation objectives.

WHAT IS ITHCP DOING TO ADDRESS THIS?

ITHCP recognises that effectively managing protected areas is critical for the conservation of tigers and biodiversity in general. Since its inception, the programme has supported 44 protected and conserved areas across six countries. So far, projects have contributed to the development or improvement of more than ten protected area management plans though participatory processes, taking climate change adaptation requirements into account. These plans outline management goals and approaches, provide a framework for decision-making and assist the identification of priorities to support effective area-based conservation outcomes.

Monitoring activities are key to tracking progress and for adaptive management of protected areas. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) is the most widely used protected area assessment system, which is used to evaluate improvements in the effectiveness of protected areas and to guide management decisions. ITHCP has supported METT assessments in project sites, as well as the application of other tools for tiger conservation site management, such as the Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS).

Many projects build the capacity of protected areas staff on a wide range of topics, including wildlife and ecological monitoring, SMART patrolling, habitat management techniques, protected area management skills and rights-based approaches to conservation. Equipment and infrastructure have also been provided, such as guard posts, watch towers, ranger housing, vehicles (cars, boats and motorbikes) and the maintenance of forest roads.

These project interventions have significantly contributed to improving the management effectiveness of project sites and ensuring the long-term survival of tigers, their prey and other wildlife living in these areas.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PROJECTS

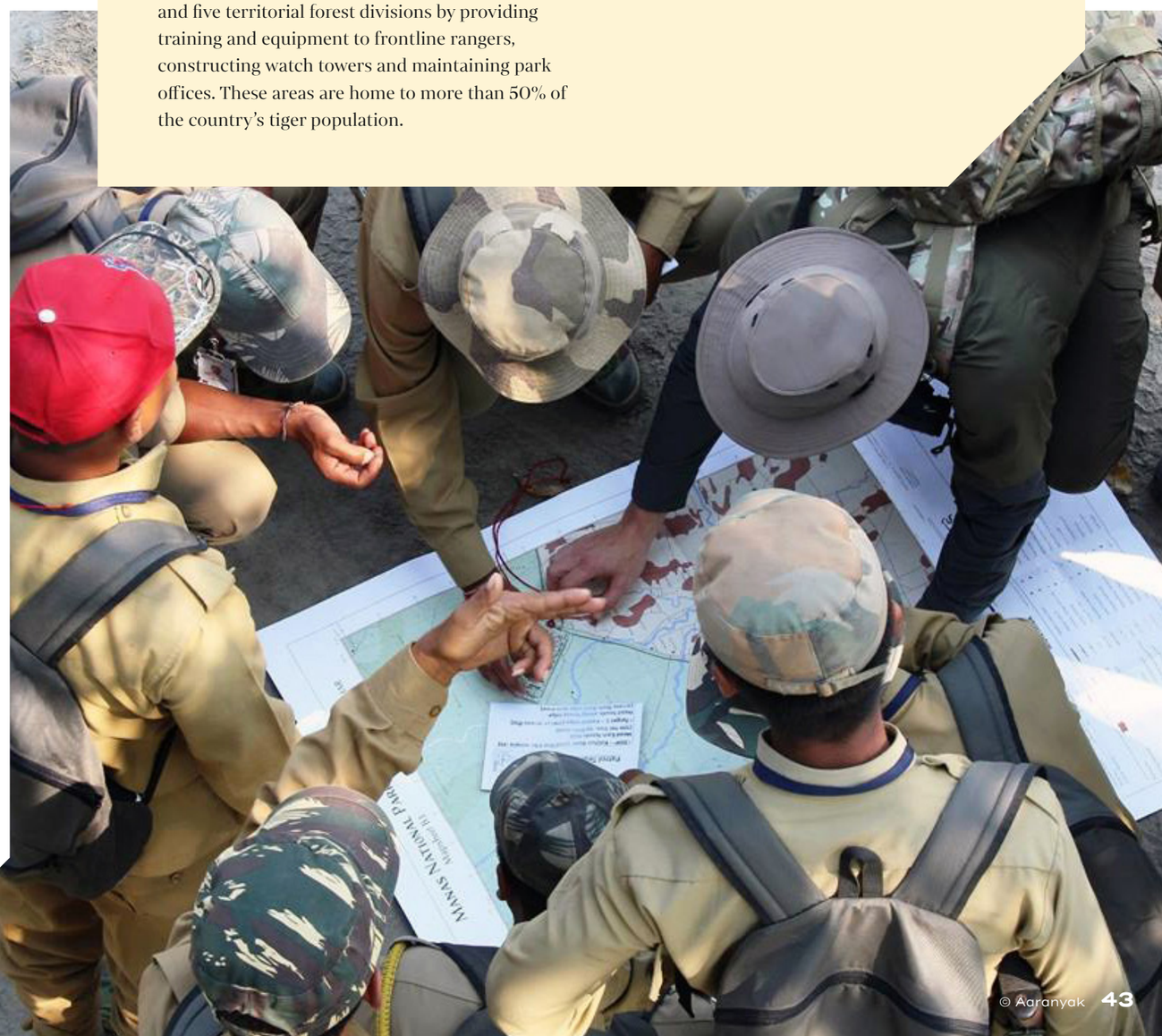
In **Western Nepal**, a project assisted in the preparation of a large carnivore conservation strategy for high altitude landscapes in Sudurpashchim province, as well as the development of a management plan for Khaptad National Park.

In **Sumatra**, **Indonesia**, METT assessments were conducted in four protected areas, recording an 11% average increase in METT scores between 2015 and 2019, indicating improved management effectiveness.

In **Bhutan**, an on-going project aims to increase management effectiveness of five protected areas and five territorial forest divisions by providing training and equipment to frontline rangers, constructing watch towers and maintaining park offices. These areas are home to more than 50% of the country's tiger population.

In **Chitwan and Parsa National Parks**, **Nepal**, ITHCP constructed five guard posts and provided equipment such as solar lights, furniture and internet facilities. To ensure availability of clean drinking water for park staff, reverse osmosis water purification units were installed at 15 guard posts and bio-sand water purification plants in 12 guard posts.

In **Sikkim**, **India**, a project is building capacity in four protected areas by providing training to 100 forest officials and frontline staff, upgrading infrastructure for biodiversity monitoring and anti-poaching, and improving ranger facilities.



© Aaranyak

> The Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Program has been a great support in working towards tripling the tiger population in Nepal. It has been possible due to our commitment to conservation and community engagement. Through collaborative efforts, we have not only safeguarded critical tiger habitats but also empowered local communities to become active stewards of their natural heritage. This program proves that when we work together, wildlife conservation and sustainable development can go hand in hand”
>
> Mr. Bishnu Shrestha, Under Secretary, Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation, Former Chief Conservation Officer, Bardiya National Park


© ZSL

Case study

Since 2016, an ITHCP-funded project implemented by Zoological Society of London (ZSL) has supported the management of five protected areas in the Terai Arc Landscape (Parsa, Banke, Bardiya, Shuklaphanta National Parks in Nepal and Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary in India). The project is implemented in close collaboration and coordination with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), the focal government agency for wildlife conservation in Nepal, and Uttarakhand Forest Department (UKFD) in India.

Technical support has been provided for the development of the National Tiger Conservation Action Plan for Nepal and the revision of management plans for four national parks, to ensure alignment to the national strategy and assist protected area managers to effectively manage the sites.

The project has supported the adoption and systematic use of Conservation Assured Tiger Standard (CA|TS) as the standard tool for management and monitoring of tigers in protected areas in Nepal. CA|TS assessments were conducted in all five tiger recovery sites. In 2023, a CA|TS training program was conducted for park authorities to enable the evaluation of current management efforts against the key pillars listed in the CA|TS accreditation framework, and subsequently, assessment updates were completed in all protected areas.

The project has also provided training of frontline protected area staff in SMART and MSTrIPES systems, wildlife and ecological monitoring, and adaptive habitat management techniques. Protected area infrastructure has been improved through the construction of eight guard posts, the maintenance of more than 200 km of patrol road, the construction of 25 km of new patrol road, and the installation of solar panels in 72 guard posts.


© Global Tiger Forum

Protecting, restoring and connecting habitats

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Habitat loss and fragmentation are a leading cause of biodiversity loss and a major threat to tigers, which require large areas and a sufficient prey base for their survival. Climate change is exacerbating this problem. Preserving habitats and sustaining ecological connectivity is therefore fundamental for tiger survival, as well as the conservation of many other species. At the same time, healthy habitats provide multiple benefits to humans, including food, clean water, materials and carbon sequestration among others, as well as reducing the risk of zoonotic disease transmission between humans and wildlife.

WHAT IS ITHCP DOING TO ADDRESS THIS?

ITHCP supports the conservation of protected and community-based conservation areas, as well as the restoration of degraded habitats, to ensure tigers have safe spaces to roam and breed. This has been done in close consultation with and active participation from local communities, to benefit both the environment and the people living in these areas. ITHCP mandates clear community engagement protocols and the application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

Habitat management activities are implemented in protected areas to ensure a sufficient prey base, maintain water quality and provide a healthy environment for tigers to thrive. These activities include grassland management to increase the presence of tiger prey species, the creation and restoration of waterholes to ensure a consistent source of water for wildlife, and the construction and maintenance of fire lines to control the spread of wildfires. Several ITHCP projects have also conducted habitat monitoring activities, for example, using remote sensing, to assess the health of tiger habitats, identify threats and inform the development of effective conservation strategies.

Many projects have promoted habitat restoration measures, including reforestation through planting trees and native vegetation, the removal of invasive plant species and the protection of watersheds.

The establishment of plant nurseries and fodder production for livestock has helped communities in accessing the resources they need, while reducing reliance on forests and restoring degraded corridors and buffer zones.

Projects have also improved habitat connectivity through the creation and maintenance of wildlife corridors that connect fragmented habitats and facilitate the movement of tigers and other wildlife. This ensures tiger populations are connected and can disperse to new areas for feeding and breeding, maintaining genetic diversity and reducing human-wildlife conflict.

By implementing these strategies, ITHCP fosters a landscape-scale approach to tiger conservation, ensuring tigers have the space they need to thrive in a changing climate.



© Langgeng A.U, KERABAT

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PROJECTS

In **Nagaland**, **North-East India**, six communities living on the fringe of Ntangki National Park have revived traditional conservation measures, designating Community Conservation Areas (CCA) and implementing regulations in forested areas that serve as a crucial corridor for wildlife.

In **Assam**, **North-East India**, a project has promoted participatory forest restoration of 24 ha of jhum fallow (a shifting cultivation farming technique), using more than 1,400 native tree saplings produced in community nurseries. Fifteen jhum-dependent families have also been engaged in three agroforestry model plots covering 4.5 ha.

100 ha have been restored in the Shikaribas corridor to maintain critical connectivity between Chitwan and Parsa National Parks in **Nepal** and Valmiki Tiger Reserve in **India**, facilitating transboundary movements of tigers and their prey.

In the Tanitharyi region in **southern Myanmar**, remote sensing analysis has been used to detect land cover changes and monitor the integrity of tiger habitats in the wider landscape.

In **Nepal** a project supported the construction of 11 waterholes, the maintenance of 104 km of fire lines, the management of 212 ha of grassland and the restoration of 8 ha of land with the planting of more than 25,000 seedlings in buffer zone community forests.

> The ITHCP is a trailblazer project being first of its kind to focus on wildlife corridors and areas outside protected areas of the region. The project successfully stressed the importance of maintenance and development of corridors through sensitization and education to all the stakeholders. Providing alternative livelihoods and mitigating human–wildlife conflicts not only helped in increasing tiger numbers but improve the genetic viability through safe migration in the region”
>
> B.S. Hooda, Maharashtra Forest Department

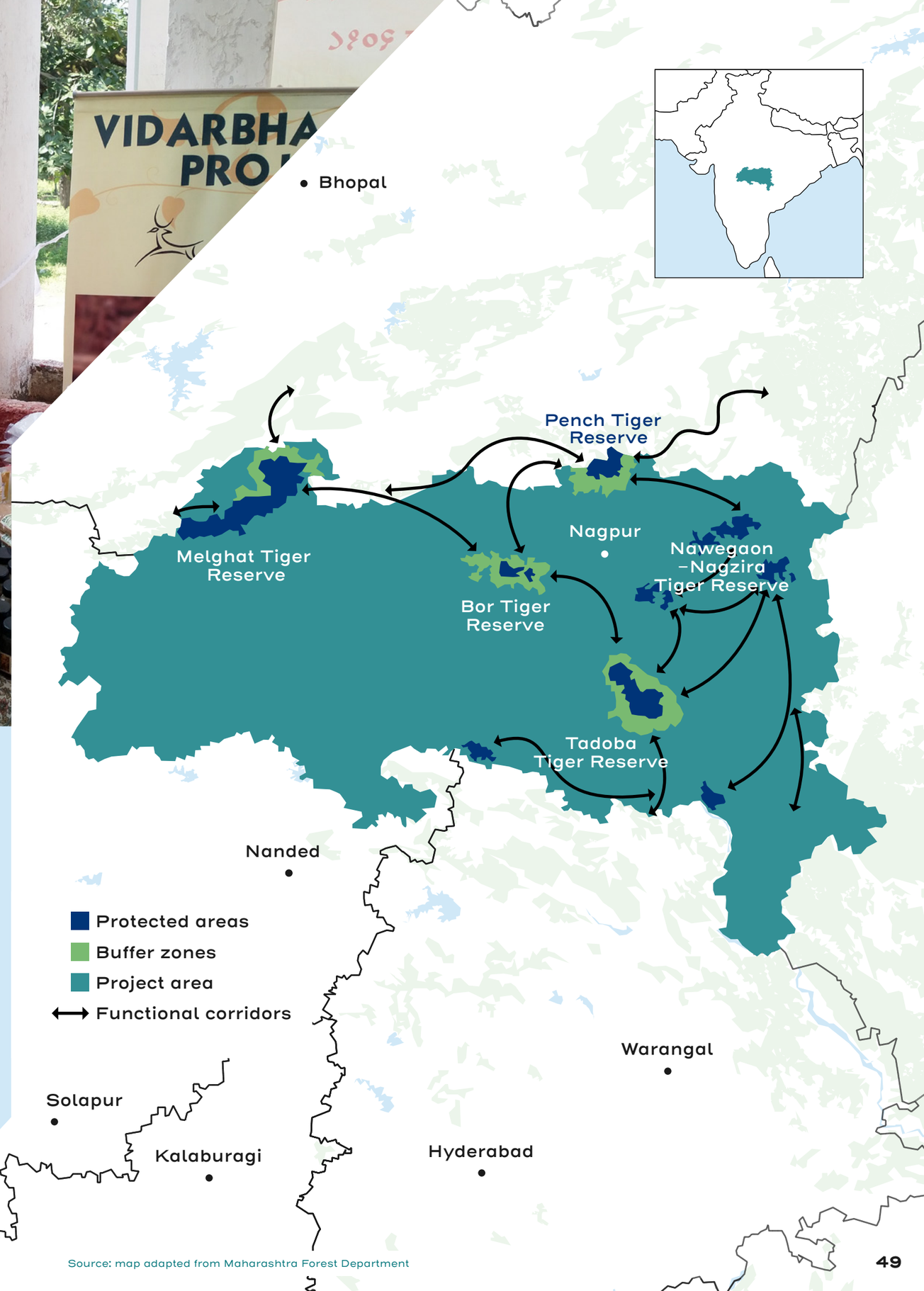


Case study

An ITHCP project implemented by the Maharashtra Forest Department focused on corridor areas connecting five Tiger Reserves in central India. This landscape is extremely important for maintaining the connectivity of tiger populations across the country, thus playing a crucial role in maintaining genetic diversity of tigers, which is essential for the long-term survival of the species at a meta-population level.

This project promoted an integrated tiger conservation initiative for the first time at the landscape level, bringing together a large number of NGOs previously working in isolation. The project focused on offering sustainable livelihood support and reducing human–tiger conflicts in corridor areas through the establishment or revitalisation of 279 self-help groups, the provision of 120 training sessions on alternative income streams, as well as more than 7,500 improved cooking stoves to reduce local communities' dependence on fuelwood. In addition, 115 Primary Response Teams were established to address human–wildlife conflicts, which contributed to improving coexistence between humans and tigers.

The project also contributed to the removal of invasive plant species in 840 ha in Melghat Tiger Reserve, as well as the desilting of 44 water bodies to increase their water retention capacity and the construction of 21 waterholes fed through solar powered pumps to improve water availability for wild animals in four protected areas.



Source: map adapted from Maharashtra Forest Department



© Anil Thapa, WWF India

Promoting transboundary collaboration

Transboundary collaboration is a key feature of many ITHCP projects, contributing to the effective implementation of conservation activities, especially in relation to tiger population movement, the management of human–wildlife conflicts and the control of illegal wildlife trade across borders.

For example, by supporting transboundary meetings and exchange visits involving protected area managers, local authorities and communities, ITHCP has improved collaboration between Nepal and India in the Terai Arc Landscape. These activities resulted in better coordination and regular information sharing to control human–wildlife conflict, poaching and wildlife crimes. Knowledge exchange on best practices has also assisted protected area managers to improve the management of their respective sites, and helped local communities learn about conflict mitigation strategies and sustainable livelihoods.

Similarly, transboundary meetings and exchange programmes have been organised in the Manas Landscape, with joint patrolling activities taking place between Royal Manas National Park in Bhutan and Manas National Park in India.

Collaboration was also fostered among several community-based groups in transboundary areas of the Sundarbans in India and Bangladesh by conducting exchange visits. During these visits, members of Primary Response Teams, Tiger Scouts and Bagh Bandhus (Friends of Tigers) shared their experiences and challenges while managing human–wildlife conflict.

Engaging Indigenous Peoples and local communities

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) are at the forefront of conservation, sharing and shaping their landscape alongside biodiversity. Their culture and practices are tied very closely to their natural world. These communities are the stewards of tiger conservation, but they also face the highest risks associated with forest resource depletion, climate change and increasing human–wildlife conflict. It is through meaningful engagement with IPLCs that we can better understand existing gaps and challenges at a grassroots level, and tap into their vast knowledge system for effective conservation. Engaging them is also essential to ensure their active participation through a rights-based approach, with their support and ownership of conservation activities in their landscape.

WHAT IS ITHCP DOING TO ADDRESS THIS?

Meaningful engagement and mobilisation of IPLCs are at the centre of all ITHCP interventions: community members actively participate in the co-development and implementation of conservation efforts, ensuring their rights are respected and that they benefit from project activities, while also promoting a sense of ownership and inspiring environmental stewardship. All ITHCP projects involve inclusive partnerships with IPLCs, ensuring proper safeguard mechanisms are in place to identify, protect and support the most vulnerable groups. Attention is given to design activities that respond to the needs of the communities and support their well-being and livelihoods. This is done following Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) protocols, alongside robust stakeholder engagement frameworks outlining step-by-step processes of integrating communities' participation in project activities. To foster accountability, each project site also has a grievance mechanism in place, specifically designed to be accessible, transparent and responsive.

Most ITHCP projects operate in landscapes where IPLCs are highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihood, experience socio-economic marginalisation and are at risk of human–wildlife conflict. Therefore, ITHCP activities are focused on offering alternative or additional sources of income and ensuring the safety of communities and their livestock. For example, preliminary consultations are conducted to identify the underlying causes of human–wildlife conflict and develop responsive mitigation measures. In sites with marginalised and vulnerable communities, projects establish clear engagement protocols and beneficiary selection criteria aimed at engaging and supporting these communities. In addition, ITHCP projects have supported the establishment of community-based cooperatives and livelihood groups that facilitate community ownership in mobilising funds for livelihood and conservation activities of their choice.

IPLCs are extensively involved in the mapping of natural resources and development of management plans, to ensure their participation in decision-making concerning sustainable resource use. This ensures that the needs of the community are met, conflict hotspots are identified, and sites of cultural significance are protected. ITHCP has also been instrumental in facilitating cooperation between communities and conservation authorities through various stakeholder engagement activities, and joint monitoring and patrols. This has helped include communities' perspectives in management practices, empower their decision-making and recognise their role in conservation.

These activities have helped develop and maintain meaningful relationships with communities for site-specific, globally relevant and locally appropriate conservation efforts.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PROJECTS

ITHCP has supported the Karen Wildlife Conservation Initiative in the protection of core tiger forest habitat lying within the Salween Peace Park, an indigenous-led initiative to promote peace-building, ethnic-led self-governance and environmental conservation in **Karen State**, **Myanmar**.

Participatory land use mapping and planning was conducted in **Rimbang Baling Wildlife Reserve**, **Indonesia**, to assess the impacts of current zoning regulations on livelihoods. The project facilitated dialogue between local communities and authorities for the development of Conservation Agreements on land uses that support both livelihoods and conservation.

In the **Sundarbans delta of India and Bangladesh**, a project has integrated local communities in tiger conservation efforts through the establishment of community-based volunteer groups and response teams, empowering them to effectively respond to human-wildlife conflicts and inspire environmental stewardship.

In the **Terai Arc Landscape of Nepal**, ITHCP has supported community-led fund mobilisation schemes for livelihood and human-wildlife conflict mitigation purposes, prioritising communities as the decision makers as to the usage of the funds.

In **Assam**, **North-East India**, local communities in ten villages have been engaged to conduct participatory natural resource management planning, which has helped identify existing natural resources and land use patterns and enable the development of effective management measures.



© Sanjay Gubbi



© WCS India

> “In most villages across Nagaland, Community Conserved Areas are established but suffer from inadequate monitoring and enforcement by the village councils. Here in Ikesingram village, I have observed that with the intervention [of the project], there has been a marked increase in awareness and commitment towards conservation within these areas. The villagers are now taking the management and protection of the Community Conserved Areas more seriously”
>
> Ikiesingram Village Pastor, Haisuayibe

Case study

The North-East Indian state of Nagaland is a critical landscape connecting Kaziranga Tiger Reserve in India and tiger habitats in Myanmar, and it is therefore essential for the long-term survival of tiger metapopulations in the Indo-Myanmar region. Through the support of ITHCP, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) India has been implementing a community-based conservation project in the fringes of Ntangki National Park, in forest areas that are largely community-owned and managed. The project operates in this important tiger migration corridor with the dual objective of promoting community-led tiger habitat conservation and livelihood creation for local communities.

Following consultations with IPLCs, WCS India has led an innovative Sustainable Livelihood Contest in six target villages to identify viable sustainable livelihood activities. During the contest, members pitched their livelihood ideas, and the winners were selected based on innovation, sustainability, practicability, community impact and profitability. The winners received monetary support to bring their livelihood idea into fruition. This contest, alongside Story Telling and Drawing Contests to raise awareness about conservation matters, has become an effective platform to foster strong relations with local communities, while promoting their empowerment and livelihood development.

The project has also involved youth in biodiversity monitoring and the development of an herbarium to document indigenous knowledge on plants. Additionally, it has supported communities in managing community conservation areas and formalised hunting regulations to protect forested areas, while facilitating linkages between village institutions and local government authorities.

© WWF

Promoting sustainable use of natural resources and alternative livelihoods

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Local communities living in and around tiger habitats are often dependent on forest resources for their daily needs. In some cases, this can lead to increased encounters and conflicts with wildlife, jeopardizing the safety of local communities, while over-reliance on resources can result in a threat to tigers and biodiversity. The promotion of sustainable practices and development of alternative income-generating activities is therefore crucial to securing the well-being and safety of local communities, while helping to reduce pressure on tigers and their habitats.

WHAT IS ITHCP DOING TO ADDRESS THIS?

ITHCP works closely with local communities to develop sustainable natural resource management practices, promote the diversification of livelihoods and identify alternative income sources where needed.

To reduce reliance on firewood, which is predominantly used for cooking by rural households, several projects have provided improved cooking stoves, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) connections, biogas digesters and electric stoves. These alternative and more energy-efficient cooking devices have allowed local communities to reduce their per capita consumption of fuelwood, and hence decreased the risk of encounters with tigers and other conflict-prone wildlife species in forests. In addition, the provision of alternatives to forest-based fuelwood has helped improve women's health, due to decreased exposure to smoke during cooking activities, and resulted in significant time savings, with the time previously spent collecting firewood utilised for other productive activities.

ITHCP has also supported the adoption of fodder crops to reduce grazing, as well as the establishment of community forests and plantations, improving accessibility of the communities to these resources and reducing over-extraction from protected areas.

Many projects have promoted alternative income-generating activities to diversify income streams and improve food security, for example, by facilitating trainings and the establishment of micro-enterprises and market linkages. Capacity building has been provided within a wide range of practices, including sustainable farming techniques, animal husbandry, beekeeping, food processing, handicrafts production and ecotourism activities, among others. Some projects have also supported the establishment of self-help groups, cooperatives and community banking initiatives; for example, seed fundings were made available for the provision of micro-loans at low interest rates for income generating activities.

Most of the livelihood-related activities supported by ITHCP projects target vulnerable groups, including indigenous communities and women. These activities are assisting communities to enhance their well-being and income, but also to adapt to climate change, by improving food and water security such as community access to drinking water, protecting habitats and building climate-smart livelihoods. In addition, income generating activities such as ecotourism and craft making can be instrumental in empowering Indigenous Peoples by fostering a sense of pride towards their identity and cultural traditions.

By promoting sustainable practices and fostering alternative livelihoods, ITHCP empowers local communities to become partners in tiger conservation, ensuring a future where both humans and tigers can prosper.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PROJECTS

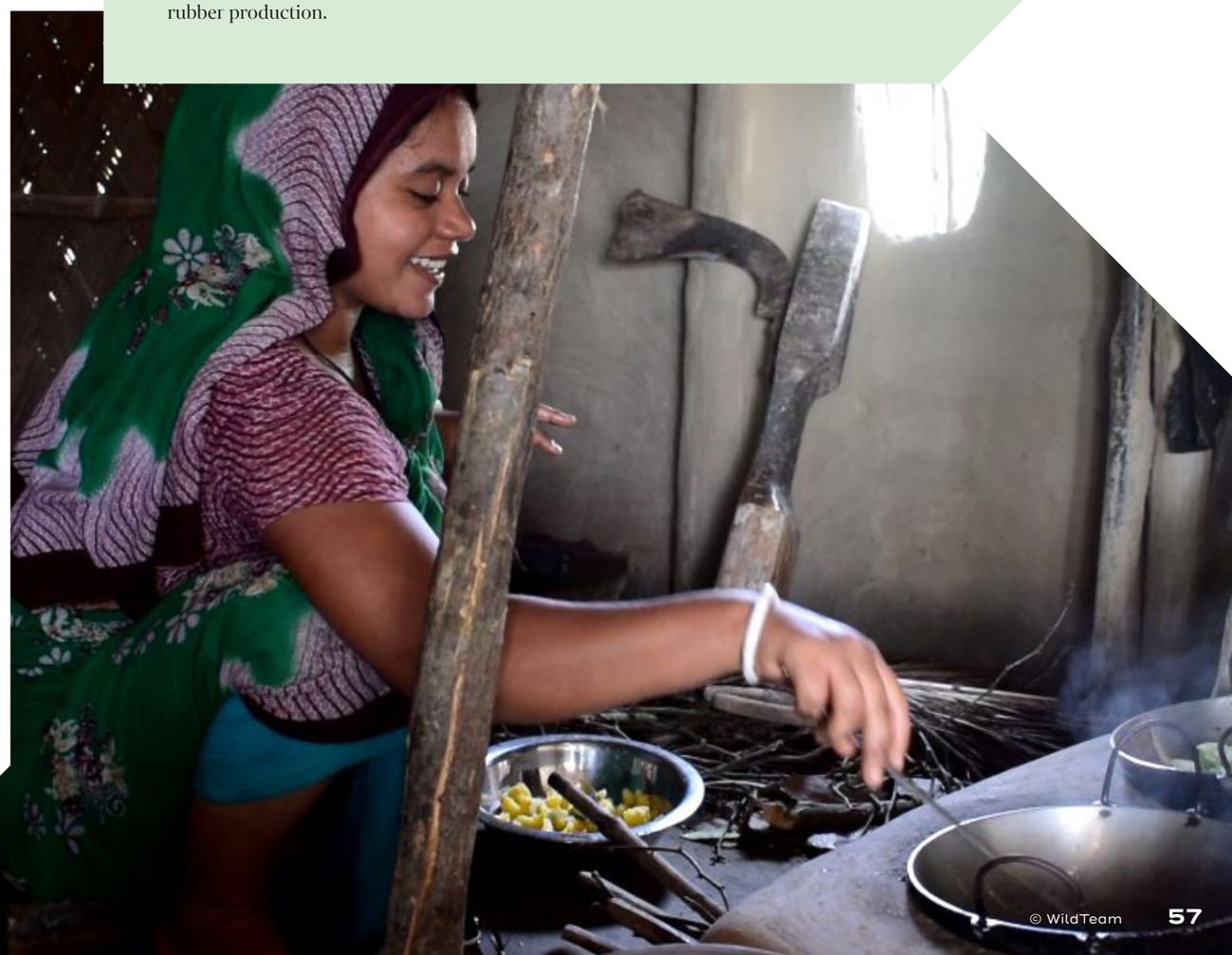
A project in the **Western Ghats**, **South India**, provided LPG cooking stoves to 1,353 households residing in and around wildlife corridors, and linked them with refilling facilities. This reduced firewood consumption by 65% per capita, avoiding over-extraction from forests and reducing the risk of human-wildlife conflicts.

Near **Royal Manas National Park**, in **Bhutan**, farmers were provided with Jersey cows, an improved breed, to enhance productivity. This helped reduce grazing pressure and significantly decreased cattle depredation by tigers.

Following the conduction of feasibility studies, a project implemented in **Rimbang Baling Wildlife Reserve**, **Indonesia**, has assisted local communities in diversifying their livelihoods through ecotourism activities and souvenir production, agroforestry, NTFPs and sustainable rubber production.

Since 2017, a project in **Myanmar** has supported the construction of small irrigation canals to supply water to wet rice paddy fields and increase farming harvests. In addition, 16 buffalos for collective use in farming were procured and a buffalo bank management system was created to support community farming activities.

A project in **Ulu Masen and Kerinci Seblat National Parks**, **Indonesia**, promoted social forestry scheme to encourage the community to protect tiger habitats outside protected areas, by granting community rights to manage the forest in a sustainable manner.



© WildTeam

> With guidance, training and materials support, me and my family members received since 2016, there is no need to visit the Manas National Park to collect forest products as now we have our own farming and other alternative options to sustain the family"
>
> Ghega Narzary, a farmer from a fringe village of Manas



© Aaranyak

Case study

An ITHCP project implemented by Aaranyak operates in the Manas Landscape and the Kaziranga–Karbi Anglong Landscape, two priority tiger conservation landscapes located in North–East India, which host a large population of tigers along with other key threatened species like the Greater One–horned Rhino and the Asian Elephant. The project aims to reduce unsustainable practices and high anthropogenic disturbance in and around these habitats, through the promotion of alternative sustainable livelihood models and participatory natural resource management planning.

Between 2015 and 2021, the project supported the capacity building of 1,400 households in the Manas Landscape, facilitating the adoption of sustainable livelihood alternatives. This initiative provided training on various farm–based livelihoods, such as vegetable farming, mushroom cultivation, fishery and beekeeping, as well as non–farm–based activities, such as weaving and tailoring, food processing and production of local handicrafts. The Manas Conservation and Outreach Center was also established to improve capacity building for research, conservation, outreach and sustainable livelihoods. Since 2022, the project has replicated similar activities in the Kaziranga–Karbi Anglong Landscape, and, together with Manas, have trained an additional 500 beneficiaries for alternative sustainable livelihoods.

The project supports PIRBI, a community–owned rural, sustainable enterprise established to provide suitable market access and support to the Karbi community's produce. 5% of PIRBI's profits are allocated to biodiversity conservation initiatives, like eco–restoration of degraded habitats. In 2023, ITHCP played a crucial role in establishing the PIRBI–Karbi Ethnic Haat, a retail store owned and managed by PIRBI. This store serves as a platform to showcase and sell community–made products, promoting their unique heritage, traditional craftmanship and alternative income initiatives.

Ecotourism activities were also offered as an alternative source of income, by providing basic infrastructural support and marketing opportunities to local ecotourism service providers. An assessment of ecotourism potential was conducted in the landscape and a women's collective focusing on experiential rural ecotourism was initiated.

Reducing the risk of zoonotic diseases

Zoonotic diseases (or zoonoses) are infectious diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans. Human activities such as deforestation, agricultural expansion, livestock production and illegal wildlife trade increase contact between humans, domestic animals and wildlife, creating conditions that heighten the risk of infectious disease spillover. Zoonoses can also be transmitted from humans and domestic animals to wildlife, posing a threat to species survival. Solutions to reduce zoonotic disease risk require a One Health approach, which is an integrated strategy recognising that the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment are closely linked and interdependent.

The Leuser ecosystem is one of the largest remaining intact rainforests in Asia and one of the most biodiverse hotspots on earth, home to 30% of all Sumatran tigers. This ecosystem faces threats from forest loss and degradation, and fragmentation due to infrastructure development, industrial agricultural expansion, and smallholder encroachment. These threats weaken the forest's ecosystem health, creating pathways for emerging infectious disease transmission and spillover, which threaten both human and animal health.

To prevent wildlife diseases transmission, an ITHCP project implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in Sumatra is vaccinating 2,000 livestock in 15 villages and training community members in good animal husbandry practices. Outreach efforts in rural communities aim to increase understanding of the linkages between human, wildlife, livestock health, and healthy ecosystems. Additionally, the project will develop and disseminate provincial safety guidelines and regulations for the improved handling of confiscated wildlife to reduce disease transmission risk.

> The Tiger–Proof Enclosure and livestock vaccination supports brought by the project are two tangible benefits for us who live in this remote village on the edge of the forest. Livestock represents our most important asset, hence protecting it from predation and disease is very important to us. Through the supports, not only the project encourages us to live harmoniously with the tigers but also enables us to better safeguard the safety and health of our livestock."
>
> Abdul Karim, Head of Community Group Datuk Sedanau, Gulo Village, South–East Aceh



© FKH USK

Raising awareness about tiger conservation

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

High dependence on natural resources often causes conservation to be less prioritised by local communities living in and around tiger habitats. This, coupled with overexploitation and unsustainable use of natural resources, can lead to habitat fragmentation and degradation, and increased human–wildlife conflict risks. Raising awareness about the importance of tigers and the threats they face, the consequences of ecosystems degradation, and providing knowledge about sustainable practices and human–wildlife conflict mitigation strategies, is therefore critical to support conservation efforts.

WHAT IS ITHCP DOING TO ADDRESS THIS?

Raising awareness is at the core of developing knowledge and cultivating positive attitudes towards tigers and their conservation. For this reason, every ITHCP project promotes awareness–related activities, aimed at increasing communities' understanding of the importance of preserving biodiversity and protecting wildlife.

Since 2014, ITHCP has reached over 675,000 people through different types of awareness raising activities. These include conservation classes and workshops targeting both adults and school children, theatre, social media campaigns, radio and newspaper outreach. Visual materials have also been developed and distributed for public information campaigns, including brochures, booklets and information boards erected in project sites. Several videos and documentaries have been produced, and large–scale events, such as the celebration of Global Tiger Day or World Environment Day, are organised regularly to engage the general public. The support from local religious and cultural institutions has often been used to increase the reach of awareness programs.

These programmes have helped local communities to improve their understanding of wildlife behaviour and coexistence strategies, such as avoiding encounters with tigers. Awareness activities highlight tiger vulnerability to poaching and habitat loss, and stress the importance of biodiversity conservation, encouraging positive attitudes towards tigers and sustainable practices. Several projects have also worked to increase awareness about legislation, existing regulations and processes to access compensation schemes for human–wildlife conflict incidents. Most importantly, these initiatives foster a sense of responsibility and pride within local communities about their surrounding environment and natural heritage, encouraging them to actively participate in conservation efforts and promote awareness in their respective communities.



© INDECON–KERABAT



© Elisa Facchini

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PROJECTS

Since 2017, a community radio station has been managed by the local community living near **Rimbang Baling Wildlife Sanctuary**, **Indonesia**, to promote awareness and conservation messages through radio broadcasts, reaching the villages along the Subayang river.

In **Valmiki Tiger Reserve** in **India**, under the Ek Prithvi (One World) environment education programme, 11 schools were equipped with teaching and learning materials, 4,970 students participated in classroom sessions and outdoor activities to learn about environment conservation, and 1,427 teachers were trained to effectively engage students in environmental education activities.

In the **Terai Arc**, in **Nepal**, between 2021 and 2023 over 35,000 people were engaged in efforts to increase understanding of human–wildlife conflict mitigation and wildlife conservation, through street drama, events, social media campaigns and information boards.

In **Assam**, **North–East India**, a project has involved school children in the experiential learning programme "Amar Bagisa" ("Our Garden" in assamese), which aims to engage students in a hands–on–experience of surveying homestead gardens and documenting plant and animal species, to develop their appreciation for science and nature.

A project working on the fringes of **Gunung Leuser National Park**, **Indonesia**, has involved more than 200 villagers in awareness–raising sessions on wildlife–livestock protection, and the need for adoption of good animal husbandry practices linked to animal disease transmission and human–wildlife conflict mitigation.

> "I have willingly joined as Bagh Bandhu and am dedicated to making the Sundarbans safer for humans, tigers and other wildlife"
>
> Radha Rani, a Bagh Bandhu (Friends of Tigers)


© Samrat Paul, WTI

Case study

The Sundarbans is a UNESCO World Heritage Site spanning across India and Bangladesh, renowned for its rich biodiversity and for being the largest mangrove forest in the world. This is also the only existing mangrove tiger habitat, home to approximately 200 tigers. Here, local communities are highly dependent on forest resources, and encounters with tigers, crocodiles and snakes are common. A project implemented by Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and WildTeam aims to engage local communities in human–wildlife conflict mitigation and tiger conservation efforts in this unique ecosystem, and awareness raising is a key component of this initiative.

Since 2018, ITHCP has supported the establishment and operation of seven Sundarbans Education Centres in local schools (five in Bangladesh and two in India), which are knowledge centres serving as hubs for educational programmes on the importance of preserving the Sundarbans' biodiversity and cultural values among students and local communities. The centres are equipped with various facilities, including display boards, posters, books and exhibition spaces.

Alongside this, the project has helped establish the Tiger Scouts, local youth groups who are trained and empowered as 'ambassadors' of tiger conservation. These groups disseminate knowledge among other students and the wider community about the significance of biodiversity and effective ways to mitigate human–wildlife conflicts. Similarly, Bagh Bandhus (Friends of Tigers) volunteer groups have been formed to organise village forums and school programs in their respective villages. Their goal is to raise awareness and foster changes in attitudes and behaviours towards the conservation of tigers, wildlife and the Sundarbans within their communities.

Additionally, a Conservation Biology Centre was built in the Bangladesh Sundarbans, for research, training and outreach activities. The building includes a Sundarbans Interpretation Centre, which aims to be a visitors' information hub on Sundarbans biodiversity, ecology and history.

3. The ITHCP community

© Dr Niaz Abdur-Rahman

ITHCP is a grant-making initiative that brings together a wide range of stakeholders and organisations.

It is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through KfW Development Bank. IUCN is responsible for the overall implementation and operational management of the programme.

Projects funded under ITHCP are implemented on the ground by a large number of partners, including governments, national and international NGOs, in close collaboration with local organisations and communities.

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

www.bmz.de

Within the German government, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is responsible for Germany's development policy. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement form the framework for all of its actions. The Ministry's efforts are focused on fighting poverty and hunger and ensuring that people can lead healthy lives in a healthy environment. The BMZ sees itself as a transformation ministry globally engaged in advancing the transition to sustainable economies which are compatible with the protection of the global climate and the natural environment, and simultaneously working to strengthen peace, freedom and human rights. To achieve those objectives, the BMZ aligns its bilateral cooperation activities with the priorities of its partner countries all over the world and works for strong multilateralism, guided by the SDGs.

KfW

www.kfw.de

On behalf of the German Federal Government, and primarily the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), KfW Development Bank finances and supports programmes that mainly involve public sector players in developing countries and emerging economies. Its goal is to help its partner countries fight poverty, maintain peace, protect both the environment and the climate and shape globalisation in an appropriate way. Its financing and promotional services are aligned with the United Nations Agenda 2030 and contribute to the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The headquarters of KfW Development Bank are located in Frankfurt, Germany.

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

www.iucn.org

IUCN is a membership Union composed of both government and civil society organisations. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its more than 1,400 Member organisations and the input of more than 16,000 experts. IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)

www.iucn.org/commissions/species-survival-commission

The IUCN Species Survival Commission is a science-based network of thousands of volunteer experts from almost every country in the world, all working together toward achieving the vision of "a just world that values and conserves nature through positive action to both prevent the loss and aid recovery of the diversity of life on earth."

Aaranyak

www.aaranyak.org

Aaranyak was first launched in 1989 as a small group of nature enthusiasts, and over the years has carved a niche for itself in the field of biodiversity research and conservation, not only in North East India, but as a leading environmental and biodiversity conservation organization at a national and international level. Aaranyak is on a mission to contribute towards the protection of nature by providing key inputs to biodiversity management based on a combination of conservation research, environmental education, capacity building and policy.

Arannayk Foundation

www.arannayk.org

Arannayk Foundation, also known as the Bangladesh Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation, is a not-for-profit organization established in 2003. Arannayk Foundation's mission is to foster conservation, protection, restoration and sustainable use of tropical forests in Bangladesh by working with relevant government agencies, NGOs and private sectors.

Department of Forests and Park Services, Royal Government of Bhutan

www.dofps.gov.bt

The Department of Forests and Park Services of the Royal Government of Bhutan is responsible for protecting, conserving, utilizing and managing the forestry resources of Bhutan. The Department works towards the conservation of forest resources and biodiversity to ensure social, economic and environmental well-being, and to maintain a minimum of 60% of the land under forest cover for future generations.

Fauna & Flora International

www.fauna-flora.org

For over 120 years, Fauna & Flora International has been at the forefront of global wildlife conservation, partnering with local and international stakeholders across 48 countries. Dedicated to preserving biodiversity, Fauna & Flora employs a holistic approach to safeguard endangered species and their habitats. Their work integrates scientific research, community engagement, and policy advocacy to create lasting conservation outcomes. By fostering collaboration and leveraging expertise, Fauna & Flora aims to ensure that nature's most vulnerable ecosystems and species are protected and can thrive for future generations.

Global Tiger Forum (GTF)

www.globaltigerforum.org

The Global Tiger Forum (GTF) is an inter-governmental, international body working exclusively for the conservation of tigers in the wild by utilizing co-operative policies, common approaches, technical expertise, scientific methods and other appropriate programmes.

Jahangirnagar University

www.juniv.edu

Jahangirnagar University, a public university in Bangladesh founded in 1970, is dedicated to advancing knowledge for human development. Established in 1986, the Department of Zoology within the university, is renowned for producing skilled zoology graduates and advancing the field of animal sciences, including Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Biology. Notably, the Wildlife Research Group spearheads top-tier research and conservation efforts focused on biodiversity management and conservation throughout Bangladesh.

Komunitas Konservasi Indonesia Warsi (KKI–Warsi)

www.warsi.or.id

KKI–Warsi is a non–government organisation established in 1991 by a number of inter–disciplinary and inter–genre activists that share the same views in responding to facts in natural resource management in that period. Warsi (Warung Informasi Konservasi) changed from a foundation to an association in 2002, updating its name to KKI–Warsi and continues to be an organisation open to individuals with commitment to forest conservation and empowerment of communities living inside and around the forest.

Maharashtra Forest Department

www.mahaforest.gov.in

The Maharashtra Forest Department is dedicated to sustainably managing its forest resources to protect the state's rich biodiversity. The Wildlife wing within the department is primarily responsible for the conservation and management of all Protected Areas and wildlife in the state.

Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF)

www.ncf–india.org

The Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) was established in 1996 as a public charitable trust. NCF's mission is to contribute to the knowledge and conservation of India's unique wildlife heritage with innovative research and imaginative solutions.

National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)

www.ntnc.org.np

The National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), established in 1982, is an autonomous and not–for–profit organization mandated to work in the field of nature conservation in Nepal. NTNC's core value lies in active community participation and evidence–based actions to foster the balance between nature conservation and development aspirations. NTNC's focus areas are species conservation, protected areas and ecosystems, climate change, conservation economy and research and knowledge.

Panthera

www.panthera.org

Founded in 2006, Panthera is devoted to the conservation of the world's 40 species of wild cats and the vast ecosystems they inhabit. Panthera's team of biologists, data scientists, law enforcement experts and wild cat advocates studies and protects the seven species of big cats: cheetahs, jaguars, leopards, lions, pumas, snow leopards and tigers. Panthera also creates targeted conservation strategies for the world's most threatened and overlooked small cats.

Wildlife Asia

www.wildlifeasia.org.au

Wildlife Asia stands beside local NGOs and communities, supporting their vision for a sustainable future. A future that ensures the persistence of peace, cultural values and traditions, sustainable development opportunities and of course the protection of wildlife and habitat.

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

www.wcs.org

With leadership and results dating back to 1895, WCS has evolved into the world's most comprehensive wildlife–conservation organization. WCS envisions a world where wildlife thrives in healthy lands and seas, valued by societies that embrace and benefit from the diversity and integrity of life on earth. WCS uses science to discover and understand the natural world. This knowledge helps engage and inspire decision–makers, communities, and millions of supporters to take action to protect the wildlife and wild places we all care about.

Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)

www.wti.org.in

Established in 1998, Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) is a non–profit conservation organization with a vision to protect India's natural heritage. Registered as a Trust, its mission is to conserve wildlife and its habitat and to work for the welfare of individual wild animals, in partnership with communities and governments.

WildTeam

www.wildteam.org.bd

WildTeam was established in 2003 as a non–profit organisation dedicated to the conservation and restoration of Bangladesh's natural heritage. WildTeam's mission focuses on enhancing the conservation status of key species and habitats in Bangladesh, and fostering partnerships, tools, and platforms to empower organizations and individuals for effective conservation. Guided by the motto, "changing the game for nature," WildTeam is committed to four core values: believing in people as the solution, staying grounded in reality, celebrating nature, and acting fearlessly.

WWF

wwf.panda.org

Founded in 1961, WWF is an independent conservation organization active in nearly 100 countries. WWF is working to sustain the natural world for the benefit of people and wildlife. Working with many others – from individuals and communities to business and government – WWF urgently seeks to protect and restore natural habitats, stop the mass extinction of wildlife, and make the way we produce and consume sustainable.

YAPEKA

www.yapeka.or.id

YAPEKA is a non–profit organization dedicated to conservation, environmental education, and community empowerment, working towards the protection and sustainable use of natural resources. Through collective learning and an intensive maturing process, YAPEKA has gained knowledge and invaluable experiences alongside communities, partners, and colleagues. YAPEKA has integrated these experiences into their professional approach to education, community–based sustainable resource management, empowerment, and protection of natural resources.

Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

www.zsl.org

First founded in 1826, ZSL – The Zoological Society of London – has grown into a global science–led conservation organisation helping people and wildlife live better together to restore the wonder and diversity of life everywhere. ZSL's approach is to put cutting–edge conservation science into practice to drive innovation for wildlife recovery.

ITHCP grants

Since its inception, ITHCP has provided a total of 32 grants, with six more expected to be awarded.
The complete list of ITHCP grants is provided below:

PHASE I

Project
Transcending Boundaries for Tiger Recovery: The Chitwan–Parsa–Valmiki Complex in Nepal and India

Lead Partner
WWF Germany

Budget
€1,972,623

Completed

Project
Communities for tiger recovery in Rimbang Baling: the Beating Heart of the Central Sumatran Tiger Landscape

Lead Partner
WWF Germany

Budget
€1,950,671

Completed

Project
Supporting trans–boundary tiger recovery in India and Nepal

Lead Partner
Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

Budget
€2,600,000

Completed

Project
Securing Source Population of Tiger, Prey and Habitats in Indo–Bhutan Manas Landscape

Lead Partner
Aaranyak

Budget
€1,699,477

Completed

Project
Restoring tiger and prey populations in northern Myanmar through protection and enhancing livelihoods of local communities in the Myanmar–India Transboundary Tiger Conservation Landscape

Lead Partner
Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

Budget
€901,153

Completed

Project
Tanintharyi Tiger Conservation Landscape Project

Lead Partner
Fauna & Flora International

Budget
€1,192,199

Completed

Project
Securing the Future of Tigers in Bhutan Manas Complex

Lead Partner
Department of Forests and Park Services, Royal Government of Bhutan

Budget
€700,000

Completed

Project
Recovering Tigers in the Confluence of the Western and Eastern Ghats

Lead Partner
Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF)

Budget
€1,182,297

Completed

Project
Safeguarding Indonesia's Priority Tiger Conservation Landscapes

Lead Partner
Fauna & Flora International

Budget
€2,000,000

Completed

Project
Integrated Habitat Conservation and Eco–development in Vidharba Tiger Landscape

Lead Partner
Maharashtra Forest Department

Budget
€1,986,802

Completed

Project
Karen Wildlife Conservation Initiative (KWCI)– Conserving tigers and indigenous knowledge in the Dawna–Karen Hills, Myanmar

Lead Partner
Wildlife Asia

Budget
€499,985

Completed

Project
Protecting tigers, people and their vital habitats in the Sundarban Delta of India and Bangladesh

Lead Partner
Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and WildTeam

Budget
€587,577

Completed

Project
A review of best practices to create a future for carnivores and people in tiger range countries

Lead Partner
Awely

Budget
€76,000

Completed

Project
Status of Tiger Habitats in High Altitude Ecosystems in Bhutan, India and Nepal

Lead Partner
Global Tiger Forum (GTF)

Budget
€100,000

Completed

Project
Developing an Action Plan for Conservation of High Altitude Tiger Habitats in Bhutan, India and Nepal

Lead Partner
Global Tiger Forum (GTF)

Budget
€20,000

Completed

Project
Securing tigers and their habitat and simultaneously benefit people in Baling Wildlife Reserve, Riau

Lead Partner
Yapeka

Budget
€40,000

Completed

Project
Supporting trans–boundary tiger recovery in India and Nepal (Phase I – Additional Funding)

Lead Partner
Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

Budget
€270,000

Completed

PHASE II

Project
Transcending Boundaries for Tiger Recovery: The Chitwan- Parsa-Valmiki Complex in Nepal and India – Phase II

Lead Partner
WWF Germany

Budget
€1,714,908

Ongoing

Project
Supporting trans-boundary tiger recovery in India and Nepal

Lead Partner
Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

Budget
€1,200,000

Completed

Project
Protecting Tigers, People and their vital habitats in the Sundarban delta in India and Bangladesh – Phase II

Lead Partner
Wildlife Trust of India
WildTeam
Jahangirnagar University

Budget
€511,608 (WTI)
€552,534 (WildTeam)
€262,171 (JU)

Ongoing

Project
Partnering with communities to strengthen conservation of critical tiger habitats in northeast India

Lead Partner
Wildlife Conservation Society – India (WCS)

Budget
€420,518

Ongoing

Project
Bridging Project for Community-based Tiger Conservation

Lead Partner
Fauna & Flora International

Budget
€99,982

Completed

Project
Karen Wildlife Conservation Initiative (KWCI) – Conserving tigers and indigenous knowledge in the Dawna-Karen Hills, Myanmar

Lead Partner
Wildlife Asia

Budget
€100,000

Completed

PHASE III

Project
Supporting trans-boundary tiger recovery in India and Nepal

Lead Partner
Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

Budget
€1,115,000

Ongoing

Project
Advancing human and tiger harmony in Rimbang Baling Wildlife Reserve, Central Sumatran Tiger Landscape

Lead Partner
Yapeka

Budget
€909,895

Ongoing

Project
Strengthening the long-term persistence of tigers in the high altitudes of Bhutan

Lead Partner
Department of Forests and Park Services, Royal Government of Bhutan

Budget
€650,000

Ongoing

Project
Investigating and Addressing Tiger Conservation in Sikkim – The Eastern Himalayas

Lead Partner
Global Tiger Forum (GTF)

Budget
€498,500

Ongoing

Project
Strengthening Tiger Conservation Initiatives in High Altitude Landscapes of Western Nepal

Lead Partner
National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)

Budget
€429,217

Ongoing

PHASE IV

Project
Securing population of tigers, habitats and biological corridors in Assam, India

Lead Partner
Aaranyak

Budget
€1,030,000

Ongoing

Project
Delivering a scalable integrated tiger conservation and livelihood development model for Sumatra landscapes

Lead Partner
Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

Budget
€1,000,000

Ongoing

Project
Enhancing Sumatran Tiger conservation efforts in Berbak Sembilang Landscape through National Park-Community-Private Co-Management

Lead Partner
Komunitas Konservasi Indonesia Warsi (KKI Warsi)

Budget
€707,809 *

In preparation

Project
Enhancing the functionality of the transboundary Kamdi-Suhelwa complex for the management of dispersing tiger populations, through a community-centered conservation approach

Lead Partner
Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

Budget
€1,900,000 *

In preparation

Project
Scaling-up an integrated conservation model for tigers and sustainable livelihoods in Southern Sumatra

Lead Partner
Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

Budget
€1,554,688 *

In preparation

Project
Securing corridors for tigers and people: Leveraging transboundary cooperation for tiger conservation in the Khata-Basanta-Dudhwa complex of the Terai Arc Landscape in Nepal and India

Lead Partner
WWF Germany

Budget
€1,120,000 *

In preparation

Project
Beyond Border: Securing Big Cats and their habitats across Chittagong-Lushai Transboundary Landscape of Bangladesh and India

Lead Partner
Arannayk Foundation

Budget
€1,888,924 *

In preparation

Project
Expanding the Wild Cat Frontier: Collaboratively Accelerating Range Expansion and Recovery of Western Thailand's Tigers, Leopards, and Clouded Leopards

Lead Partner
Panthera

Budget
€2,000,000 *

In preparation

*Tentative budget, project in preparation

4. The road ahead

While significant progress has been made, the main threats to tigers still persist. Although tiger numbers have increased in some countries, they have declined in others, underscoring the ongoing challenges. Looking ahead, it is imperative to build upon past successes, address emerging threats and chart a course toward a future where tigers, their habitats and people can thrive in harmony.

ITHCP will continue to ensure its efforts align with global conservation priorities, actively contributing to the Global Tiger Recovery Program and the Global Biodiversity Framework. By strengthening protected area management, promoting human–wildlife coexistence and sustainable livelihoods, as well as improving research and monitoring, ITHCP aims to contribute to these frameworks and their targets. To address the impacts of climate change, ITHCP will implement climate-resilient strategies, such as supporting sustainable land use practices, restoring degraded ecosystems and promoting water conservation.

As part of its more recent phase, ITHCP has opened up funding to new countries and priority landscapes, as well as two other Pantherine species, namely leopards and clouded leopards. As these species have similar habitat requirements to those of tigers and are also involved in human–wildlife conflicts, the conservation of these species and their habitats can support and prepare the ground for tiger recovery, as well as promoting coexistence between humans and wildlife.



Moving forward, ITHCP will adopt the following core strategies to achieve its tiger conservation goals:

Focusing on what works: The integrated approach championed by ITHCP, encompassing robust species monitoring, effective habitat management and community engagement, has demonstrably yielded positive results. ITHCP will continue to prioritise these core strategies, leveraging cutting-edge technologies to enhance monitoring efforts, and fostering collaboration with governments and local communities to ensure the sustainable management of tiger landscapes.

Scaling up for impact: Scaling up successful interventions, such as community engagement programmes and livelihood alternatives, will be crucial in expanding the reach and impact of the programme. In addition, strengthening human–wildlife coexistence and transboundary cooperation for the management of tigers will remain a priority.

Adapting to a changing climate: The challenges facing tiger conservation are constantly evolving. Climate change presents a significant threat, impacting weather patterns, water availability and habitat suitability. ITHCP will prioritise building climate resilience into its strategies, supporting communities in adapting to changing conditions, and exploring innovative solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change on tiger habitats.

Empowering local communities: The future of tigers is inextricably linked to the future of the communities that share their landscapes. ITHCP will continue to prioritise engaging Indigenous Peoples and local communities as partners in conservation efforts. This includes fostering a sense of shared responsibility, scaling up livelihood interventions , and expanding support to communities in adapting to climate change.

Building a future together: ITHCP recognises the importance of collaboration and will continue to work closely with governments, NGOs, research institutions and philanthropic organisations, by fostering joint conservation efforts and leveraging the diverse expertise of these partners.

By focusing on these core strategies, ITHCP remains firmly committed to its mission of securing a future where tigers and humans can coexist in thriving ecosystems. Through continued innovation, collaboration and science-based conservation action, ITHCP will continue to provide benefits for species, habitats and people within key tiger landscapes.

Get involved

As a dynamic and adaptable programme committed to protecting global biodiversity and fostering community engagement, the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP) welcomes partnerships from all who share its mission. The ITHCP allows donors and other stakeholders to contribute in ways that align with their strategic priorities, levels of commitment and conservation interests. Whether your focus is on habitat preservation, species recovery or empowering local communities, the ITHCP is designed to support diverse conservation goals.

For those interested in investing to shape the future of tiger conservation, the ITHCP offers the chance to collaborate on developing innovative new projects or to contribute to existing efforts.

Moreover, the ITHCP places a strong emphasis on integrating local knowledge, as well as empowering Indigenous Peoples and local communities. By working together, we can develop tailored solutions that not only protect tiger habitats but also enhance the well-being and resilience of the communities that depend on these ecosystems.

No matter the level of involvement, everyone can support the ITHCP's mission. You can help amplify our impact by promoting our work through social media and word of mouth or by making a direct contribution via our secure online donation platform. Your support is vital in ensuring that we continue to make strides in tiger conservation, safeguarding these majestic animals and their habitats for future generations.

To discuss potential collaboration opportunities, please contact us directly via email at **tiger.conservation@iucn.org**



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