

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) - www.iucn.org

By Patricia Braña – HOPE researcher Cuba (December 2021)



Main aims:

The mission of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

Current Projects:

The six IUCN major achievements to the date are strongly related to their Commissions. These unite 10,000 volunteer experts from a range of disciplines. They assess the state of the world's natural resources and provide the Union with sound know-how and policy advice on conservation issues.

- Commission on Education and Communication (CEC): drives change for the co-creation of sustainable solutions through leading communication, learning and knowledge management in IUCN and the wider conservation community.
- Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP): provides expertise and policy advice on economic and social factors for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.
- World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL): advances environmental law by developing new legal concepts and instruments, and by building the capacity of societies to employ environmental law for conservation and sustainable development.
- Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM): provides expert guidance on integrated ecosystem approaches to the management of natural and modified ecosystems.
- Species Survival Commission (SSC): advises the Union on the technical aspects of species conservation and mobilizes action for those species that are threatened with extinction.
- World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA): promotes the establishment and effective management of a worldwide representative network of terrestrial and marine protected areas.

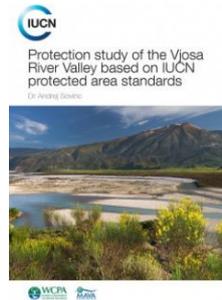
IUCN actually works on hundreds of conservation field projects and activities all over the world, from the local level to those involving several countries, all aimed at the sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources. Each project is focused on the needs of each region.

IUCN's work in **Eastern and Southern Africa** underscores the fact that sustainable economic development depends on sound environmental management. Developing the **Integrated water resources management (IWRM)**: The goal of the Integrated Water Resource Management programme is to implement sustainable water and wetland management and mainstream ecosystems approach into IWRM processes in order to support poverty reduction, equitable development, resilience to climate change and conservation of biological diversity.



Actually, **IUCN-South America** developed the project **Amazonia 2.0** as a regional initiative, implemented into the IUCN member countries. The project is focused on restraining the deforestation and degradation of the Amazonian forests and biodiversity loss. In the face climate change and forest threats, empowering of indigenous organizations to act and respond in an organized way with the support of national and international NGOs is essential.

The overall objective of **IUCN in Eastern Europe, North and Central Asia** is to work towards the long-term protection of biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources. For that they develop the project “**Saving**



Europe’s last free-flowing wild river – Vjosa/Aoos” with the objectives: raise awareness and increase public pressure on political decision-makers; monitor and optimize legal compliance and influence legal frameworks on

(inter)national levels; involve local stakeholders and strengthen their position in the national (hydropower) developments; enhance the scientific and general knowledge of river ecosystems and sustainable energy developments; and elaborate on a comprehensive roadmap for the final designation of Europe’s first Wild River National Park.

The **IUCN European Work Programme** identifies regional priorities in the framework of the global IUCN Programme Implementing the **IUCN Urban Alliance** that envisages nature thriving in urban areas and providing solutions to multiple social, economic and environmental challenges. Pursuant to this vision, it has three objectives: create a platform for debate and knowledge exchange on urban dimensions of nature conservation; catalyze new projects and partnerships for greener cities; and develop an ‘Urban Nature Index’ for monitoring the ecological performance of cities.

The strategy lines of **IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation** aim to address biodiversity loss and climate change impacts through innovative and targeted initiatives. For that reason they have developed **Plastic Waste-Free Islands Med Project**



as a part of a broader IUCN’s “Close the Plastic Tap” programme, the PWFI project is working to improve knowledge of waste generation in the two target islands, Menorca and Cyprus.

The **IUCN on Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean** is focused on creating a world which values and is committed to preserve nature by implementing projects related to biodiversity conservation, management of protected areas, community forestry, observance of rights, climate change and water. One of the projects the IUCN is currently developing in this region is the **Underground Water Governance in Cross-Border Aquifers** - the office is in charge of the **Esquipulas-Ocotepeque-Citalá (Trifinio) Aquifer** in coordination with UNESCO. Through improving the knowledge and recognition of cross-border underground water resources; establishing cross-border dialogue and cooperation; elaborating shared management instruments; and stimulating governance reforms focused on improving livelihoods, economic development and environmental sustainability.

The biodiversity of the Oceania region is characterized by exceptionally high levels of endemism and species diversity, **IUCN Oceania** supports governments, members and communities to strengthen capacity for the sustainable management and conservation of the species and ecosystems of Oceania, and to address the major drivers of biodiversity loss. Developing **Species Programme** focuses on enhancing the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, contributing to efforts in combating invasive species, supporting governments in implementing CITES and increasing awareness of the status of species.

The IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) has taken a pragmatic direction to focus on the major priorities that draw all of the region’s countries together. Implementing the **MENA Region Initiative as a model of NEXUS Approach and Renewable Energy Technologies**



(**MINARET**) a four-year regional project focusing on Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia, aiming at strengthening regional cooperation. The project is designed to address the unique sustainability challenges and opportunities of the MENA region by applying the “NEXUS” approach, which increases local and regional sustainability capacities using the synergies between renewable energy technology and efficiency, water management and food security.



In **Asia** the IUCN works in more than 100 projects focused on biodiversity conservation, nature-based solutions and related environmental governance. **Species and Biodiversity Conservation** is a project they are currently developing, focusing on: updating the National Red List of Endangered species in several countries; assisting governments to develop their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans for the Convention on Biological Diversity; and implementing species-focused initiatives (e.g., vultures, tigers, rhinos) across the region.

The marine and coast program implemented at **West and Central Africa region (MACO)** is engaged to conserve the integrity of the marine ecosystem and the West and Central Africa's offshore; becoming a way to guarantee an enduring development for the communities. As part of this idea, the IUCN developed the project: "**Management of Mangrove Forests from Senegal to Benin**", signed in 2019 and financed by the European Union. This project is focused on the management and protection of the mangrove forests at nine West-African countries. Under the partnership of the IUCN Wetlands International Africa and 5Deltas.

Resources

You can subscribe to IUCN newsletters at www.iucn.org/newsletters in order to receive update information, regarding commissions and programs.

Regarding the Amazonia 2.0, you can contact braulio.buendia@iucn.org for more information or visit www.amazoniadospuncocero.com

You can access to the IUCN library by visiting <https://portals.iucn.org/library/>

You can download: "Plastic Waste Free Islands in the Mediterranean Factsheet", visiting: www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/pwfi-med_factsheet_revised_w_citation

For further information, please visit the <https://iucnurbanalliance.org/> or contact Russell Galt, Head of Urban Alliance, at russell.galt@iucn.org.

You can download the factsheet "A vision for the Vjosa: Europe's first Wild River National Park" at https://balkanrivers.net/sites/default/files/The%20Vjosa%20WRNP_factsheet.pdf

IUCN ESARO Water and Wetlands Situational Analysis 2011 download the file www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/iucn_esaro_water_and_wetlands_situation_analysis.pdf

You can visit the official IUCN blog on www.iucn.org/crossroads-blog