

IUCN

The mission of IUCN, The World Conservation Union, is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. IUCN was founded in 1948 and is unique in bringing together states, government agencies and a diverse range of non-governmental organizations. IUCN has a membership of more than 1,000 organizations, as well as 10,000 individual scientists and experts structured in six Commissions. Together they form the world's largest network for nature conservation, responsible for, amongst others, the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Member organizations within a country or region often organize themselves into National or Regional Committees to facilitate synergy and cooperation and help coordinate the work of IUCN.

IUCN contributes to the setting of global environmental standards and guides the actions of governments and civil society in sustaining the biological diversity and natural resource base on which human livelihoods depend.

IUCN is promoting equity, transparency and participation as cornerstones to responses at all levels with regards to unsustainable or illegal land use practices.

IUCN NL

The IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands (IUCN NL) was founded in 1983 as a platform of the Dutch member organizations of IUCN, and the Dutch members of the six Commissions. The IUCN NL office is based in the centre of Amsterdam and employs thirty plus staff, making it the largest IUCN National Committee office. Since 1994, IUCN NL has managed several small grants funds for NGOs in the South that are active in ecosystem and biodiversity management that at the same time benefits local communities.

Websites

www.iucn.org

www.iucn.nl

SMALL GRANTS, BIG IMPACTS

Text Rob Glastra (IUCN NL)

Production Miriam Ubbink, Rob Glastra (IUCN NL)

Editor Hans van de Veen, Bureau M&O, Amsterdam

Design Margo Vlamings, Arnhem

Photos IUCN NL, Joost Brouwer, Missite-Benin, NCRC / Donna Shephard

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IUCN NL

Plantage Middenlaan 2K

1018 DD Amsterdam

The Netherlands

Tel. +31 (20) 6261732

Fax. +31 (20) 6279349

mail@iucn.nl

www.iucn.nl

National Committee of
The Netherlands

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SMALL GRANTS, BIG IMPACTS

How small grants can help
civil society organizations in
the South to conserve nature
and fight poverty

NO CONSERVATION WITHOUT CONSIDERING PEOPLE'S NEEDS

1 Crocodile conservation in the Philippines with the support of the local population; a small organization in war-torn Sierra Leone that adds a green touch to reconstruction efforts; lobby against mining in Indonesia's protected forests; organizing civil society engagement in the management of one of South America's largest watersheds; assisting an ethnic minority community in Southern China with alternative income generating activities.

These are just a handful of projects that have been supported since the mid 1990s by IUCN NL's small grants programmes. These examples have demonstrated that small grants can be a low-risk, efficient and effective mechanism to support the development of civil society organizations and contribute to conservation and poverty reduction goals.



'The help we got from IUCN Netherlands was crucial coming as it did in the early days when the Kipepeo butterfly project was balancing on a knife edge!'

(Ian Gordon, Principal Scientist and Division Head, Int. Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology, Nairobi)

Vital role for civil society

IUCN NL has built up considerable experience in managing small grants programmes over an extended period. One of the most important lessons learned concerns the vital role of civil society in the management of ecosystems and the conservation of biodiversity in the South. This is due to a number of reasons: government institutions often have only a token presence in rural areas, and in many instances, the policies and activities of governments and corporations ignore environmental considerations. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are especially well placed to articulate local people's interests. In practice this almost always means the integration of socioeconomic concerns in conservation initiatives. To make ecosystem and biodiversity conservation effective and socially sustainable, the livelihoods of poor rural communities must be considered at the same time.

'The Sustainable Development Institute acknowledges the significant contribution made by IUCN NL towards ensuring the active participation of Liberian NGOs in the Liberian forest sector reform process. This support has enabled us to effectively influence the process and increased the likelihood of meaningful results.'

(Silas Kpanan'Ayoung Siakor, SDI director, Liberia).

Seed money for grassroots initiatives

IUCN NL's small grants have been praised for being flexible, demand-driven and easily accessible. Most small grants projects are rooted in realities on the ground. They can serve as breeding grounds for beginning NGOs or provide seed money for grassroots initiatives. They can also be used for field-tests that can later be replicated or expanded. In other instances they are used to support low-cost investigative or advocacy work that does not meet the funding criteria of larger, more conventional donors. In general, projects include one or more of the following components: local ecosystem and biodiversity conservation; sustainable land use and alternative income generation for the poor; education and awareness raising; lobby and advocacy; or empowerment and capacity building.

IUCN NL'S SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMMES

IUCN NL previously managed five separate small grants programmes. As of 2007, three programmes remain:

- the **Ecosystem Grants Programme (EGP)**, which focuses on ecosystems and human livelihoods. The EGP includes the former separate programmes for tropical rainforests (TRP), wetlands (SWP) and dry ecosystems (DAS).
- **The Biodiversity and Tourism Micro Fund (BTF)**, focusing on sustainable tourism, open to both NGOs and small business companies.
- **Small Grants for the Purchase of Nature (SPN)**, funding for NGOs to purchase land with strategic conservation value.



Apart from administering the programmes, IUCN NL provides assistance in project management and in technical support using its knowledge base and partner network. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has funded all programmes, except for the land purchase programme which is financed by the Dutch National Postcode Lottery. The combined programmes have

so far supported over a thousand projects with a total budget of more than 30 million euro. Maximum grants were 85,000 euro, but the average grant size was around 30,000 euro, except for the tourism micro-fund that awarded grants up to 12,500 euro. (see www.iucn.nl for the current maximum amounts).

Stepping up efforts

Although most small grants projects are site-based, they fit in a programmatic framework that addresses complex and large-scale issues. The big challenge is to have influence beyond the site level, on larger scales and higher institutional levels. In other words, to increase project effectiveness and impacts. Linking local projects with regional or global programme levels can be achieved by emphasizing a geo-graphic or thematic focus. Or by stimulating projects to form or join networks or partnerships that allow projects to be up-scaled, replicated or embedded in large-scale initiatives. In the grants programmes' operational phase from 2007 to 2010, IUCN NL is stepping up efforts to work along these lines. This process will be supported by stronger working relations with the international IUCN network.



This brochure is complemented by a series of sheets with profiles of successful projects from IUCN NL's small grants programmes. Their impacts have been big in relation to the size of the grants. Impact categories refer to governance and policy influencing, civil society development, income generation, and the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity.

GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION

The following map and table show numbers of small grants projects per country funded by IUCN NL since the start of the first grants programme in 1994. Unlike the Ecosystem Grants Programme, the land purchase and the tourism small grants programmes can also be used to fund projects in non-ODA countries, such as Eastern Europe.

AFRICA	432
ASIA + OCEANIA	255
LATIN AMERICA + CARIBBEAN	321
EUROPE**	14
GLOBAL	102

GRAND TOTAL 1124

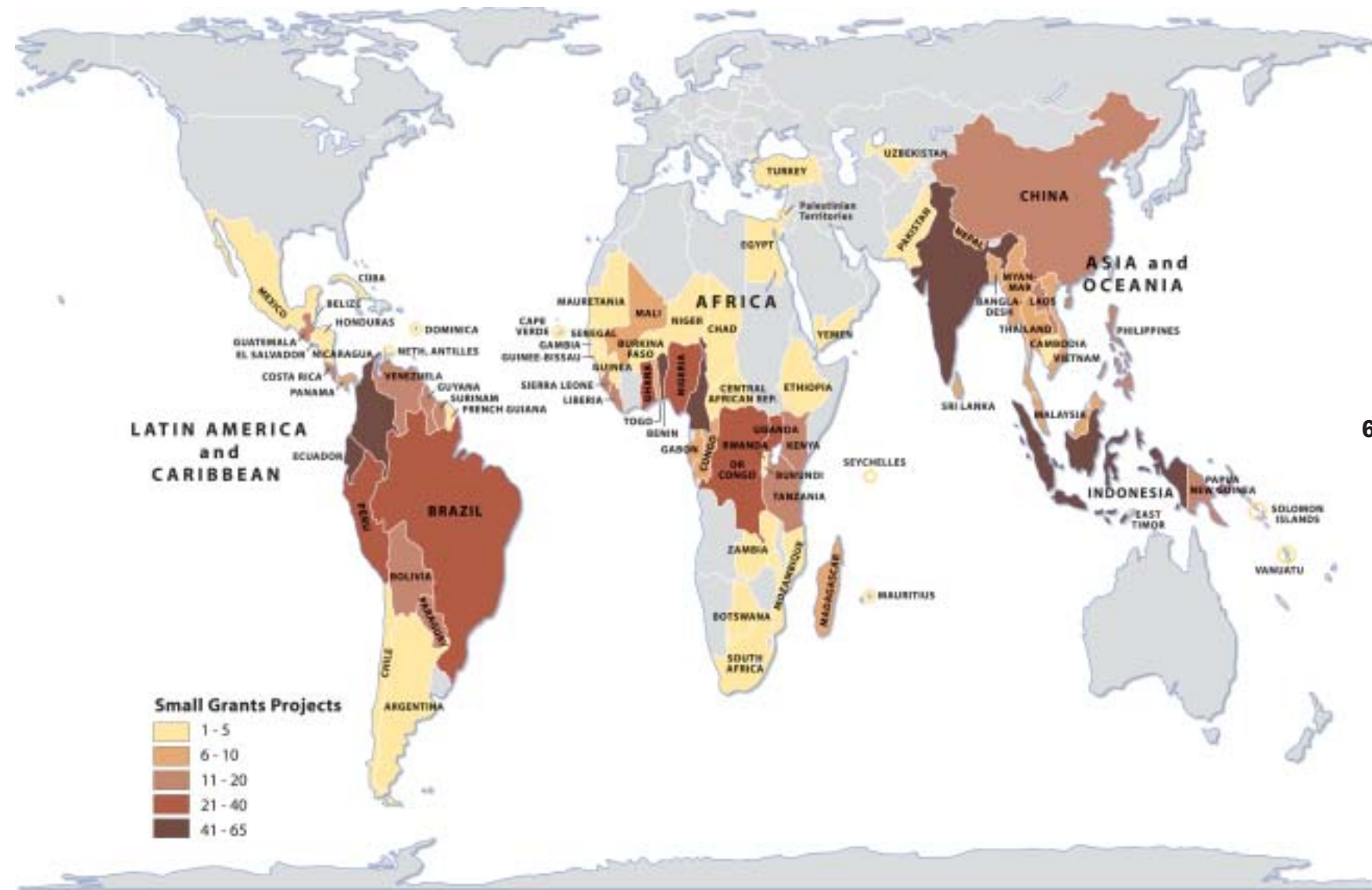
* The large number of projects in Benin is mainly due to the separate bilateral Benin fund managed by IUCN NL between 2001 and 2004.

** The SPN has funded 11 projects in five European countries (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania) and the SWP funded 3 projects in Macedonia.

AFRICA	Benin*	54	Gabon	7	Niger	2
	Cameroon	44	Togo	6	Botswana	1
	DR Congo	37	Senegal	5	Cape Verde	1
	Nigeria	35	Burundi	4	Chad	1
	Ghana	32	C. African Republic	4	Egypt	1
	Uganda	22	Burkina Faso	4	Guinea Bissau	1
	Liberia	13	Ethiopia	3	Guinea	1
	Sierra Leone	13	Mozambique	3	Mauritius	1
	Tanzania	12	South Africa	2	Zambia	1
	Kenya	12	Rwanda	2		
	Madagascar	10	Gambia	2	Africa General	74
	Congo	10	Mauretania	2		
	Mali	8	Seychelles	2	TOTAL	432

ASIA and OCEANIA	Indonesia	65	Thailand	8	East Timor	1
	India	45	Sri Lanka	7	Samoa	1
	Philippines	17	Malaysia	6	Solomon Islands	1
	Papua New Guinea	15	Myanmar	6	Palestinian Territories	1
	China	13	Cambodia	5	Uzbekistan	1
	Laos	12	Vanuatu	4		
	Nepal	10	Pakistan	2	Asia General	14
	Vietnam	9	Turkey	2		
	Bangladesh	8	Yemen	2	TOTAL	255

LATIN AMERICA and CARIBBEAN	Ecuador	46	Guatemala	12	Neth. Antilles	1
	Colombia	45	Bolivia	11	Belize	1
	Peru	31	Panama	8	Dominica	1
	Brazil	31	Nicaragua	5	French Guiana	1
	Guyana	20	Argentina	4	Honduras	1
	Costa Rica	19	Mexico	4		
	Venezuela	18	El Salvador	2	Latin Am. general	29
	Suriname	14	Cuba	2		
	Paraguay	13	Chile	2	TOTAL	321



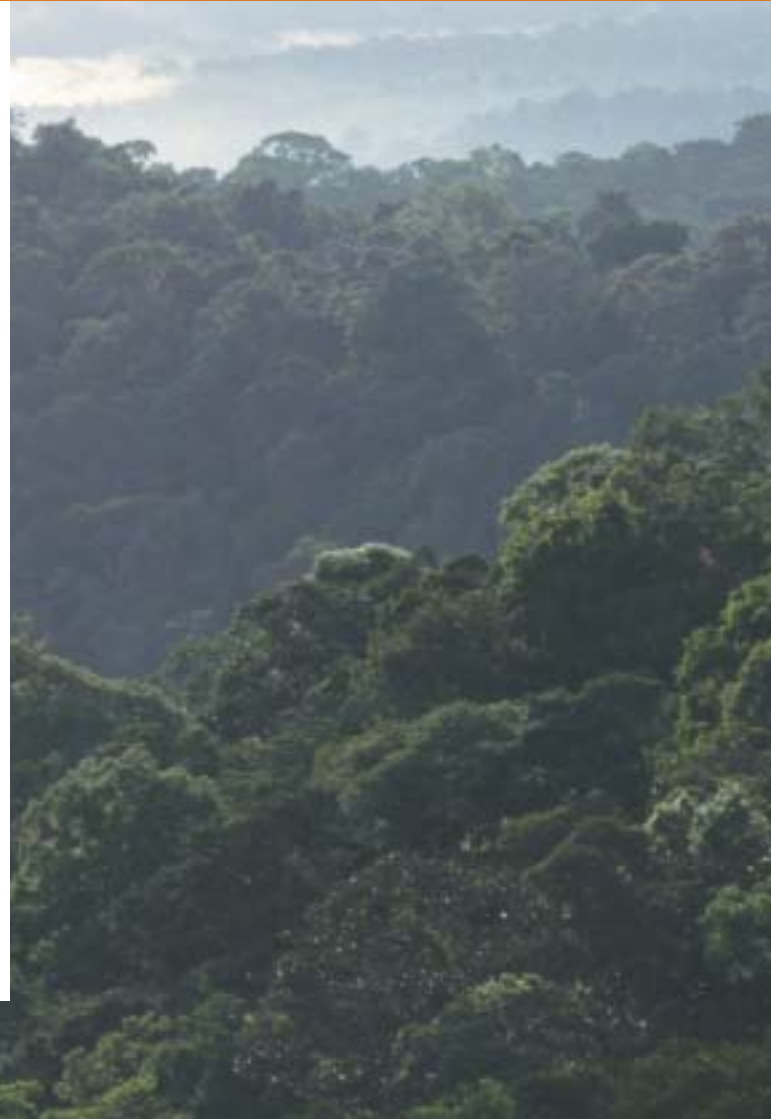
Small Grants Projects

- 1 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 40
- 41 - 65

GOVERNANCE

7 Good governance is fundamental to effective ecosystem management and rural poverty reduction. It should also enable people to share more equitably in the benefits from natural resource use and it should contribute to a level playing field for competing commercial interests. Experience shows that improved environmental governance can catalyse better overall governance and make broader development efforts more effective. IUCN NL's small grants projects that address governance issues usually take place in countries where sound laws and policies for natural resource management are lacking or not implemented. Informal governance structures may still be working well or they may be absent. Some governance projects dealt with securing land tenure for the poor or with strengthening indigenous land rights, while others addressed the unregulated and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.

Many governance projects focused on economic sectors with profound impacts on ecosystems and the rural poor. Sectors include mining, oil and gas, logging and plantation agriculture, as well as large infrastructural schemes. Project activities included advocacy to reduce or mitigate negative impacts, investigating and exposing illegal or unsustainable practices, or facilitating multistakeholder processes to improve laws and policies and their enforcement.



DEVELOPING CIVIL SOCIETY

One of the goals of the IUCN NL small grants programmes is to support the development of a strong and effective civil society, as a key player in ecologically and socially sustainable development. Building the capacity of individual CSOs is a recurrent objective in the projects supported by IUCN NL. The development of networks of civil society organizations facilitates the exchange of experiences and mutual learning. Furthermore, it also helps to create the synergy that leads to greater impacts on ecosystem policies and practices than individual small projects would have.

Environmental NGOs can also play a crucial role in post-war reconstruction and peace building with natural resource management as a vehicle. Playing that role will be easier if NGOs manage to maintain a presence throughout a conflict. In areas where NGOs have been able to continue operating during conflicts, the environment has been less adversely affected than in areas where they pulled out.



INCOME GENERATION

Biodiversity loss or ecosystem degradation is often driven by unsustainable land use practices, either by government institutions, companies or local people. Many projects intend to change such practices by a combination of awareness raising, education, training in sustainable techniques and by developing income generation alternatives that help protect or restore ecosystems and biodiversity. Developing successful alternative income sources all the way from research, consultation, training, putting theory into practice, resource management and product processing to market sales usually takes five to ten years. Since the time-frame of a small grants project rarely exceeds two years, most projects only cover a limited section of this chain. One way to overcome this limitation is by embedding a small project into a larger programme or ensuring follow-up with support from other sources.



ECOSYSTEM AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Projects funded by IUCN NL's small grants programmes have varying degrees of relevance for ecosystem and biodiversity conservation. In some projects poverty reduction, advocacy or awareness raising components dominate that are expected to promote conservation indirectly. In others, conservation objectives play a prominent role, although they are never detached from their socio-economic context.

Conservation projects may aim to help create a new protected area or strengthen its management, or they may focus on threatened animal or plant species. In most cases, the life span of small grants projects is too short to achieve significant and lasting conservation results within the project period. However, they do contribute to a more enabling environment, for instance by reducing threats to biodiversity or ecosystem degradation.

