



# Non-traditional funding sources for biodiversity conservation in Indo-Burma

Main report for the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund

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## Introduction

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. It is a global leader in enabling civil society to engage in conservation of the world's most critical ecosystems.

IUCN is leading the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) for the second phase (2013-2019) of CEPF's investment in the Indo-Burma hotspot, working in partnership with the Myanmar Environment Rehabilitation-conservation Network (MERN) and Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (KFBG). Among other priorities, CEPF seeks to improve the protection and management of priority sites and species, and support the development of domestic civil society.

Unfortunately, specific actions that are needed to conserve biodiversity across the hotspot do not seem to find sufficient space within the strategies of national governments and most multilateral agencies (which obtain their funding from multiple governments and spend it on projects in various countries). and bilateral agencies (which receive funding from the government in their home countries, and use the funding to aid developing countries). Funds available for species conservation from global funding mechanisms, such as the World Bank/GEF-funded Save Our Species initiative and the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, are also limited.

The demand for biodiversity funding far outstrips available resources, as is evidenced by the fact that CEPF receives hundreds of applications in the Indo-Burma region (over 1,000 since 2013) but is only able to support about 17% of these. There is therefore a need to identify other sources of funding for priority biodiversity conservation in the hotspot. The Indo-Burma Ecosystem Profile clearly identifies this need through Investment Priority 1.4 "Develop long-term financing mechanisms for conservation of priority species", under which civil society is encouraged to access non-traditional and innovative funding sources, such as private sector contributions.

IUCN's role as the Indo-Burma RIT includes a requirement to 'engage directly with private sector partners and ensure their participation in implementation of key strategies.' This scoping study on non-traditional funding sources is a first step towards meeting this objective.

In addition, the Asian Species Action Partnership (ASAP), an interagency coalition to address the extinction risk among Asia's most threatened land and freshwater vertebrates, has expressed an interest in participating in this study.

The results of the study are expected to help identify priority funding sources to be engaged, and priority mechanisms for constructive engagement. The data obtained from the study will also be utilised during training events which IUCN and CEPF will organise for civil society organisations, in order to encourage them to engage and influence government and private sector partners.

## Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- Identify non-traditional funding sources for biodiversity conservation in the region;
- Identify sources that are likely to be worth pursuing further;
- Identify the barriers that are currently preventing us from taking advantage of these funding sources.

The study will be focused on the Indo-Burma hotspot (which comprises all non-marine parts of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, as well as parts of southern China).

## Methodology

As a first step, a review of previous research on non-traditional funding sources and private sector engagement was carried out, and additional literature reviews and online searches were conducted.

Following initial web-based studies, a set of detailed interview questions was developed. The questions were carefully tailored to each interviewee to yield information that is accurate and thorough, and that contributes to answering the overarching objectives of the study.

Interviews were then conducted with key stakeholders in the Indo-Burma region both in person and via Skype. The stakeholders interviewed were ASAP, CEPF, Toyota, Minor International Ltd, Asiola, (a crowdfunding platform in Thailand), Save Vietnam’s Wildlife (a Vietnamese NGO), and the SOS - Save our Species initiative, another grant-giving facility.

## Key Findings

### Overview

There are various sources of non-traditional funding globally and in the Indo-Burma hotspot in particular. These can be broadly grouped into seven types: high net-worth individuals; private sector contributions; tax breaks and other incentives by governments; Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES); funding by the general public through, for example, online crowd-sourcing campaigns; public organisations and mechanisms for charitable giving such as lotteries; and development organisations whose priorities do not explicitly include biodiversity conservation.

The table below, which includes data provided by Jack Tordoff, Managing Director of CEPF, as well as data identified through simple web searches, shows an overview of current non-traditional funding sources existing in the Indo-Burma region. The table should not be considered comprehensive as not all the financial information could not be obtained (see page 13)

Key	
Number of notable examples	Total revenue (from 2015 - August 2017) (US \$ millions)

(DD = Data Deficient)

Funding from the private sector and development agencies occurs in all countries in the Indo-Burma hotspot. There appears to be opportunities for PES in most countries, though Myanmar and Cambodia do not yet have any of note. Crowdfunding for biodiversity conservation occurs in China, Cambodia, and Thailand, while financial incentives, such as tax breaks, exist in China, Thailand and Viet Nam. Particularly in China, there is the possibility for funding through green bonds. However, in none of the countries in the Indo-Burma hotspot do local state lotteries currently fund biodiversity conservation.

The countries with the most and least opportunities for leveraging non-traditional sources of funding for species conservation can be roughly identified through quantitative analysis, but social trends and cultural norms – analysed qualitatively – have been used to more thoroughly inform our recommendations.

With 21 notable funding sources and a total identified revenue of US\$ 86.4 billion from these sources, China presents the most apparent opportunities from a purely quantitative perspective. These sources are especially concentrated on contributions from the private sector and public utility companies supporting PES. In contrast, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar present the most limited apparent opportunities from a quantitative perspective, with Cambodia offering an identified revenue of less than US\$ 70 million, and conservation projects in Lao PDR and Myanmar receiving support from nine notable sources.

## Private sector and high-net-worth individuals

### Private Sector

In the October 2014 'Lessons Learned' document produced for internal use by SOS - Save Our Species and focussing on general fundraising efforts, it is emphasised that “businesses are not philanthropists.” Most do not necessarily care about the environment or feel any need to work toward sustainability beyond possibly mitigating their own impacts. Corporate philanthropic foundations, such as the Ford Foundation and Credit Agricole Suisse, tend to prioritise “strict humanitarian aid” over the environment, let alone holistic sustainable development initiatives. When investments in environment and corporate sustainability initiatives are made, the contributions are small, generally require adherence to a strict set of conditions, are invested in local NGOs, and are rarely for the purpose of biodiversity conservation. However, having said that, the private sector is not a lost cause. There are several examples in the Indo-Burma region of large corporations involving themselves in biodiversity conservation and corporate sustainability. It is possible that others might be convinced to follow, especially after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, which emphasises the

	Private sector (per year)		PES (budget)		State lotteries		Development agencies		Crowdfunding (total)		Financial incentives		Other (e.g. green bonds)		Total	
<b>China</b>	6	0.51-5.1	5	85,211.4	0	0	3	30-300	3	0.3-3	2	0.2-2	2	1,001-1,010	21	86,387.455
<b>Cambodia</b>	3	0.02-0.21	1	0	0	0	7	12.4-124	1	0.00039	DD	DD	DD	DD	12	68.31539
<b>Lao PDR</b>	1	0.1-1	2	1.1-11	0	0	6	13.2-132	0	0	DD	DD	DD	DD	9	79.2
<b>Myanmar</b>	2	0.11-1.1	DD	DD	0	0	7	22.3-223	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	DD	9	123.255
<b>Thailand</b>	4	0.03-0.31	2	0.01-0.1	0	0	6	30.3-301	1	0.01-0.1	1	0.1-1	DD	DD	14	166.48
<b>Viet Nam</b>	3	0.012-0.12	2	11-110	0	0	6	31.2-301	2	DD	1	0.1-1	DD	DD	14	227.216

importance of private sector involvement in order to achieve the goals.

### **Drivers and incentives**

The private sector's greatest incentive to fund conservation projects would be the enhanced reputational value, followed by the long-term benefits to the company's profitability. A company's image as environmentally-conscious could lead to more trust among consumers and a greater willingness to purchase the company's goods and services, and investing in environmental protection could secure long-term access to natural resources. This is especially crucial for companies in industries such as logging and fishing, as these resources renew themselves slowly and must be conserved if companies wish to take advantage of them in the future. According to SOS, some companies believe that supporting conservation will be perceived as 'greenwashing' and make the company seem insincere, bringing more risks than opportunities. The example is given of Swiss watch company Cartier, whose mascot is a leopard but who refuses to contribute to leopard conservation "for fear of animal rights activist groups responding with cynicism". This perception is clear and damaging, and must be taken into account when seeking private sector support.

In addition to the potential reputational enhancement (of which many companies will need to be convinced), supporting other conservation projects is an economical and expedient option for companies that have environmental targets. It is less costly and time-consuming for a company to do this than to carry out a conservation project itself, as it eliminates the need to hire experts for technical knowledge, conducting assessments and monitoring results. SOS found that companies want ownership of the projects to which their foundations are contributing, in the sense that they regard the financial support as a transaction rather than an investment; they "ask specifically what their money will buy", and require clear deliverables.

Additional drivers for biodiversity conservation funding may also exist, and have been demonstrated within companies in Indo-Burma. One example is the incorporation of environmental considerations into the company's philosophy and overall business strategy. Toyota, notably, has maintained a corporate philosophy of sustainable and ethical business practices since its inception, which resulted in its "Environmental Challenge 2050" initiative that aims to reduce the negative impacts associated with automobiles as close to zero as possible, while simultaneously making positive impacts on society. The company has provided approximately US\$ 1.2 million to support The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, which is the world's most comprehensive source of information on the status of biodiversity.

The will of individuals, such as company CEOs, can also drive corporate investment in environmental protection. Some corporate charitable foundations, such as the Asahi Glass Foundation, are set up by executives who are willing to donate their wealth back to society, and do so by funding conservation.

For companies in industries that rely heavily on extracting resources or that otherwise have large environmental footprints, another incentive to funding conservation is its function as a compensation scheme or a biodiversity offset strategy. Sometimes, due to environmental limitations, it is impossible for companies to restore or minimise damage to degraded land at their operational sites, leaving carbon and degradation offsetting as the most viable option in industries such as mining, heavy manufacture and oil extraction. Examples of such initiatives are presented in the country-specific section below.

Additionally, companies may also benefit from the aforementioned enhancement of brand image and value that comes with supporting conservation initiatives and mitigating their own impacts. In the era of global communication, and with the growth of social responsibility within the investment sector, this

environmentally-friendly image can build trust and credibility with customers and thereby generate more sales revenue for the company. A 2015 Nielsen global online survey found that consumers are increasingly willing to pay more for socially responsible products. 66% of respondents said they were willing to pay more for products and services that come from companies who are committed to positive social and environmental impact, up from 55% in 2014 and 50% in 2013.

### **Risk of greenwashing**

As noted above, being environmentally-conscious can lead to accusations of greenwashing, if the company does not incorporate the environmental considerations more widely into their core business operations and adopt group-level (company-wide) sustainability strategies. Greenwashing accusations tend to arise when companies that don't otherwise have sustainability strategies fund conservation initiatives without examining the impacts of their operations and taking strategic action to minimise their impact on the environment.

The term “greenwashing” was coined in 1986 by Jay Westerveld, who was struck by the hypocrisy of a large, rapidly-expanding resort asking its guests to help save reefs by not washing towels daily, without changing its more impactful operations in any way. Other notable examples of greenwashing include Chevron’s “People Do” advertising campaign in the mid-1980s, which showed Chevron employees playing with wildlife at the same time that the company was violating the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts of the United States, and an advertisement produced in 1989 by the DuPont chemical company – the single largest corporate polluter in the U.S. at the time – which featured marine animals celebrating a new line of oil tankers.

Overcoming the greenwashing label is difficult, but not complex; incorporating sustainability strategies that apply to the entire company demonstrates a long-term commitment to sustainability that goes beyond marketing ploys. Minor International, for example, which operates hotels, restaurants and lifestyle retail shops globally, has a group-level sustainability strategy which comprises three strategic pillars: 1) Develop workforce capability and promote mobility; 2) Drive for sustainable supply chain management practices; 3) Manage environmental impact and advocate conservation. In line with their strategy, the group has implemented several initiatives that protect biodiversity, including the establishment of a turtle conservation centre in Phuket, the implementation of a turtle conservation project in collaboration with IUCN in Sri Lanka, and the establishment of an elephant conservation centre in Thailand. An interview with Minor Group's head of sustainability, Chompan Kulnides, revealed that the company is motivated to protect biodiversity because the chairman and senior managers are aware that most of their businesses, especially hotels, depend fundamentally on a pristine environment. Essentially, Minor understands that in order to protect their bottom line, they need to protect nature.

### **Brief overview of corporations supporting biodiversity conservation**

A brief internet search for corporations supporting biodiversity conservation in each country, as well as information provided by Jack Tordoff, yielded the following results.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Company/foundation</b>	<b>Est. annual support (USD)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Global/Regional	<a href="#">Asahi Glass Foundation</a>	10,000 – 100,000	Supports research in the natural sciences, including a handful of grants on conservation each year
	<a href="#">Ford Motors</a>	100,000 – 1,000,000	Provides grants to grassroots

	<a href="#">Conservation and Environmental Grants</a>		NGOs and individuals for conservation, energy efficiency, climate change and environmental engineering
	<a href="#">HSBC/ HSBC 150 Community Fund</a>	100,000 – 1,000,000	Provides support to biodiversity surveys and water conservation in Western China; And a biodiversity conservation programme in Viet Nam
	<a href="#">Toyota Environmental Activities Grant Programme</a>	100,000 – 1,000,000	Supports initiatives on biodiversity conservation and climate change
	<a href="#">PADI Foundation</a>	10,000 – 100,000	Provides grants for marine research and education
	<a href="#">PATA Foundation</a>	1,000 – 10,000	Provides grants for sustainable tourism, including conservation of environment and cultural heritage
	<a href="#">Yves Rocher</a>	1,000 – 10,000	Awards prizes to adult women (18+) who are engaged in community-level conservation
	<a href="#">Fondation Total</a>	Unknown	Carries out projects relating to biodiversity, wetlands, fragile ecosystems and invasive species in collaboration with independent organisations
	<a href="#">J. M. Kaplan</a>	100,000 – 1,000,000	J. M. K. Innovation Prize awarded to grantees outside the United States for innovation in environment, heritage and social justice
	<a href="#">Mitsubishi Corporation</a>	100,000 – 1,000,000	Provides grants for projects in biodiversity conservation, clean energy, indigenous rights, agriculture, ecological research, etc. Grants for Asia are provided by their headquarters in Japan
	<a href="#">Hermès Enterprise Foundation</a>	Unknown	Provides grants to grassroots organisations for developing local skills and knowledge consistent with biodiversity conservation
Cambodia	<a href="#">Giant Ibis Transport Company</a>	10,000 – 100,000	Sponsoring ibis conservation by BirdLife International
	ANZ Staff Foundation	1,000 – 10,000	Makes grants of up to \$5,000
	<a href="#">MTV Exit</a>	10,000 – 100,000	Supporting the EXIT campaign against human trafficking and exploitation; some elements of the campaign have been extended to address wildlife trade. This initiative is no longer active.
China	<a href="#">Apple</a>	Unknown	Partnership between WWF and Apple to conserve forests in China
	<a href="#">Bridgestone Company</a>	100,000 – 1,000,000	Provides grants for conservation initiatives in southwestern China
	<a href="#">Marriott Hotels and Resorts</a>	100,000 – 1,000,000	Supporting water resource conservation in southwestern

			China
Lao PDR	<a href="#">MMG Limited</a>	100,000 – 1,000,000	Supporting biodiversity conservation in Savannakhet province as part of a biodiversity offset strategy for the Sepon mine
Myanmar	<a href="#">MGTC, Tanintharyi Pipeline Company and PTTEP</a>	100,000 – 1,000,000	Supporting Tanintharyi Nature Reserve as part of a compensation scheme for pipeline developments
Thailand	<a href="#">J Walter Thompson</a>	10,000 – 100,000	Supporting anti-wildlife-trade campaigns, including the ARREST program, by providing pro bono support
	<a href="#">Coca Cola</a>	Unknown	Partnered with WWF and others to ensure access to drinking water for communities in the vicinity of its factories to offset operational water consumption
	<a href="#">Marriott Hotels and Resorts</a>	100,000 – 1,000,000	Supports conservation of marine biodiversity and education on biodiversity and sustainable tourism
Viet Nam	<a href="#">FPT Corporation</a>	1,000 – 10,000	Provided small support to conservation initiatives
	<a href="#">Spatial Decisions</a>	1,000 – 10,000	Pro-bono support to conservation organisations

**Cambodia:** Few companies are supporting conservation work in Cambodia; the most prominent example is the partnership between BirdLife International and Giant Ibis Transport, which operates long-distance busses between Cambodia’s major cities, as well as to Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City. Giant Ibis partnered with BirdLife to protect the company’s namesake, the national bird of Cambodia, which is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. MTV Exit, though mostly focussed on human exploitation and trafficking, has also been tangentially involved in addressing wildlife trafficking in Cambodia.

**China:** There are several examples in China of corporations supporting conservation, either through grants, collaboration with NGOs, or conservation-oriented business models. Bridgestone Company has provided grants for wildlife protection on the Nianbaoyuze plateau, and Marriott invested US\$ 500,000 in rural communities to develop alternative livelihoods and reduce pressure on water resources. Other international foundations, including the Ford Motor Foundation and HSBC, which distribute grants worldwide and throughout the Indo-Burma region, have supported conservation initiatives in China.

Additionally, Apple partnered with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in China to protect sustainable forests by conserving up to one million acres of responsibly managed working forests which provide fibre for pulp, paper and wood products. Apple has undertaken this five-year project to achieve its long-term goal of making a net-zero impact on the world’s supply of sustainable virgin fibre and powering its global operations on 100% renewable energy. A key outcome of this project will be an increase in the amount of forest land within China that is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), an entity that WWF helped to create 20 years ago. The FSC label means the product comes from a forest that is managed according to rigorous standards for environmental and social responsibility.

**Lao PDR:** Few corporations are actively involved, or have been involved, in biodiversity conservation

in Lao PDR. The most notable example is MMG Limited, which operates the open-pit Sepon copper mine in Savannakhet Province. MMG Limited works towards supporting the conservation of key ecosystems and species as part of a biodiversity offset strategy for the mine. Some of the initiatives include a project to develop a comprehensive inventory of the terrestrial flora and vertebrate fauna in the upper catchments of the Namkok River and to identify species and habitat of particular conservation or social significance to the area. Another project, implemented in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society, supported the conservation of the Siamese Crocodile, the third rarest Crocodile in Lao PDR, through the restoration of wetland habitats and community livelihood programs to support maintenance of the wetland in Champhone District. It is not clear if these projects are still being implemented as there is insufficient information available to the public. Additionally, MMG turned down the scoping study's team interview invitation.

**Myanmar:** Similarly, few corporations in Myanmar are actively involved in biodiversity conservation, and the ones that do so in order to compensate for the degradation inherent in their operations. MGTC, Tanintharyi Pipeline Company and PTTEP, which operate oil pipelines in and around Tanintharyi Nature Reserve, take a more hands-off approach than MMG Limited does in Lao PDR; the three companies provide payments for the Tanintharyi Nature Reserve Project to use at their own discretion, and not in order to offset the environmental impacts of their activities.

**Thailand:** Many companies operate in Thailand, and many have company-wide sustainability strategies built into the fabric of their operations, or else have a philosophy of corporate responsibility. Some notable examples include the Coca Cola Company and Marriott Hotels and Resorts, as well as influential high-net-worth executives with a personal interest in conservation. Beginning in 2008, Coca Cola's '*Raknam*' (Love Water) initiative aims to return as much water to local communities by 2020 as the local factories consume, and had 500,000 beneficiaries by 2011. Marriott Hotels partnered with IUCN in 2013, and has been contributing to biodiversity restoration and conservation, as well as education on sustainable and responsible tourism practices, at its Thailand resort locations. J. Walter Thompson, an advertising agency known for partnering with social justice-oriented movements and initiatives seeking to improve the world, worked pro bono with the Freeland Foundation in 2016 on a campaign to discourage illegal trade in wildlife products.

In early 2017, 15 prominent business leaders based in Thailand pledged, on behalf of themselves and their respective companies, to stop the ivory trade in Thailand, as part of the Ivory Free Thailand Campaign initiated in 2015 by WildAid and WWF Thailand. The companies pledged to lead by example in developing sustainable and socially responsible business practices; not to purchase, use or give as gifts any illegal wildlife products and ivory; to encourage friends, family and employees never to purchase any illegal wildlife products; and to support efforts to conserve Thailand's rich natural heritage and protect wildlife. These individuals included William Edward Heinecke, Chairman and CEO of Minor Intl. Public Company Ltd.; Pridiyathorn Devakula, former Deputy Prime Minister, Thailand; Banthoon Lamsam, Chairman and CEO of Kasikornbank Public Company Ltd.; Boontuck Wungcharoen, CEO of TMB Bank Public Company Ltd.; Chatsiri Sophonpanich, President of Bangkok Bank Public Company Ltd.; Khunying Chodchoy Sophonpanich, President of the Thai Environmental and Community Development Association; David Lyman, Chairman and Chief Values Officer of Tilleke & Gibbins International Ltd.; Harald Link, Chairman of B. Grimm; Kamala Sukosol, President of Sukosol Hotels Group; Kirati Assakul, Director of Ocean Glass Public Company Ltd.; Kirit Shah, Chairman of GP Group; Richard Han, CEO of Hana Microelectronics Group; Santi Bhirombhakdi, President of Boon Rawd Brewery Co. Ltd.; Surin Osathanugrah, Chairman of Bangkok Rinvest Co. Ltd.; and Suchin Wanglee, Chairman of The Navakij Insurance Public Company Ltd.

**Viet Nam:** As in most Indo-Burma countries, few corporations in Viet Nam actively engage in biodiversity conservation. Those that do have a strong commitment to environmental sustainability

and corporate responsibility that is inherent in their operations. FTP is a technology and telecommunications firm whose Green IT project seeks to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and who have partnered with organisations such as WWF and the WCS to campaign against illegal wildlife trafficking. Spatial Decisions, a corporate design and planning firm, incorporates “green urban development” practices into its daily operations and supports climate change mitigation strategies. According to CEPF, they have sometimes collaborated pro bono with conservation organisations.

### *High net-worth individuals*

Nerissa Chao, ASAP Programme Manager, highlighted that high net-worth individuals based in Singapore as well as multinationals with regional headquarters in Singapore might be good sources of funding for biodiversity conservation work in the Indo Burma region, as they have readily available funds and a growing interest in nature conservation. However, Chompan Kulnides commented that high net worth individuals in general may be reluctant to contribute to biodiversity conservation, preferring instead to make donations to strictly humanitarian initiatives. SOS confirms this, citing lessons-learned from discussions with individuals in Switzerland. These revealed that “a very limited amount of funding from wealthy individuals goes to the preservation of the environment” as individuals – much like corporations – prefer a quick turn-around on their investments.

### **Tax incentives and payments for ecosystem services (PES)**

#### *Tax incentives*

Governments may be considered traditional actors in support of conservation through legislation. In the Indo-Burma region, however, significant tax breaks and other incentives for charitable donations to biodiversity conservation are not widespread.

Governments could create incentives for companies and organisations to fund biodiversity conservation projects. Corporate philanthropy especially depends on the development of the legal environment. For example, if tax incentives for charitable donations are high, the likelihood of companies and organisations funding biodiversity conservation increases accordingly.

Moreover, when governments legitimately represent the public interest, conservation-oriented policy-making and support for incentivising conservation can raise awareness on the importance of this issue. When charitable giving (in general and specifically for conservation) is incentivised and streamlined, more of the public is likely to become interested in participating in crowd-funding and companies become motivated to invest in conservation.

A lack of government incentivisation can be seen throughout the Indo-Burma countries.

**China:** China has some of the lowest rates of charitable giving in the world, ranking 138th out of 139 countries on the Charities Aid Foundation’s World Giving Index, a ranking of how charitable a country is based on how likely its citizens are to donate money, volunteer, or help a stranger. The reason for this is the lack of trust in charities, due to the prevalence of corruption. Since the new Charity Law passed in 2016, the situation has improved somewhat, as this new law contains many tax incentives for both charitable donations and charitable organisations. This could lead to an increase in the amount of funding these charities receive.

However, while biodiversity conservation qualifies as a charitable activity under the Charity Law, the Overseas NGO Laws prohibit foreign charities from accepting donations from within China. This significantly shrinks the pool of charitable organisations that could actually benefit from the Charity

Law. The Charity Law, which makes the criteria for NGO registration more rigorous and also allows domestic NGOs to take donations from the general public, may improve the attitude toward NGOs in China and encourage charitable donations in the future. The Overseas NGO Laws will heavily limit the donations that foreign organisations can receive from Chinese sources, which might present yet another opportunity for 'competing' local NGOs.

**Thailand:** According to the Income Tax Law, charitable donations made by individuals and companies are tax-deductible, but to a limited extent relative to many other countries. A deduction equal to the amount donated is allowed, but it cannot exceed 10% of all deductions. This may deter some very substantial donations and is, in effect, only a partial incentivisation.

**Viet Nam:** Donations for conservation is not a category explicitly mentioned in the Corporate Income Tax Law for tax deductions in Viet Nam. According to this law, tax-deductible expenses include donations for education, healthcare, natural disasters or building homes for the poor. Therefore, donations for conservation would get limited tax incentives compared to other countries.

**Myanmar:** Under the current Myanmar Income Tax Law, there is no specific provision governing the tax deductibility of goodwill. For individuals, as well as corporations, donations made to approved charitable organisations or approved government-sponsored events are tax deductible, but total donations should not exceed 25% of income. Myanmar has also ranked first on World Giving Index, suggesting that, once a conservation organisation has been approved by the government as charitable, private sector funding in Myanmar might be less difficult to obtain than in other Indo-Burma countries.

**Cambodia:** The charitable contribution expense is deductible to the extent that the amount does not exceed 5% of taxable profit. The taxpayer must have proper evidence supporting the payments. The 2015 Law on Associations and NGOs (LANGO) has proved restrictive, according to the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), and created an environment of mistrust, if not open hostility, between the government and NGOs in Cambodia. Compared to other countries in the region, incentive for charitable giving in Cambodia is very limited.

**Lao PDR:** Charitable contributions in Lao PDR are limited to 0.3% of annual revenue, and charitable giving is practically non-existent. Compared to other countries in the region, funding sources are very limited.

According to these findings, tax benefits for biodiversity conservation donations are a viable incentive in China, Myanmar and possibly Thailand. In Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam, the benefits are currently either non-existent or so small as to be practically negligible. In these cases, it is advisable to obtain funding from the private sector by emphasising the other benefits of biodiversity conservation: Attracting investments through improved reputation, long-term company sustainability, and compliance with national and international regulations and targets.

### *Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)*

'Payments for ecosystem services' (PES) is defined by L. Tacconi as "incentives offered to farmers or landowners in exchange for managing their land to provide some sort of ecological service."

Several countries in Indo-Burma have established or are piloting PES schemes through public utility companies, who provide payments to offset or compensate for their use of natural resources. There are no notable active PES schemes in Myanmar or Cambodia at this time, and though one was planned for Phnom Kulen in Cambodia, the talks have yielded nothing substantial. In China, Lao PDR

and Viet Nam, PES schemes are already well-established; many schemes are also being piloted in Thailand. Examples of PES schemes are provided below.

**Cambodia:** PES in Cambodia are only provided by NGOs, and not by public utility companies or the government itself. A mechanism was discussed for Phnom Kulen, but never moved beyond the discussion phase.

**China:** Local governments and water utility companies in China's southwestern provinces provide payments for protection of water catchment areas.

**Lao PDR:** As part of a strategy to offset environmental degradation caused by their activities, which is another form of PES, the Nam Thoun 2 hydropower project funds the Nakai Nam Theun Watershed Management Authority, and The Theun-Hinboun Hydropower Company supports conservation in Bolikhamxay province.

**Myanmar:** There are no PES programmes through the government or public utilities in Myanmar, though the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF) has expressed an interest in developing them.

**Thailand:** Two notable PES programmes are being piloted. In the Dong Yai Community Forest, payments will be made to the community of Ban Wang by downstream users of the water flowing out of Dong Yai for restoration of forest or coastal ecosystems, and for the improvement of water quality. In Khao Ang Rue Nai, public utility companies, such as the East Water Company, will likely be the entity making payments to the six villages surrounding the wildlife sanctuary, with the intention of mitigating human-elephant conflict and for restoring the ecosystem.

**Viet Nam:** PES systems for the protection of hydropower dam catchment areas are being piloted in 26 provinces, two of which – Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue – have begun using the funds to pay for patrols in protected areas. The Forest Protection and Development Fund, under the purview of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, is piloting PES programmes in Lam Dong, Lai Chau and Kon Tum provinces to channel funds directly to forest owners and to finance patrol of protected forest areas.

### Non-conservation development agencies

Biodiversity conservation and development are not mutually exclusive. This is exemplified in the inclusion of environmental issues in at least seven of the 17 SDGs developed by the United Nations, and especially in goals 6, 7 and 11. SDG 6 is to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all,” 7 is to “ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all,” and 11 is to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” All of these goals prioritise human well-being, and achieving them would also result in clean freshwater habitats for aquatic species, lower greenhouse gas emissions and a decrease in climate change-induced natural disasters and environmental degradation, and better waste management practices. Humans and other species depend on the same ecosystems, and many initiatives that benefit people also benefit biodiversity.

This is the principle behind sustainable development and the SDGs, and it is also the reason that many development organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and European Union (EU) end up conserving biodiversity as a tangential result of development-focussed initiatives, or as a secondary goal. Organisations that support the land and water usage rights of

indigenous and rural communities end up protecting that land and water by definition, as such groups rely on a pristine environment for their livelihoods. Organisations like UNFAO, whose projects support sustainable agri- and aquaculture practices, may also support the management of natural resources that are not necessarily cultivated but which nevertheless contribute to livelihoods.

A brief internet search for non-environmental development agencies supporting biodiversity conservation in Indo-Burma, as well as information provided by Jack Tordoff, yielded the following results.

Region/Countries	Organisation	Est. annual support (USD)	Description
Global/Regional	<a href="#">American Jewish World Service</a>	100,000 – 1,000,000	Supports advocacy for land rights among indigenous groups in Cambodia and rural communities in Thailand and Myanmar
	<a href="#">Danida</a>	1,000,000 – 10,000,000	Supports major projects on climate change, natural resource management and sustainable development in all Indo-Burma countries.
	<a href="#">Oxfam</a>	1,000,000 – 10,000,000	Supports initiatives in all Indo-Burma countries on natural resource rights, often linked to climate change
	<a href="#">ADB</a>	10,000,000 – 100,000,000	Provides loans for development of sectors with close links to biodiversity conservation-- including agriculture, forestry, water resources, and transport. Projects have been implemented in China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam
	<a href="#">UNDP</a>	10,000,000 – 100,000,000	Supports a wide range of program areas, including environment and climate change
	<a href="#">EU</a>	10,000,000 – 100,000,000	Supports a wide range of program areas, including the forestry sector and climate change. Projects have been implemented in China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam
	<a href="#">UNFAO</a>	1,000,000 – 10,000,000	Supports government initiatives to promote sustainable natural resource management and sustainable agricultural production. Projects have been implemented in Lao PDR and Viet Nam

Cambodia	Trocaire	100,000 – 1,000,000	Provides support to indigenous peoples groups and grassroots organisations on issues often involving natural resource and water rights. This programme is no longer active
Myanmar	<a href="#">The Open Society Institute</a>	1,000,000 – 10,000,000	Supporting grants on human rights and capacity building for civil society; a small portion are to groups working on environmental issues

### General public and lotteries

Crowdfunding through online platforms such as [Kickstarter](#), [Indiegogo](#) and [GoFundMe](#) is gaining popularity worldwide, and the Indo-Burma region is no exception. Crowdfunding platforms give donors the opportunity to select the precise project they wish to fund, and while these donations are not always tax deductible, the platforms sometimes include other incentives. Donors may receive gifts, depending on the size of their contribution. Recipients must also set finite targets, allowing donors to choose which projects they think have the greatest potential for success and to track the grant's progress; some even have the option of refunding all donations if the donation target is not achieved, which acts as an insurance policy against the uncertainty of donating to a project which may not be successfully funded.

**China:** According to an article by DaXue Consulting, the crowdfunding market in China is still in its infancy compared to markets in the West, but is growing quickly. Despite a lack of oversight and laws to protect against intellectual property theft, as of 2016, Chinese firms had raised a total of over US\$ 101 billion, and may generate 52% of the global crowdfunding total by 2025, according to World Bank estimates. The aforementioned tax laws, while discouraging to foreign NGOs, could possibly incentivise crowdfunding by domestic CSOs.

Many Chinese crowdfunding platforms have specialised focuses and offer more tangible rewards for their contributors than those in the West. Frequently, a campaign will offer physical goods like coupons, souvenirs, books or DVDs in return for the contributions – much more like a sale than a donation. However, conventional types of crowdfunding also exist. [AngelCrunch](#), the Chinese version of [AngelList](#) (A U.S. website which allows startups to raise money from investors free of charge), was one of the first and is currently one of the biggest equity crowdfunding platforms in China. Other well-known equity sites include [Dajiatou](#), [Yuanshihui](#), [Renrentou](#), [Ihetou](#), and [Yunchou](#).

Some examples of crowdfunding initiatives include the Global Environmental Institute (GEI)'s campaign on crowdfunding websites to raise the GBP 8,500 (81,000 yuan) needed to buy new hives and help 150 beekeeping households rebuild their lives after the Sichuan earthquake in 2013. GEI, a supporter of Baoxing's Fengtongzhai Honey Co-operative, launched two concurrent campaigns on Indiegogo and Demo Hour aiming to raise US\$ 10,000 and 20,000 yuan (US\$ 3,000) respectively. They offered participants rewards, such as a photo of the beneficiaries with their bees, and updated them regularly. By the end of the campaigns, GEI had raised 27,000 yuan or 135% of their target on Demo Hour, and US\$ 10,350 or 104% of their target on Indiegogo.

While crowdfunding appears to present opportunities for fundraising, the lack of public trust acting as a barrier to traditional charity is also posing challenges to crowdfunding. A lack of transparency and accountability about how donated funds are used has done little to credit the charity sector, with recent scandals making the problem worse.

**Viet Nam:** Crowdfunding is growing fast, but it faces barriers because there are no specific laws governing it. The public is still sceptical, especially if the benefits of the projects are not immediately obvious (which is likely to be the case with rural conservation work).

Charitable giving is common for alleviation of suffering, and is exemplified in donations to poor people, disaster relief and places of worship. Corporate donations are commonplace and often substantial, due to the cultural importance of charity, but most companies do not collaborate directly with NGOs. It is also important to note that these same ideas about charity negatively influence the integration of social responsibility into corporate strategy, according to the Asia Foundation. The belief that charity ought to be “detached from any self-interest” discourages initiatives that benefit the company as well as others.

Crowdfunding in Viet Nam is on the rise, but it is less likely to work in areas where people who donate are not seeing the direct impact of their donations. There is a general distrust after it was uncovered recently that money sent to charitable causes was not being spent effectively.

An interview with Save Vietnam’s Wildlife revealed that while the number of Vietnamese who support projects via crowdfunding platforms is low, the number of international individuals participating to crowdfunding is high, therefore they are the main donors. Save Vietnam Wildlife said that they have been able to raise funds successfully on international crowdfunding platforms, and think that crowdfunding on these platforms presents great fundraising opportunities for Vietnamese NGOs. The NGO also said that international crowdfunding platforms have allowed them to raise awareness about their cause.

**Thailand:** An interview with Thai crowdfunding platform Asiola revealed that, while only about half of Thai people know about crowdfunding either as a means to finance projects or obtain funding, it has the potential to be a valuable resource as awareness grows. Asiola currently hosts projects for ocean and forest conservation, sustainability and pollution control, as well as 6-7 projects on biodiversity.

Asiola provided examples of three ongoing conservation campaigns funded through their platform. PTT Global Chemical Public Company Ltd. (PTTGC) is currently supporting crowdsourcing for the Sung Cheuk floating marine habitat, in order to help restore marine ecosystems and conserve the traditional fishing practices of fisherfolk in the area. Another, called ‘Kingdom of Coconuts,’ seeks to help farmers adopt farming practices that will allow them to be certified as organic, allowing them access to premium prices for their crop and guaranteeing high quality for the consumer. ‘Right to Breathe,’ the third example provided by Asiola, is a campaign by YPO Australia to crowdfund a series of reforestation workshops held by Mae Fah Luang (MFLF) to teach children in badly-deforested areas of Nan province how to plant Andaman redwood, crops and fruit trees on their families’ land.

About 50-60% of Asiola’s projects meet their fundraising targets, and Asiola takes a 5-6% cut from these projects. Successful campaigns usually provided donors with gifts and rewards for donating specific amounts of money, set appropriate fundraising targets, reached out to specific target audiences using social media networks and other means of advertisement, and were able to provide donors with powerful stories and tangible examples of the impact of their contributions. The Asiola representatives emphasised this latter point very strongly, reiterating at several intervals the need for organisations seeking funding to provide donors with concrete examples of their money being used for its intended purpose.

**Cambodia:** Charitable giving is low, possibly due in part to the distrust of NGOs by the government, which has made allegations against NGOs for supporting the opposition party, and the potential risk of contributing to organisations with ties to the opposition party given the current political climate. Many NGOs are finding it difficult to operate in Cambodia after the passing of LANGO in 2015, which some perceive as vaguely-worded, leading to uncertainty about the actual criteria to remain in good

legal standing. There exists little information on how this has affected the public's trust in NGOs, but the lack of certainty may also be leading to a lack of investment in NGOs for fear that they could be shut down for arbitrary reasons. ToSFUND, Cambodia's first crowdfunding platform, was launched in 2016 and has successfully funded a few projects, only one of which was related to conservation. Some important features of the site include allowing payment by mobile apps, ensuring payments are secure, transparency, and a focus on local as opposed to international donors. This is crucial in Cambodia, where transparency can be an imposing barrier to charitable giving (similar to Viet Nam).

The platform has hosted a total of 23 projects, only three of which have been successful in meeting or exceeding their targets. One successful project was an app which planned to integrate Khmer culture and environmental awareness-raising into an interactive story that people could download for free; the other two successful projects involved providing meals for students (each US\$ 1 contribution would feed one child) and providing support to new mothers in the first 1000 days of a child's life (each US\$ 250 contribution would support one mother and child). In the first case, the output was a tangible app that contributors would be able to use; their contributions could be categorised as an investment or even a purchase rather than charity. In the second two cases, the actual threshold for success was relatively low – \$1 in the first case, \$250 in the second – giving donors an immediate sense that they had substantially affected someone's life, even if the target was not reached, and even if the actual amount they were able to donate was not comparatively high. Initiatives such as these, where people are either purchasing a tangible reward or knowing that low risks return high rewards, provide a sense of security that may also allow low-income individuals to participate.

NGOs wishing to find support in Cambodia might have more success gaining support for individual, localised projects through platforms like ToSFUND than through large donations from corporations and high net-worth contributors.

**Myanmar:** Myanmar has been ranked no. 1 in the World Giving Index four years in a row, though it is not clear if the donations support biodiversity conservation. Nine out of ten people in Myanmar donate money, likely due in part to Buddhist practices of donating to monasteries. Despite its relatively small population, Myanmar ranked no. 9 for the total number of people donating money in 2014. As yet, Myanmar lacks crowdfunding platforms within the country, though there are numerous projects on non-Indo-Burma crowdfunding sites – such as IndieGoGo and StartSomeGood – which seek to benefit Myanmar. Examples of crowdfunding campaigns include the 'pushing Myanmar' project, which saw a German skateboarding nonprofit group raising funds for the nation's first free and community-built skate park in Yangon through Indiegogo. Days before the end of the fundraising campaign, the USD \$19,500 donation goal had been met. In another campaign, PACT, a local NGO, raised US \$5,000 to bring solar power light systems to remote areas in Myanmar.

## **Lotteries**

As yet, there are no examples of lotteries donating funds to contribute to wildlife conservation in the Indo-Burma region. There are, however, examples of lotteries supporting initiatives related to healthcare and social protection. Vietlott in Viet Nam, for example, has donated money to children at National Institute of Hematology and Blood Transfusion (NIHBT) and also to veterans at the Nursing Center for wounded veterans. In Thailand, the official national lottery donates four billion baht a year to the Thai Red Cross and other community projects.

It is not clear if lotteries in Lao PDR, China, Cambodia and Myanmar donate funds to charity or development initiatives as not much information could be found through online research.

While none of the lotteries in the Indo-Burma region seem to be supporting wildlife conservation at the moment, it does not mean that they will not do so in the future. Thailand and Viet Nam, for example,

seem to have rather generous lotteries, so there is a possibility they may be interested in supporting biodiversity conservation, especially since it cross-cuts with various sectors and themes of concern to development community, including the environment, agriculture, health, and poverty alleviation.

## Recommendations

### Across the region

Out of all six countries, China and Thailand present the greatest opportunities to obtain funding for biodiversity conservation. There appear to be more sources in China than in any of the other countries, and though the new laws barring foreign NGOs from receiving contributions from donors in China could severely limit the funding available to foreign programmes and NGOs, they might encourage larger contributions from Chinese corporations and individuals to domestic CSOs. The lack of trust in the veracity of charitable organisations may still present a challenge to taking advantage of the funds potentially available, but CSOs that can deliver visible results – or at least tangible rewards for individual contributions – are likely to find more success than those who seek funding for long-term projects.

Large businesses in Thailand have already begun making inroads to biodiversity conservation projects and initiatives – some through financial contribution, others through pledges of support or non-involvement with illegal wildlife trafficking – and the resources available to these companies is substantial. Thailand and China also have well-established crowdfunding platforms, which CSOs could use to their advantage. SOS recommends offering a “clear return on investment” by seeking support and funding for small-scale, short-term projects with concrete deliverables; this strategy was suggested in the context of mobilising private sector support, but is equally important with regard to crowdfunding platforms. The more the donor’s reward is maximised and their risk minimised, the more likely they are to take the risk. This is especially crucial in countries such as Cambodia and Myanmar, where income is comparatively low, and in Viet Nam, where lower-income families in rural areas are more likely to donate to charity than higher-income families in urban areas.

While the limits in Thailand on tax deductions for charitable giving may de-incentivise extremely large contributions, the limits are not so restrictive that they will discourage them altogether; Thailand already hosts companies – such as B. Grimm, Thai Environmental and Community Development Association and Marriott – with a proven track record of charitable giving and projects to support environmental conservation. While most of the corporations involved in conservation in China are international (such as Bridgestone Tires, Ford Motors and Marriott Hotels), the newly-revised tax law may provide extra incentive for more Chinese companies to become involved in biodiversity conservation, as long as other hurdles – such as fear of being called out for ‘greenwashing’ – are also mitigated.

In Lao PDR, Cambodia and Viet Nam, tax incentives for corporations are low and the culture of charitable giving is tainted by mistrust. There are opportunities for funding in these countries, but less so than in Thailand and China. Myanmar also presents a middling-viable opportunity; despite its low number of funding sources, the actual amount of money contributed is higher than both Cambodia and Lao PDR due to the culture of charitable giving and the lack of tax restrictions on donated capital.

Through recent interactions with representatives from International conservation NGOs such as WWF, Conservation International, Birdlife International and Wildlife Conservation Society at international forums, Ann Moey, Head of Communications from IUCN Asia, learned that most of the International conservation NGOs that have been very successful in securing funding from the private sector have a dedicated fundraising team that focuses primarily on establishing partnerships with

corporates. Based on this, it is safe to say that NGOs should consider investing in a fulltime staff or team to handle relationships with the private sector.

### **Opportunities with the private sector**

The private sector entities on which NGOs should focus their efforts fall into three categories.

Category 1) Corporations in industries with large environmental footprints and known detrimental impacts on biodiversity. These include extractives (such as mining and quarrying), factory operations with toxic waste output (such as chemical and oil refineries), and monoculture (such as palm oil plantations). Given their expanding mining and quarrying industries, Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Myanmar could leverage funding from companies that have a high impact on the environment (more details can be found in the country-specific recommendations below).

Category 2) Companies in industries whose profitability relies heavily on the health and viability of the environment. These include, for example, tourism sector entities that operate in places where the landscape itself is an attraction, as well as the supply chains of seafood distributors.

Category 3) Corporations that already have a group-level sustainability strategy and/or who have committed to contributing to achieving the SDGs. Companies with a previous track record of support for biodiversity conservation are likely predisposed to working with environment-focussed NGOs, and will only need to be convinced that a partnership with the specific NGO in question will be beneficial to them.

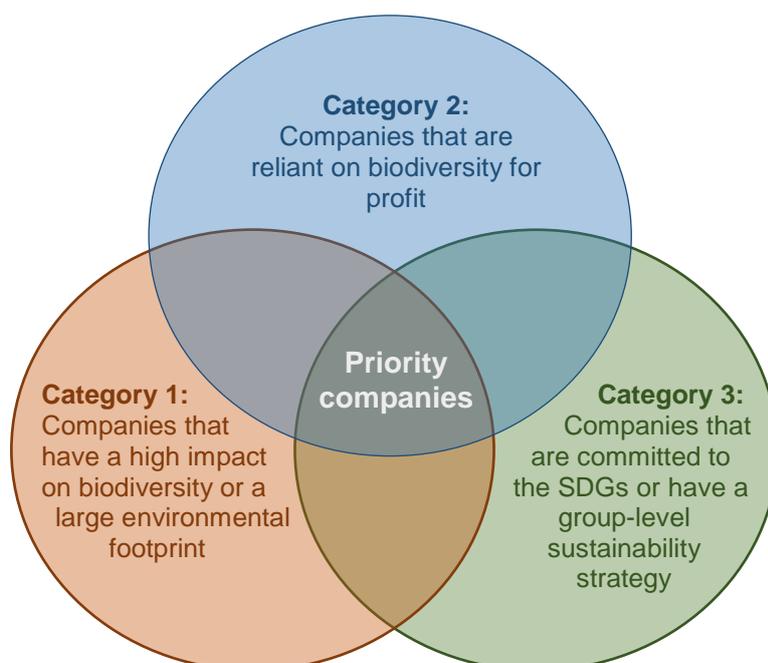
### **Priority Companies**

Conservation organisations should focus their efforts on companies which fall into all three categories. These 'priority companies' have a high impact on biodiversity, are reliant on biodiversity to be profitable, and have also committed to the SDGs or a group-level sustainability strategy.

Minor International Group is one such priority company: As a conglomerate that transports goods globally and operates large resorts and hotels, its carbon footprint and impact on biodiversity have the potential to be very high; it is also reliant on biodiversity for profit, as pristine beaches and natural landscapes attract tourists and are integral to the company's spas and resorts; and it has committed to a group-level sustainability strategy in order to minimise the company's impact and ensure its longevity. JW Marriott Phuket Resort and Spa, owned by Minor International Group, for example has been a valuable partner to IUCN, and contributed to biodiversity conservation efforts in Thailand.

Existing in all three categories is by no means a guarantee that a company will want to partner with an NGO, but previous experience of IUCN Asia would suggest that they are the most likely candidates and ought to be prioritised by conservation organisations wishing to establish private sector partnerships.

(See figure 1.1)



[Figure 1.1]

### Opportunities with non-conservation development agencies

As another opportunity for funding, NGOs and non-profits with a biodiversity conservation focus might consider partnering with large development funding mechanisms, as these often provide substantial grants. While these agencies may not necessarily provide grants for biodiversity conservation-focused initiatives, biodiversity does cross-cut and integrate with other themes these agencies may be supporting, such as health, gender etc. There is precedent for collaboration between some of them, such as UNDP and Danida, with conservation-focussed organisations such as IUCN.

Therefore, as long as the objectives of the conservation-focussed organisations and the development agency are aligned, and benefits both people and the environment, then non-conservation development agencies could prove to be an important resource.

### Opportunities with the general public through crowdfunding

While Cambodia, China and Thailand have their own crowdfunding platforms that enterprising organisations might use to reach local donors, better-known U.S.-based platforms such as Kickstarter and GoFundMe are also available, and would allow organisations based in Indo-Burma to access a much wider pool of donors across the globe. Donors in Thailand might be more inclined to support Thai projects through Asiola, and donors in China might prefer to use Dajiatou or Yuanshahui to fund projects in their own country, but organisations do not need to restrict themselves to a single platform, nor to domestic ones only. Like any other fundraising venture, crowdfunding requires a detailed strategy; Jessica Alter, co-founder of Tech for Campaigns, provides a [list of key points](#) (published by Quora, redistributed by Forbes) for developing one. Most important to a crowdfunding campaign's success, based on this list and on interviews with Asiola, is the effective communication and promotion of the project before and during the launch of the campaign. This is especially true on popular platforms that may be hosting 50 active biodiversity conservation projects from across the world at any given time; a successful campaign will have something to make it stand out from the crowd, such as a professionally-produced video, captivating photos, or a particularly well-written and engaging story. An organisation that wishes to truly benefit from crowdfunding will need to invest some funds in hiring communications professionals – first to draw investors, and then to relate each

success as it comes, so that donors remain engaged in the project. Engaged donors are more likely to share the organisation's social media posts and encourage their social circles to donate as well.

Distribution of these communications materials is best done on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter; according to Alter, "Twitter is nice for hype, Facebook is good for donations." Organisations should make ample use of both in order to cover both bases. Outreach posts on Twitter should include the handles of relevant media outlets, persons of note who may have a personal interest in the project (if possible) and other relevant organisations (for example, @IUCNAsia or @CommunityCEPF). Outreach posts on Facebook should go into more detail and should also include relevant tags, but will likely have a more narrow reach than posts on Twitter. Social media should be used before the campaign starts to attract prospective donors; during the campaign each time a milestone is past; and after the campaign, once the money has been spent on project implementation, so that donors know that their money has reached its intended destination.

While many of these overarching methods can be used by most NGOs in most Indo-Burma countries, it is vital that more detailed strategies for obtaining funding be tailored to the unique circumstances of each country.

Recommendations at the country level are provided below.

## **Breakdown according to countries**

### **Cambodia**

#### *Overview*

Financial incentives to the private sector and high-net worth individuals for biodiversity conservation are low, government-funded PES does not exist, trust in NGOs is low, and charitable giving is low. Many large development agencies fund projects in Cambodia, but few are for the purpose of environmental protection, and thus Cambodia generates the least revenue from funding sources for biodiversity conservation in the region.

#### *Opportunities*

Though the number of opportunities available for private sector collaboration is relatively low, companies like Giant Ibis Transport have set a precedent for the involvement of Cambodian corporations in biodiversity conservation. NGOs might consider reaching out to other companies with logos or names that reflect Cambodia's biodiversity, and encouraging them to honour their namesake species in that way.

There is also opportunity for Cambodian NGOs to reach out to development agencies such as the American Jewish World Service, which already operates in Cambodia, to further progress on the cross-cutting SDGs.

Cambodia's new crowdfunding platform, TosFUND, may be used as a means to obtain some support, as long as the project being funded operates with full disclosure to both donors and the government, and provides donors with tangible rewards for little financial risk.

## **China**

### *Overview*

China's culture of charitable giving ranks particularly poorly, but crowdfunding is on the rise, and corporations now have additional tax incentives to make donations. There is precedent for foreign companies to support conservation in China, and the new tax laws may incentivise domestic corporations to do the same. In addition to tax incentives, local governments also support PES programmes in dam catchment areas.

### *Opportunities*

Local NGOs may now have a greater opportunity to obtain funding from Chinese corporations, and should begin to seek them out according to their corporate social responsibility mandate, their environmental footprint, and their reliance on biodiversity for profitability.

Meanwhile, startup or younger NGOs could use platforms such as AngelCrunch to link with large corporations for direct funding, and already-established organisations should take advantage of companies' potentially greater interest in contributing to charity and the greater ease with which they will be able to do so. Organisations that can deliver concrete results to their donors in a timely manner will be more likely to succeed in obtaining funding both from the private sector and from individual contributors through crowdfunding platforms.

Conservation NGOs could also benefit from partnering with or seeking funding from development agencies such as the UNDP, EU and ADB on environmental issues that strongly impact local communities.

Additionally, opportunities for PES or public utility biodiversity offset strategies might also be explored at the local and provincial levels.

## **Lao PDR**

### *Overview*

Financial incentives to the private sector and high-net worth individuals for biodiversity conservation are practically non-existent, as is charitable giving in general. There are also no crowdfunding platforms as yet.

Although the mining and quarrying industries accounted for nearly 10% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2009-2010, very few corporations contribute to conservation. However, several public hydropower companies have established PES schemes in order to offset the biodiversity degradation in their dam catchments

### *Opportunities*

Conservation NGOs could benefit from partnering with or seeking funding from development agencies such as the UNDP, EU, ADB and UNFAO on environmental issues that strongly impact local communities.

NGOs should also strengthen pre-existing private sector ties, and focus on highlighting the visible, tangible outcomes of their projects in order to strengthen their credibility and seem more attractive to

potential donors. Those with no private sector ties should target the many extractive companies in Lao PDR, as well as public utility companies, and work with them to minimise their environmental footprint.

In terms of PES, since there is already ample precedent for hydropower-funded PES by the public sector, CSOs and NGOs could encourage the private sector to adopt similar schemes.

## **Myanmar**

### *Overview*

Financial incentives for charity are high, and there is a strong culture of charitable giving but there are no crowdfunding platforms to take advantage of this. Additionally, Myanmar's mining industry is strong and growing fast – ranked third in the world for tin production in 2014 after a 5-year period of 4000% growth per year – and this rise in profits might also spur a rise in corporate charitability. As yet, Myanmar has no PES programmes led by the government or public utility companies, though some private corporations are engaged in a degradation offset scheme in nearby protected forest area.

### *Opportunities*

NGOs should focus primarily on establishing partnerships with the rapidly-expanding extractives sector, rather than try to obtain funding from the general public.

Additionally, there are several development agencies operating in Myanmar with which local NGOs could establish partnerships or from which they might seek funding for projects that benefit local communities as well as biodiversity.

It might also be worth liaising with the government in order to establish or secure PES, as a tool for both development and conservation. MOECAAF has already expressed an interest in piloting PES in Myanmar, and public utility companies could – as in Lao PDR – develop compensation or offset strategies that are similar to those already being employed by some companies within Myanmar. The government itself might be encouraged to pilot true PES programmes, similar to those in Viet Nam, that directly compensate communities for stewardship of their natural resources.

## **Thailand**

### *Overview*

The number of corporations in Thailand currently contributing to biodiversity conservation is second only to China, and the degree of mistrust regarding NGOs' allocation of funds is not crippling. Thailand is also piloting several PES programmes with diverse priorities, including one that is explicitly for the conservation of elephants and the reduction of human-elephant conflict. Many high-net-worth individuals and company executives have pledged support – at both individual and company levels – for conservation, the government incentivises philanthropy to a certain degree through tax breaks, and several development agencies have funded conservation projects in the country.

### *Opportunities*

Due to the prominence of high-net-worth individuals in Thailand with an interest in conservation, attempts should be made to draw their attention to these campaigns in order to drive traffic and

increase the number of donors. NGOs should also seek out corporations according to the three criteria specified in the 'Across the region' section above, and target those whose executives have explicitly aligned themselves with conservation projects.

NGOs also have the option of partnering with or seeking funding from development agencies for projects that would benefit both local communities and the environment. As PES schemes are already in place, public utility companies may also be persuaded to pilot such programmes as offset or compensation strategies for their activities.

The primary crowdfunding platform, Asiola, is relatively successful, and could also be used by NGOs and CSOs to obtain funding. The criteria Asiola specified for a campaign's success are similar to those in Cambodia, China and Viet Nam: provide donors with tangible rewards and visible outcomes, minimise the risk that donated funds will not be used for their intended purpose, and invest in outreach and communications for the campaign in order to reach a wider audience.

## **Viet Nam**

### *Overview*

The culture of charity is strong in Viet Nam, though tainted by mistrust. The government provides incentive for companies to be charitable, but donations to environmental causes are not tax deductible. However, several dozen PES programmes are being piloted in Viet Nam, some with enough success that they payments are funding additional conservation and biodiversity protection measures. Crowdfunding platforms exist, and development agencies have funded cross-cutting conservation projects in the past.

### *Opportunities*

Private corporations are unlikely to become involved in biodiversity conservation due to a lack of financial incentive, but there are almost certainly opportunities for partnerships with public utility companies and with government agencies for the development of additional PES programmes or degradation offset or compensation strategies.

Several development agencies have also supported projects with an environmental focus in Viet Nam, and NGOs may wish to partner with them or seek funding for sustainable development projects that also benefit biodiversity.

The private sector should still be investigated for potential partnerships, despite the country's limited tax incentives for donations towards conservation, as Viet Nam's mining industry is expansive and corporations in Viet Nam often donate for the purpose of charity. Corporations wishing to offset or compensate for the degradation caused by their activities may be inclined to partner with NGOs to implement offset initiatives.

NGOs and CSOs that use crowdfunding platforms for specific projects that have a tangible, visible outcome will likely be able to take advantage of the cultural inclination towards charity. There is also an opportunity to leverage international crowdfunding platforms to raise awareness about organisations or projects, and to raise funds, mainly from international individuals.

## Limitations

The primary limitation to this study has been the insufficiency of the available quantitative data to properly analyse the financial opportunities presented by this study's focus countries. In many cases, corporations involved in biodiversity conservation – such as Apple, for example, in terms of its reforestation project in China – do not make their financial specifics available in the public domain. In most cases, financial data is a result of estimation and speculation, as there is little available information.

Attempts to obtain these financial specifics through interviews with corporations such as Giant Ibis Transport Company (operational in Cambodia), Ford Motors (China and Myanmar), MMG Ltd. (operating the Sepon Mine in Lao PDR) and several others also proved challenging. Most companies did not respond, and some – like MMG Ltd. – declined all requests for interviews. Those which agreed to be interviewed were primarily companies with whom IUCN had previously established relationships. At the time of writing, answers from GP Group (Thailand) and Save Vietnam Wildlife (Viet Nam) are pending.

## Next Steps

Based on the findings of the study, IUCN has concluded that the private sector and crowdfunding presents relatively decent funding opportunities for Indo-Burma region civil society organisations working in the field of biodiversity conservation.

As such, IUCN proposes conducting capacity-building workshops and exchange visits for CEPF grantees. These workshops will focus on how to tap into crowd funding and the private sector to secure funding for biodiversity conservation initiatives. Exchange visits will draw on lessons learned from China and Viet Nam, countries that have a rich experience in crowdfunding and working with the private sector.

The private sector component of the workshop will also involve selected IUCN private sector partners in the Indo-Burma region. These partners will share valuable insights from their perspective, as businesses, on how best to capitalize on the strengths of the private sector to benefit biodiversity conservation.

## Annex

### Key stakeholders consulted:

ASAP	Nerissa Chao, Programme Manager
Asiola	Representative
CEPF	Jack Tordoff, Managing Director
Minor Group International	Chompan Kulnides, Head of Sustainability
SOS - Save Our Species initiative	Alessandro Badalotti, SOS Coordinator
Toyota	Yoshiaki Ishimoto, Vice President, Environment Management Promotion
Save Vietnam's Wildlife	Ho Thi Kim Lan, Education Outreach Manager

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