



From commitment to conservation: Delivering 30by30 for nature and people

October 2026



This publication was produced by the UK Government
with support from a range of partners and contributors.
We are grateful to these organisations and individuals for
their evidence, case studies and expertise.

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Foreword

Nature is the foundation of our security, prosperity, and resilience. It sustains life, supports economies, and protects communities from the growing impacts of climate change. When nature is degraded, the consequences are felt in every part of society.

Across the globe, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation are increasing pressure on food and water security, supply chains, economic resilience, and global stability. Forests, wetlands, peatlands, rivers, grasslands, coral reefs, mangroves, and the ocean are critical natural infrastructure: regulating climate, sustaining agriculture and fisheries, reducing disaster risk, and supporting the communities and economies that depend on them. Protecting and restoring these systems is central to a safer, more prosperous, and more climate-resilient future.

That is why delivering the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework matters. And our task now is implementation: turning global targets into practical action, mobilising finance, strengthening institutions, supporting Indigenous peoples and local communities, using science and technology well, and ensuring conservation delivers real outcomes for nature and people.

The commitment to conserve and manage at least 30% of the world's land and inland waters, and of marine and coastal areas by 2030 is one of the clearest tests of that delivery. Achieving 30by30 is not only about area. It is about whether protected and conserved places are in the right locations, well-connected, effectively managed, fairly governed, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes around them. Done well, 30by30 can help nature recover, strengthen climate resilience, support sustainable livelihoods, and safeguard food and water systems.

Progress is encouraging, but the task ahead remains significant. Protected and conserved areas currently cover 18.45% of the world's land and inland waters and 10.03% of marine and coastal areas. With only 4 years remaining until 2030, we must accelerate delivery, increasing coverage while ensuring that protected and conserved areas are effectively managed, well-connected and delivering lasting benefits for nature and people.



Rt Hon Dame Angela Eagle DBE MP
United Kingdom Secretary of State for
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs



Across the UK, our Overseas Territories, and through international partnerships, we are helping move from ambition to delivery: supporting landscape-scale recovery, strengthening marine protection, improving evidence and monitoring, developing tools for management effectiveness, and working with partners to mobilise finance and build capacity. Lasting conservation depends on partnership, trust, long-term stewardship, and the leadership of the people and communities closest to the places being protected.

Drawing on examples from the UK, UK Overseas Territories, and international partners, this publication shows what credible delivery can look like in practice. Its examples point to a shared lesson: 30by30 will succeed only if it is rooted in quality as well as coverage, supports the people who depend on nature, and builds resilience in a world facing growing climate, economic, and security pressures.

I am grateful to the governments, Indigenous peoples and local communities, scientists, land managers, businesses, civil society organisations, and international partners whose collective efforts are driving this agenda forward. No country can deliver the Global Biodiversity Framework alone. By working together, sharing evidence, and focusing relentlessly on implementation, we can make 30by30 a turning point for nature recovery.

The years to 2030 are critical. We must now turn commitments into lasting change: for nature, for climate, for prosperity, and for the security and wellbeing of future generations.

Rt Hon Dame Angela Eagle DBE MP
United Kingdom Secretary of State
for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs



Big Chalk project in Greater Cambridge area, United Kingdom © Big Chalk



Introduction

In December 2022, governments agreed the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF): a global plan to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, and put nature on a path to recovery. One of its most visible commitments is Target 3, known as 30by30, which calls for at least 30% of the world's land and inland waters, and of marine and coastal areas to be effectively conserved and managed by 2030. But 30by30 is not simply a number. It asks countries to build protected and conserved area networks that are ecologically representative, well-connected, effectively managed, equitably governed, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes, and freshwater systems. Done well, it can help restore nature while strengthening the natural systems that underpin food, water, livelihoods, and security.

The world is making progress, but the task ahead remains significant. As of September 2026, the World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas (WDPCA) shows that protected and conserved areas now cover 18.45% of land and inland waters, and 10.03% of marine and coastal areas. Many countries and territories have already achieved 30% coverage or more on land or in their national waters, showing that ambition can be translated into action. Yet the next phase is about quality as well as scale: protecting the places that matter most for biodiversity, improving connectivity, strengthening management, and ensuring that conservation delivers lasting outcomes for nature and people.

This publication looks at how the shift from commitment to credible delivery is already happening in practice. Its examples are different in scale and setting, from remote islands and deep seas to working landscapes, freshwater systems, and community-managed places. Together, they tell four linked stories: how momentum is building; why inclusive management and monitoring matters in addition to designation; how effective conservation ensures that Indigenous people and local communities are central to local stewardship; and what is needed on the road to 2030. The examples demonstrate how different routes to 30by30 create different risks and opportunities. Across those stories, one lesson is clear: successful conservation depends on long-term stewardship, fair governance, evidence-based management, and visible benefits for people, landscapes and wildlife.





Chapter 1:

Delivering 30by30 – the real success stories

Around the world, countries, communities, land managers and conservation partners are demonstrating what credible 30by30 delivery looks like in practice. While many of these approaches pre-date the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, they are increasingly informing how countries are implementing Target 3 and accelerating progress towards 2030. The examples in this chapter show that there is no single route to success. From large-scale protected areas and landscape recovery partnerships to privately governed conservation areas and community-led stewardship, they illustrate the diverse models that are helping turn global ambition into practical delivery. Together, they demonstrate that momentum is building because countries are not starting from scratch: they are building on proven approaches and adapting them to meet the scale of the 30by30 challenge.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI) show what integrated land-and-sea protection can achieve in one of the world's most important wildlife strongholds. As countries consider how to deliver ambitious and durable conservation under Target 3, SGSSI provides an example of how large-scale protection, long-term management and ecological restoration can work together across an entire territory. Since 2012, when the Marine Protected Area (MPA) was first established, Defra's Darwin Plus programme has invested over £8 million in nearly 40 environmental projects supporting research, monitoring and management across the Territory. This was increased from 1.07 million km² to 1.24 million km² in 2019, covering 100% of the area's maritime zone, and the no-fishing zone was expanded in 2022 to cover 470,000km² (38% of the MPA). This area constitutes a rare whole-territory approach to conservation, protecting globally significant seabird and marine mammal populations, including elephant seals, millions of penguins, albatrosses and petrels. Robust management has mattered as much as designation: seasonal and spatial controls help keep fishing away from key feeding areas, while the patrol vessel Pharos SG, satellite monitoring and intelligence from the licensed fishing fleet have made illegal fishing virtually absent.



Pharos SG fisheries patrol vessel
© Vicki Foster, South Georgia & South
Sandwich Islands Marine Protected Area
Management Plan, February 2026

Long-term restoration, including the removal of introduced rodents, reindeer and invasive plants, is allowing native species and habitats to recover. Humpback whales are now the most frequently seen species, with around 24,500 estimated feeding in SGSSI waters in 2019, while fur seals number around 1.98 million (95 to 98% of the global population).

In England, the Big Chalk Partnership is demonstrating how 30by30 can be delivered through landscape-scale recovery, not just individual site protection. The partnership brings together more than 150 organisations across southern England's chalk and limestone landscapes, a multi-functional area covering around 20% of England. These landscapes include chalk streams, species-rich grasslands and woodlands that are internationally distinctive but often in poor condition. Through habitat restoration, chalk stream recovery, nature-friendly farming and species recovery, Big Chalk's partners are improving the quality and connectivity of land managed for nature while supporting the people and businesses who shape the landscape every day. In 2025, the Big Chalk Nature Recovery fund invested £800,000 to support 23 projects across southern England, including restoration of 1.4km of chalk streams in Cambridge and London, and the creation and restoration of hundreds of hectares of species-rich grassland and mosaic habitats, benefitting rare species and increasing climate resilience. This shows how a voluntary, bottom-up approach to 30by30 can be built through collaboration across designated and non-designated landscapes, working with farms, estates, nature reserves and communities.

Armenia's pathway towards achieving Target 3 of the KMGBF highlights the importance of conservation approaches that extend beyond conventional state protected areas. Established in 2010 by the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets, the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge is Armenia's first privately protected area, safeguarding more than 30,000 hectares of biodiversity-rich natural habitat. It maintains wildlife corridors and migratory routes, strengthening ecological connectivity between state protected areas and other important natural areas. More than 650,000 native trees have been planted, restoring 150 hectares of degraded habitat, and monitoring has documented continued use of the landscape by Caucasian leopards since they were first recorded there in 2013. Its model also depends



Richmond Green on the River Wandle,
London, United Kingdom
© Caroline Svendsen, Big Chalk



Caucasus Wildlife Refuge, Armenia
© Foundation for the Preservation of
Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC)

on long-term partnerships with neighbouring communities, including ranger employment, habitat restoration, biodiversity monitoring, and locally identified livelihood or infrastructure priorities.

The Dominican Republic shows how rapid gains in marine coverage can be converted into credible implementation. In 2024, it became the first Caribbean country to meet the marine element of 30by30 on a national scale, protecting 30.8% of its waters through the establishment of the Orlando Jorge Mera Sanctuary and expansion of the Banco de la Plata y Navidad Marine Mammal Sanctuary. The focus has since shifted from designation to effective management: by 2026, management plans had been approved for protected areas covering more than 92% of the country's marine protected territory, helping turn headline coverage into measurable outcomes for biodiversity, sustainable fisheries, climate resilience and local communities. This is supported by the 30by30 National Programme and a growing sustainable-finance architecture, including a new mechanism intended to address financing gaps across the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, a US\$750 million sovereign green bond, the MARENA Fund, the Green, Social and Sustainable Bond Framework, the Green Taxonomy and other mechanisms designed to mobilise public and private investment for biodiversity and climate objectives. Progress on land is less advanced but continues: protected areas cover 25.6% of the national territory, and forest cover has increased by a net 0.8% since 2015, although ecosystem degradation remains a challenge in some landscapes. The approval of further protected-area management plans, the planting of more than 20 million trees and receipt of the country's first REDD+ results-based payment indicate growing institutional capacity to deliver biodiversity outcomes beyond designation.

These examples show that countries are drawing on a growing range of proven approaches to deliver Target 3. Some are long-established conservation models; others reflect more recent efforts to accelerate implementation, expand coverage, strengthen management and mobilise finance. The examples span different ecosystems, governance arrangements and economic contexts but all demonstrate that meaningful progress is possible when ambitious goals are matched by long-term stewardship, local engagement and sustained investment. Rather than starting from a blank page, countries are adapting and scaling approaches that have proven their impact.



Pantropical Spotted Dolphins, Dominican Republic © Ministry of Environment, Dominican Republic

Bearded vulture, Armenia © Foundation
for the Preservation of Wildlife and
Cultural Assets (FPWC)



Chapter 2:

More than lines on a map: from designation to real-world outcomes

Designation is an important milestone, but it is only the beginning of successful 30by30 delivery. The promise of Target 3 is not fulfilled when a boundary is drawn on a map; it is fulfilled when protected and conserved areas are effectively managed, equitably governed, ecologically representative, well-connected and integrated into the wider landscapes, seascapes and freshwater systems around them. Protected and conserved areas must be more than lines on a map. Their success depends on whether they are effectively managed, monitored and able to deliver measurable outcomes for biodiversity and people.

This is the most demanding phase of implementation. It requires clear objectives, sustained finance, skilled people, reliable monitoring, fair governance and the ability to adapt management as pressures change and evidence improves. Done well, it turns global ambition into living landscapes and seascapes: places where species and habitats recover, communities are more resilient, and people can see that conservation is delivering benefits that endure.

The central challenge is therefore not simply how much area is protected, but whether protected and conserved areas are delivering real-world outcomes. Effective management, credible evidence and adaptive decision-making are what turn designation into successful conservation.

The UK has helped shape this shift from designation to evidence-based delivery. The Management Effectiveness of Protected and Conserved Areas (MEPCA) Indicator, developed with UK expertise, provides a practical way to assess whether protected and conserved areas are being managed effectively. It is a globally applicable indicator which can be applied across different types of sites, including other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), and is designed to support national and international reporting. Its value is practical: it helps governments identify where management is strong, where evidence is weak, and where further intervention is needed to keep biodiversity recovery on track.



New technologies are making it easier to monitor protected and conserved areas at scale. Satellite monitoring, remote sensing, artificial intelligence, environmental DNA and acoustic monitoring are helping managers track habitat condition, species distributions and emerging threats, particularly in remote or data-poor areas. While these tools cannot replace local knowledge or effective governance, they are improving the evidence base available for conservation decisions and helping ensure that protected and conserved areas deliver meaningful outcomes over time.

Scotland has shown how evidence, monitoring and management can turn designation into meaningful protection. Glen Falloch Woods site of special scientific interest (SSSI) represents the largest and least disturbed remnants of native broadleaf woods in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. As part of their landscape scale nature recovery project, Glenfalloch have managed deer populations to support woodland expansion and peatland recovery, leading to a reduction in herbivore impacts on vegetation and regeneration in most areas of the SSSI. It is believed the condition of the SSSI will become favourable in the foreseeable future. On the Moray Firth, the Findhorn Hinterland Trust (FHT) is restoring grassland, woodlands and coastal dune habitats (nationally significant for lichen, invertebrates, and fungi) through targeted scrub and non-native tree seedling removal, allowing recovery of natural ecological processes. Management of the woodland is seeing the proportion of non-native trees reduced and replaced with native species over a long timescale. Findhorn Hinterland has been recognised as one of Scotland's first Nature30 sites in celebration of its positive management and contributions to biodiversity.

OECMs are central to the shift from designation to real-world outcomes because they recognise biodiversity conservation beyond traditional protected area systems. They can bring non-state actors into 30by30 delivery, including Indigenous peoples and local communities, businesses, (including fishers, farmers and tourism) non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith groups, and private landholders. Japan's certification scheme of Nationally Certified Sustainably Managed Natural Sites, referred to as 'Kyosei Sites' is one of the most advanced national approaches, with a strong focus on identifying, reporting, monitoring, and verifying sites that contribute to national 30by30 delivery. The Yamakawa Fishing Cooperative Association leads efforts to restore and monitor seagrass habitats while maintaining sustainable fisheries, contributing to marine biodiversity by providing habitat for species including filefish,



Sand dunes, Findhorn Hinterland, Scotland © Scottish Government

squid and nesting loggerhead turtles. Elsewhere in Japan, the Higo Bank is involved in restoration and cultivation of the Aso Mizukake Rice Terraces, maintaining water security and protecting a rich diversity of species, including those on Red Lists. The lesson is that OECMs can support implementation of 30by30 by rooting initiatives in local stewardship and helping them benefit from partnerships that extend beyond traditional conservation actors. However, this can only be successful when backed by clear standards, robust evidence, and transparent reporting.

With support from SPACES, Panama launched the ‘Panama 30by30 Transformation’ in 2023. SPACES engaged national and local NGOs, Indigenous organisations, and community leaders to ensure inclusive and informed planning, while promoting blended finance and public-private co-financing strategies. This support builds on SPACES’ wider portfolio of assistance to biodiversity-rich countries, including Madagascar, where the programme has supported efforts to strengthen protected and conserved area management and mobilise sustainable finance for long-term conservation outcomes. Currently, 33% of Panama’s terrestrial territory and 54% of Panama’s marine waters are protected, surpassing the 30% coverage target in both environments. This incorporates the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor (CMAR), which safeguards migration pathways used by species like hammerhead sharks, whales and sea turtles. In 2026, the government established criteria and a national registration process for recognising OECMs, alongside a process to identify and update Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) using internationally recognised standards. Supported by mechanisms such as Fondo Panamá Natural, a permanent trust fund created to secure long-term financing for the conservation of Panama’s natural resources and protected areas, these measures are helping to link effective conservation with community development and sustainable finance, ensuring that protected and conserved areas deliver lasting biodiversity outcomes and strengthened livelihoods for future generations. Together, these developments demonstrate Panama’s transition from 30by30 planning towards implementation, consolidation and long-term stewardship.



San Lorenzo Protected Area, Panama
© Dirección General de Comunicación
(DGC), Government of Panama

The International Advisory Panel on Biodiversity Credits (IAPB) has brought together more than 45 pilot projects across 26 countries, providing practical insights into the development of biodiversity credit markets. One such example is the Blue Future project in Mozambique, implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), which is supporting the establishment of a resilient marine-terrestrial conservation area expected to contribute more than 1% of Mozambique's national marine protection targets. The project aims to prepare the area for future biodiversity credit transactions, including biodiversity offsets required under Mozambique's regulatory framework and potentially voluntary biodiversity contributions supported by robust safeguards and claims controls. The project seeks to strengthen ecosystem resilience and maintain critical ecosystem services by restoring and protecting coastal forests, mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass meadows, while also promoting sustainable agricultural and business practices. Local communities participate in project design, ecosystem management and decision-making, supported by capacity-building initiatives and performance-based payments linked to conservation outcomes. The project demonstrates how biodiversity finance can help move beyond protected area designation towards long-term ecological restoration, effective management and community-led stewardship that delivers benefits for both biodiversity and local livelihoods.



Mangrove restoration under the Blue Future Project, Mozambique
© Wildlife Conservation Society

Gili Matra, a group of 3 islands in Indonesia, has been a protected area since 1993. Responsibility for managing the area is shared across 4 institutional levels from the national Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) to the local with Gili Indah village. This multi-governance arrangement is reflected in a 6-zone system covering sustainable fisheries, species protection and port activities, balancing conservation objectives with local economic use. Through governance accounts piloted by MMAF and the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (with support from the UK's Blue Planet Fund), integrating governance data with the environmental, social and economic data revealed a financing gap that ecological data alone would not have identified. In 2021 the management cost was \$47,500 but the MPA collected \$1060 in official revenue. It also highlighted that while Gili Matra delivers real value to tourism and fisheries, biodiversity outcomes might not be keeping pace. For example, a 2021 reef fish survey found more fish than in 2015, but lower total biomass: the reef was gaining small fish faster than it could regrow the larger ones that keep populations stable. This evidence is helping the Indonesian government strengthen investment decisions and improve the long-term management and effectiveness of its MPAs.

The lesson from these examples is that effective conservation is felt in real places, not just recorded in national statistics. It is seen when fragile deep-sea habitats are protected from damage, when management systems respond to real pressures, and when conservation outside formal protected areas is recognised for the biodiversity it sustains. Evidence, monitoring, and reporting matter because they help managers and communities make better decisions and keep nature recovering over time. That is what gives 30by30 credibility beyond designation.





Mangroves in Panama © Dirección General de
Comunicación (DGC), Government of Panama

Chapter 3:

Nature and people: stewardship, inclusion and local leadership

The strongest examples of 30by30 show that conservation works best when people have a meaningful role in shaping, governing, and stewarding the places on which they depend. Effective conservation is not only about protecting ecosystems; it is also about building trusted institutions, recognising rights and responsibilities, and ensuring that those closest to nature can help shape its future.

For many communities, the value of protected and conserved areas is not measured in percentages alone. It is measured in the things that make people safer and more secure: cleaner water, healthier fisheries, reduced flood risk, more resilient food systems, sustainable jobs, cultural continuity, and places that people are proud to pass on to future generations. Well-managed areas protect the ecosystems that underpin livelihoods and growth, while giving communities a meaningful role in shaping how nature is restored, used, and cared for. This is why 30by30 matters beyond conservation: done well, it can strengthen nature, security, and prosperity for people as well as wildlife.

Experience from around the world increasingly points to a common lesson: conservation is more likely to endure when it is inclusive. Approaches that recognise rights, strengthen participation, support equitable decision-making and value diverse forms of knowledge can help build trust, legitimacy and long-term stewardship. These principles are reflected in growing international efforts to promote more inclusive nature action and are visible across many of the examples highlighted in this chapter.

Protected and conserved areas are not simply places set aside for wildlife. They help maintain the natural infrastructure on which societies depend, including clean water, healthy fisheries, flood regulation and climate resilience. Like any form of infrastructure, these systems require investment, management and long-term stewardship if they are to continue delivering benefits for people and nature.



Successful conservation depends on trust as well as protection. Conservation authorities, Indigenous peoples, local communities, land managers and practitioners must often navigate complex questions around access, resource use, livelihoods and stewardship. Durable outcomes are most likely where governance is transparent, inclusive and responsive to local circumstances.

Effective conservation also depends on the people working on the front line. Rangers, wardens, community monitors and other local practitioners play a critical role in monitoring biodiversity, supporting visitors, engaging communities, enforcing regulations and responding to emerging threats. Their work is often challenging, particularly in remote locations or where conservation objectives, livelihoods and security concerns must be carefully balanced. Investing in skills, capacity, safeguarding and professional standards is therefore an important part of delivering durable conservation outcomes.

Colombia shows how 30by30 can support biodiversity while strengthening formal recognition of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community governance. It has already achieved 30by30 domestically, with an estimated 34% coverage in August 2026, but its progress is not only about scale. Co-governance arrangements and management plans developed with territorial authorities have helped align conservation with local priorities and rights, while Colombia's 2024 recognition of Indigenous environmental authority within its National Environmental System moves beyond consultation towards autonomy, Indigenous knowledge, and long-term environmental management. The opportunity now is to ensure these governance advances translate into well-resourced management on the ground, with delivery models that reflect both biodiversity outcomes and community priorities.

Canada is increasingly demonstrating that 30by30 can advance reconciliation alongside conservation. Much of this momentum comes through the Indigenous Guardians programmes, community-led programmes that are place-based expressions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis responsibilities to their traditional territories, treaty lands, and ancestral homelands. The Pacific Rim National Park's Tseshaht community have delivered a Beach Keeper Program since 2013, while the Guardians of the West Coast Trail work to ensure the trail is in good condition through clearing undergrowth, fallen trees, and maintaining the boardwalk and cabins. The Pauquachin Marine Guardians monitor

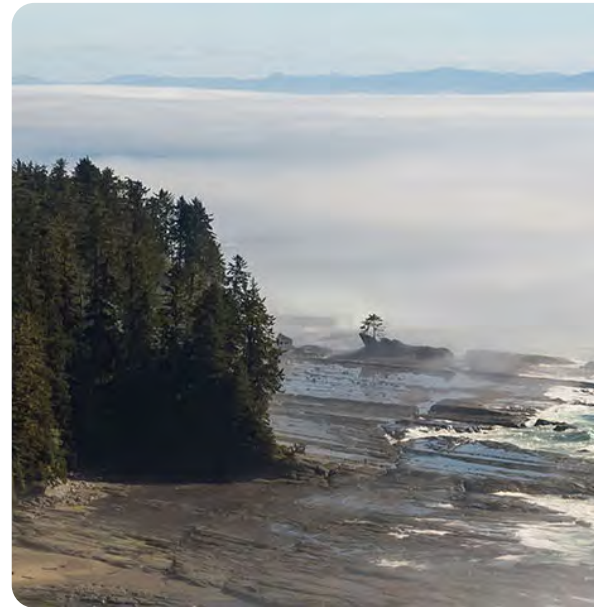


Local fishermen operating under the Tropical Forest Conservation Agreement (TFCA Colombia) © MinAmbiente

the Nation's traditional territories of land and sea along the Saanich Peninsula and Southern Gulf Islands, significantly enhancing marine conservation efforts in monitoring and protecting the kəłtolemečən (Killer Whales) and understanding salmon health, among many other successes. The Guardians programmes provide training and career development opportunities for community members, meaningful connection to the land and sea, as well as the chance to share their traditional teachings and stories with park visitors, Elders and youth. These programmes show that conservation can be more durable when people with deep relationships to a place have the authority, resources and recognition to care for it.

Customary tenure and community governance offer an important pathway for scaling durable conservation. The experience of Sea Women of Melanesia in Papua New Guinea (supported by the UK's Blue Planet Fund's Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature grants programme) demonstrates how conservation can be strengthened when it is built around existing Indigenous governance systems rather than being layered over them. In Papua New Guinea, approximately 97% of land and coastal areas remain under customary tenure, meaning local communities retain a central role in governing natural resources. Working through those customary institutions, Sea Women of Melanesia supports Indigenous women to combine traditional ecological knowledge with marine science, facilitating community-led decisions on reef management, sustainable fisheries and the establishment of Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs). Conservation measures are agreed through local dialogue and implemented within customary marine tenure boundaries, helping to embed ownership, legitimacy and long-term stewardship. The programme has supported the establishment of 24 LMMAs protecting more than 3,390 hectares of reef habitat, while early monitoring suggests positive trends in fish biomass and coral recruitment in areas with strong community support. The wider lesson for 30by30 is that protection is often more likely to endure when communities have recognised authority, trusted governance structures and a meaningful stake in managing land and sea resources.

This experience also highlights the important role that women's leadership can play in strengthening local stewardship and building conservation capacity that remains embedded within communities long after external support ends.



Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, Canada
© Government of Canada



Members of the Sea Women of Melanesia,
Papua New Guinea © United Nations
Development Programme (UNDP), Equator
Initiative Case Study Series 2025



Bolivia is turning forest conservation into essential water infrastructure. Its 'Watershared' model connects downstream water users with upstream landholders: small contributions from water bills and municipal budgets fund practical benefits for rural families, such as beekeeping equipment, irrigation systems and fruit trees, in return for commitments to conserve forests, protect springs and fence livestock away from rivers. Rather than relying only on short-term donor grants, Fundación Natura Bolivia trains water utilities and local authorities to invest in the forests and grasslands that regulate water flows and help keep supplies clean. Across 100 municipalities, 280,000 water users now contribute to conserving 1 million hectares of water-recharge areas. The result is a locally financed system that links healthier catchments with more secure water supplies and stronger rural livelihoods. More than 1 million hectares have been put under conservation agreements, and the approach has been replicated in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and the Comoros. A new £5 million UK Government grant will work with 3 provincial governments in Bolivia to strengthen the long-term protection across 4 million hectares, scaling existing models and incorporating carbon finance.

Fruit tree, Bolivia
© Fundación Natura Bolivia (Natura)



The Legacy Landscapes Fund (LLF) demonstrates how long-term finance can strengthen conservation outcomes beyond short-term funding cycles. Launched by Germany in 2021, the LLF is supported by a coalition of public and philanthropic donors including the UK, France and Norway. Through a rights-based approach, LLF provides either 15-year or perpetual funding commitments of approximately US\$1 million annually to large-scale conservation landscapes, coupled with streamlined reporting, robust safeguards and clear performance indicators. LLF provides the predictability needed for conservation partners to invest in long-term planning, innovation and trusted relationships with Indigenous peoples and local communities. In Brazil's Greater Tumucumaque landscape, the first full biodiversity monitoring cycle was completed in 2026 by locally trained Indigenous monitors. This established a baseline for tracking climate change impacts and documented 144 plant species and 74 animal species, including 34 previously unrecorded in the survey area. The initiative demonstrates how sustained, flexible financing can help close knowledge gaps, strengthen local stewardship and support evidence-based conservation, reinforcing the broader lesson that durable biodiversity outcomes depend on reliable long-term investment, inclusive governance and locally led management.



Indigenous monitors in the Greater Tumucumaque, Brazil © Lepé, Legacy Landscapes Fund

Fair Isle shows how community leadership can shape marine protection in practice. The small Shetland island, owned by the National Trust for Scotland and home to around 40 people, began campaigning for marine protection in the 1980s. In 2016, it was designated Scotland's only Demonstration and Research MPA, created to explore the relationship between healthy seas and the future of a local island community. The site has supported practical research, including long-running seabird monitoring, inshore fish surveys, benthic habitat mapping and community-led citizen science. Fair Isle has more than 250,000 seabirds across 18 species, with monitoring records dating back to 1969, while recent inshore surveys have expanded coverage and trialled new techniques such as baited remote underwater video. For a small island community, that evidence matters because it helps connect marine protection to local identity, future livelihoods and decisions about the waters people depend on. Just as importantly, the MPA has created a platform for local people to shape conversations about the marine environment around them. Fair Isle demonstrates that protected areas can help build evidence while also giving communities a stronger voice in the stewardship of the places they depend on.

The examples are different in scale and setting, from remote islands and deep seas to working landscapes, freshwater systems, Indigenous territories, and community-managed places. Taken together, these examples show why people are central to the success of 30by30. Protected and conserved areas are more likely to endure when communities see benefits, trust the governance arrangements, and have a meaningful role in shaping decisions. They can support livelihoods, reinforce cultural identity, create local stewardship, strengthen nature security, and help maintain the natural infrastructure that underpins local prosperity and climate resilience. This does not dilute the ambition of 30by30; it makes it stronger. Conservation that works for people is more likely to last.





Chapter 4:

The road to 2030

The road to 2030 is now less about defining successful conservation than accelerating delivery at scale. The priorities are clear: adapt proven approaches to different ecological and governance contexts; close marine and freshwater gaps; use OECMs credibly; secure long-term finance; strengthen evidence and monitoring; and cooperate where ecological pressures cross borders. Progress will depend not on copying individual projects, but on applying the principles that make them work: effective management, fair governance, sustained investment, credible evidence and visible benefits for people and nature. The UK and its partners can support this next phase by sharing expertise, investing in implementation and helping successful approaches travel across the UK and internationally.

Scale what works, but adapt it to place

The examples in this publication show that successful models can travel, but they cannot simply be copied. Armenia's Caucasus Wildlife Refuge makes this point clearly. Its privately governed model works because it is rooted in a particular landscape, connecting habitats across state protected areas, community lands, wildlife corridors and degraded areas being restored. It also combines long-term stewardship with practical community benefits, including ranger employment, habitat restoration, biodiversity monitoring, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, and locally identified priorities such as clean water and renewable energy. The wider lesson is not that every country should replicate Armenia's model, but that 30by30 delivery can be strengthened when countries adapt proven principles to their own context: long-term stewardship, local partnership, credible evidence, practical community benefits and connection to wider national systems.

That principle applies across the examples contained in this publication. Canada's Indigenous Guardians programmes, Sea Women of Melanesia in Papua New Guinea, and England's Big Chalk partnership all depend on local rights, institutions, ecology, and trust. What can be scaled is not a single template, but a set of principles: give local stewards a meaningful role, set clear conservation objectives, invest in long-term management, build credible evidence, and make sure protected and conserved areas are connected to the wider landscapes, seascapes, and communities around them.



Scaling what works should therefore mean scaling learning, capacity, and ambition - not imposing a standard model.

Close the marine and freshwater gaps

Marine and freshwater systems remain among the largest gaps in global 30by30 delivery. Conservation can be technically difficult and politically complex, particularly where ecosystems are remote, cross jurisdictions or face competing pressures from fisheries, pollution and other uses. Large-scale MPAs show that ambitious ocean protection is possible, but designation must be matched by effective monitoring, enforcement and management.

The Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement provides the first global framework through which area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, can be established in areas beyond national jurisdiction. These areas cover nearly two-thirds of the global ocean. Implementing the Agreement creates an important opportunity to extend 30by30 delivery into the high seas and strengthen protection of globally significant marine ecosystems. Delivering meaningful protection in these areas will require credible science, transparent governance, robust management plans and sustained international cooperation.

Freshwater systems require equal attention. Rivers, lakes, wetlands and headwaters underpin biodiversity, drinking water, food production, flood management and climate resilience, yet remain under-represented in many protected and conserved area networks. South Georgia and the Sandwich Islands (SGSSI) demonstrates the importance of evidence and effective management in large, remote marine areas; Fair Isle shows how communities can strengthen local stewardship and monitoring; and Big Chalk illustrates why freshwater recovery must be integrated into wider landscape planning. Together, these examples show that closing marine and freshwater gaps is not simply about adding area, but ensuring that protection is ecologically meaningful, connected, effectively managed and resilient over time.

Use OECMs credibly to close implementation gaps

OECMs are important to closing implementation gaps, but only if they are used with discipline. They can recognise real conservation outcomes in working landscapes, seascapes, freshwater systems, and community-managed places outside conventional protected-area systems, widening participation and improving connectivity. But they should not become a shortcut to higher coverage figures without lasting biodiversity outcomes.



The next phase is about applying that standard consistently. Countries need clear criteria, transparent reporting, regular monitoring, and confidence that conservation is sustained over time. Japan's Kyosei Sites scheme shows how national standards can create space for non-state actors to contribute credibly to 30by30, while the Yamakawa Fishing Cooperative Association demonstrates how those standards can support conservation in practice through community-led stewardship. Panama illustrates a different stage of the same systems challenge: establishing national OECM criteria and a registration process through which qualifying areas can be recognised. Used well, OECMs can help close real ecological and connectivity gaps; used poorly, they risk weakening trust.

Finance long-term management and use innovation well

Finance will determine whether ambition can be sustained, and whether 30by30 can support growth and security as well as biodiversity. Many countries face capacity constraints, staffing shortages, and reliance on short-term project funding, making it difficult to maintain conservation gains once areas are designated. Long-term success will depend on more predictable public finance, better access to international funding, and responsible use of blended finance, philanthropy, payments for ecosystem services, bonds, trust funds, and other mechanisms that link conservation to local opportunity. This matters because protected and conserved areas safeguard the natural infrastructure on which economies and communities rely: clean water, productive fisheries, soil health, pollination, carbon storage, and natural protection from floods, droughts, and coastal erosion.

Recent assessments estimate that current expenditure on protected and conserved areas is approximately **US\$24 billion per year**, compared with estimated financing needs of around **US\$100 to 180 billion annually** according to the Global 30by30 Assessment (2026) and the Ocean Protection Gap Report (2026). At the same time, there are encouraging signs that finance is moving in the right direction. International public and philanthropic funding directed specifically to protected and conserved areas in developing countries increased by more than **150% between 2014 and 2024**, rising from approximately **US\$396 million to over US\$1.1 billion annually** according to the State of International 30by30 Funding. The same assessment found that philanthropic funding reached approximately **US\$273 million per year during 2022 to 2024** and that around **US\$142 million annually** is now supporting the establishment of new protected and conserved areas. Together,

this evidence suggests that while additional investment will be needed to achieve 30by30, financing mechanisms are already being deployed at increasing scale and the challenge is increasingly one of accelerating and sustaining proven approaches.

The priority now is to direct this growing investment towards durable management, including management planning, co-management, monitoring, surveillance, restoration and the institutions needed for long-term stewardship. Finance can go further when paired with better evidence and technology. Satellite monitoring, remote sensing, artificial intelligence, environmental DNA, acoustic monitoring and community science can improve understanding of habitats, species and threats, particularly in areas that are remote, under-surveyed or expensive to monitor. These tools will not replace local knowledge, sustained finance or good governance, but they can help managers make better decisions, demonstrate progress and target support where it is most needed.

Cooperate where challenges cross borders

International cooperation will be essential between now and 2030 for 2 reasons. First, countries and territories face very different coverage gaps, delivery costs, governance challenges and pressures, so cooperation can help mobilise finance, strengthen capacity and share technical expertise. Second, ecosystems and threats cross national boundaries. Migratory species, shared river basins, connected landscapes, transboundary seas, fisheries, pollution, invasive species and climate impacts cannot be managed effectively through isolated national action.

Regional approaches can turn these shared challenges into practical delivery. The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States 30by30 Transformation Program is coordinating across 11 member states to develop common approaches to marine protection, biodiversity data, OECM recognition, sustainable finance and implementation capacity. The Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor similarly connects marine protection in Panama, Costa Rica, Colombia and Ecuador around migration pathways used by hammerhead sharks, whales and sea turtles. These examples show that the most useful partnerships move beyond declarations to solve shared implementation problems, bringing Indigenous and local knowledge, scientific evidence, finance and practical delivery experience together rather than treating them as separate tracks.



Judge success by quality as well as scale

The examples in this publication show what quality looks like in practice: sustained management and ecological recovery in South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands; evidence exposing management and finance gaps in Gili Matra; and local stewardship linking conservation to water security and community benefits in Bolivia and Armenia. Together, they demonstrate that lasting delivery depends on effective management, credible evidence, fair governance, sustainable finance, local stewardship and practical partnerships.

By 2030, success should not be judged by coverage alone, but by whether protected and conserved areas are helping nature recover, strengthening nature security, supporting livelihoods and prosperity, and giving people confidence that conservation is delivering real benefits for the future.

Conclusion

The years to 2030 must be defined by implementation. The examples in this publication show that credible routes to 30by30 already exist across protected areas, OECMs, working landscapes and community-managed places. The task now is to apply those lessons at greater scale: sustaining effective management, connecting ecosystems, strengthening local stewardship, mobilising long-term finance and cooperating across borders. If countries focus on quality as well as coverage, 30by30 can become more than a global target: it can provide lasting infrastructure for nature recovery, climate resilience, prosperity and security.





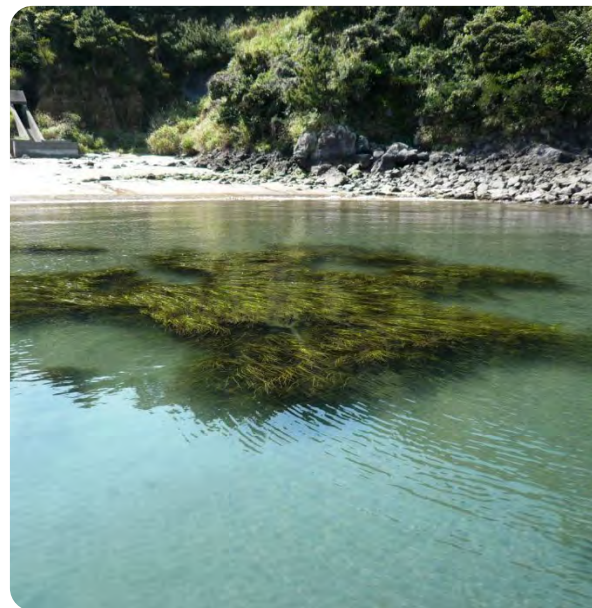
Annex: Featured Case Studies

The case studies in this annex provide fuller detail on selected examples highlighted in the publication. They are not intended to catalogue every example referenced in the main text. Instead, they have been chosen because, together, they illustrate some of the core lessons for delivering 30by30: integrating land and sea protection, restoring connectivity across landscapes, recognising credible conservation outside formal protected areas, linking finance to implementation, and ensuring that protected and conserved areas support people as well as nature.

Shorter examples appear throughout the publication to show the breadth of approaches being used by countries, territories, communities, and partners. The featured case studies provide deeper evidence where an example carries a particular strategic lesson for the road to 2030.



Yamakawa Fisheries Cooperative Association: Community-led Seagrass Restoration Supporting Biodiversity and Blue Carbon in Southern Japan



(Yamakawa Fishing Cooperative) 【山川の海のゆりかご】アマモ, Japan © Ministry of the Environment, Japan

Background

In recent decades, seagrass and seaweed beds in Kagoshima Bay in southern Japan have declined amid rising sea temperatures, herbivory by sea urchins and fish, and other changes in marine condition, resulting in the expansion of barren seafloor. These changes threatened fisheries resources and the ecological functions of coastal habitats. The Yamakawa Fisheries Cooperative Association has led long-term efforts to restore and conserve seagrass ecosystems while maintaining sustainable fisheries. The area has since been recognised as a Kyosei Site under Japan's OECM framework, contributing to the country's implementation of the global 30by30 target.

Key outcomes

Conservation activities are led directly by the local fishing community. Fishermen undertake regular restoration and management work, including establishment and restoration of seagrass meadows, removal of marine litter from important coastal habitats, and collaboration with schools, researchers, and other stakeholders for environmental education and adaptive management.

The cooperative also conducts regular ecological monitoring in collaboration with research institutes and government agencies, generating scientific evidence to guide restoration efforts. It has also generated a small volume of voluntary carbon credits from blue carbon activities. This approach aims to create sustainable financial resources for continued stewardship, reducing dependence on short-term project funding and strengthening incentives for long-term conservation by local communities.



Restoration efforts have contributed to the recovery of seagrass habitats that provide nursery and feeding grounds for numerous marine species, including one of the southernmost distributions of annual eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) in Japan. Monitoring indicates that recovered seagrass meadows now support a diverse range of marine life, including filefish (*Stephanolepis cirrhifer*), squid (*Sepioteuthis lessoniana*), cuttlefish, sardines, and horse mackerel. The surrounding coast is also an important area for loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*), which use nearby beaches for nesting.

Conclusion

This case illustrates how Japan's 30by30 target can be implemented through OECMs that are rooted in local stewardship. It shows that empowering local resource users, applying scientific monitoring, and connecting biodiversity conservation with emerging financing opportunities such as blue carbon can generate tangible ecological outcomes while sustaining local livelihoods. The Yamakawa experience demonstrates the potential for community-led marine conservation to contribute simultaneously to biodiversity recovery, climate mitigation, and regional development.



Protected Areas of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI)

Background

In 2022, the government of SGSSI designated all 3,800 km² of land as a Terrestrial Protected Area (TPA). This new designation complements the long established Marine Protected Area (MPA), which covers 1.24 million km² of surrounding ocean. Together, they form a rare, fully integrated land and sea protected area, spanning the entire Territory.

The MPA, first established in 2012, is one of the largest in the world - 5 times the size of the UK. It was designed to conserve the rich marine life within SGSSI's waters and has been strengthened several times, most recently in 2025 when the area closed to fishing was significantly expanded. Today, nearly 40 percent of the MPA - around 470,000 km² - is designated as a No-Take Zone where all fishing is prohibited. These areas include the most biodiverse parts of the seabed, shallow coastal waters, hydrothermal vents, seamounts and even the 8,000 metre deep South Sandwich Trench - the deepest part of the Southern Ocean.

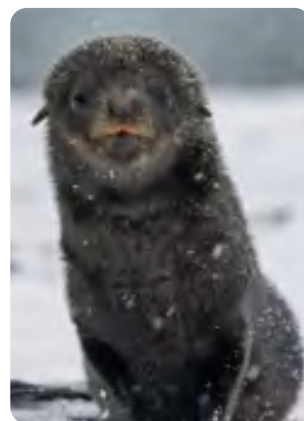
Key outcomes

Strict seasonal and spatial management ensures that fishing activity avoids key feeding areas for seals, penguins and other predators. Enforcement is robust: the Government's patrol vessel *Pharos SG* operates year round, supported by satellite monitoring and intelligence from the licensed fishing fleet. Illegal fishing has been effectively eliminated, thanks to this longstanding commitment to maritime patrols and surveillance.

On land, SGSSI supports some of the world's most significant wildlife concentrations, including millions of penguins, vast seal colonies and globally important populations of albatrosses and petrels. Decades of conservation work - most notably the eradication of introduced rodents, reindeer and invasive plants - have allowed many native



King penguins at St Andrews Bay, South Georgia © Gabrielle Weise, South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands Marine Protected Area Management Plan, February 2026



Antarctic fur seal pup, South Georgia © Vicki Foster, South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands Marine Protected Area Management Plan, February 2026

species to recover. Humpback whales are now the most frequently seen species, with around 24,500 estimated feeding in South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands waters in 2019. Fur seals have shown a remarkable recovery over the last 30 to 40 years since near-extinction and now breed in huge numbers along the north-north west coasts of South Georgia, the island being home to around 1.98 million fur seals (95 to 98% of the global population).

Conclusion

Science sits at the heart of how both protected areas are managed. Research and Monitoring Plans guide the studies needed to understand and protect these ecosystems, and Management Plans set out clear objectives for conservation and sustainable use. In order to assess the efficacy of the protected area measures, each is subject to regular expert review, ensuring that protections remain effective in a rapidly changing environment and that research and monitoring remain effective.



Protecting Bolivia's water at its source

Background

As more and more communities in Bolivia, especially in the Chiquitania region, face water scarcity issues, it is key to implement models which are beneficial for nature and also local communities. Originating from a simple, yet revolutionary exchange in the village of Los Negros in 2003, this model has since transformed the landscape of environmental conservation in Bolivia and beyond.

Natura International's 'Watershared' model is implemented by Fundación Natura Bolivia and connects downstream water users with upstream landholders: small contributions from water bills and municipal budgets fund practical benefits for rural families in return for commitments to conserve forests, protect springs and fence livestock away from rivers. The approach changes who pays for conservation and why. Rather than relying only on short-term donor grants, Natura trains water utilities and local authorities to invest in the forests and grasslands that regulate water flows and help keep supplies clean.

Key outcomes

Across 100 municipalities, 280,000 water users now contribute to conserving 1 million hectares of water-recharge areas. The result is a locally financed system that links healthier catchments with more secure water supplies and stronger rural livelihoods. Protecting vegetation around springs and rivers helps maintain water quality and availability, while conserving habitat and storing carbon. Natura has helped put more than 1 million hectares under conservation agreements and its approach has been replicated in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and the Comoros.

Local actors have blended Defra funding and other funding to test, refine and spread the model. Local institutions increasingly meet the recurring costs, embedding catchment protection within municipal and water-utility decisions. In one example, Natura used US\$150,000 of donor finance to mobilise US\$450,000 from local government for community projects linked to conservation commitments.



Local stakeholders involved in the Watershared initiative, Bolivia
© Fundación Natura Bolivia (Natura)

Conclusion

Natura Bolivia's experience shows how a targeted public grant can reshape a system. Defra support has not simply paid for isolated conservation activities. It has helped authorities and water users recognise forests as infrastructure, built practical mechanisms for moving money upstream, and created a model that local institutions sustain and other countries can adapt. The next phase aims to combine this proven, community-based approach with larger flows of water and carbon finance, so that protecting forests becomes a durable investment in water security, biodiversity and climate resilience.



Armenia: The Caucasus Wildlife Refuge – Connecting Landscapes and Communities for 30by30

Background

Established by the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) in 2010, the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge (CWR) is Armenia's first privately protected area (PPA) and today safeguards more than 30,000 hectares of important and fragile natural habitat. The CWR protects a mosaic of mountain steppe, subalpine and alpine habitats, juniper and oak woodlands, riparian ecosystems and wild fruit forests. Importantly, it helps maintain ecological connectivity between protected areas and other important habitats, allowing wildlife to move across a much larger landscape.

The CWR uses a landscape-scale approach, safeguarding biodiversity-rich habitats, maintaining wildlife corridors and migratory routes, and strengthening ecological connectivity between state protected areas and other important natural areas. It provides secure passage and breeding grounds for wildlife while demonstrating how privately governed conservation areas can complement the state protected-area system and provide practical experience relevant to Armenia's emerging discussions around privately protected areas, OECMs and other area-based approaches under KMGBF Target 3.

Key outcomes

Local people work in partnerships with the CWR through ranger employment, biodiversity monitoring, habitat restoration, environmental education and sustainable livelihood initiatives. Alongside these conservation activities, FPWC supports locally identified community priorities, including access to clean water and renewable-energy solutions. These partnerships bring important habitats under conservation management while ensuring that local communities are directly involved in and benefit from conservation.



Caucasian leopard, Armenia
© Foundation for the Preservation of
Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC)



During the past 5 years, human–wildlife conflict mitigation measures have protected over 10,000 beehives through electric fencing, reducing the risk of bear-related damage to an important source of local income. FPWC has also introduced 10 bear-proof waste bins to help prevent bears becoming habituated to settlements.

More than 650,000 native trees have been planted, restoring approximately 150 hectares of degraded habitat. The landscape provides habitat for some of Armenia's most threatened and iconic wildlife, including the Armenian mouflon, Bezoar goat, Syrian brown bear, Eurasian lynx and globally threatened birds of prey. The Caucasian leopard was first recorded in the CWR in 2013, and subsequent monitoring has documented continued use of the landscape by leopards, highlighting the importance of maintaining large, connected and effectively managed habitats for wide-ranging species.

Conclusion

The CWR demonstrates how community partnership, privately led conservation, long-term management, ecological restoration and biodiversity monitoring can work together to conserve areas beyond traditional state protected-area boundaries. As Armenia prepares to host the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP17, experience from the CWR is helping inform wider national and international discussions on the role of privately protected areas, OECMs and other effective area-based conservation approaches in implementing KMGBF Target 3 and advancing the 30by30 ambition.

Beekeepers in training,
Armenia © Foundation for
the Preservation of Wildlife
and Cultural Assets (FPWC)



Big Chalk

Background

Southern England has distinctive chalk and limestone vistas found nowhere else in the UK. The globally rare interplay of geology, soils and water creates special landscapes formed of streams, meadows, grasslands and woodlands, which support a rich diversity of wildlife.

These landscapes contribute to water supplies, healthy soils, carbon storage, sustainable food production and flood management, all while improving our health and wellbeing through access to historic heritage and the beautiful outdoors. But most nature-rich grasslands have already been lost, and the UK's chalk streams are in poor health.

Key outcomes

Since 2023, Big Chalk funding is helping the Greater Cambridge Chalk Streams Project, led by Cambridge City Council, to restore 3 urban chalk streams in the heart of a fast-growing city. Combining targeted, evidence-led, in-channel works with condition monitoring and community involvement, it shows how a catchment-based approach and partnership funding model can catalyse the recovery of our internationally important chalk streams, contributing to 30by30.

The aim is to link up an area of 25,000km² (19% of England) of nature recovery and related activities in the chalk and limestone areas of southern England. Big Chalk spans 14 Protected Landscapes and 26 Local Nature Recovery Strategies, with more than 150 partners working on the ground.

With 71% of this landscape being farmland (just over half of that is for crops), farmers and land managers will be supported to move from unsustainable farming practices to managing the land primarily for nature. Farmers and land managers have a vital role to play in helping develop and use the best farm management approaches to wildlife-friendly farming.



Richmond Green, UK © Big Chalk



Male Chalkhill Blue butterfly in Wiltshire chalk grassland © Big Chalk



Conclusion

The Big Chalk Nature Recovery Fund has expanded, with the support of the Protected Landscapes Partnership and Defra, to support 23 ambitious projects across southern England, with a total of £800,000 invested in restoring and reconnecting the UK's iconic chalk and limestone landscapes. This includes chalk stream restoration in Cambridgeshire, butterfly habitat connectivity in the Chilterns, and grassland restoration at Elm Farm in Surrey. Building on the initial funding announcement in January 2025, this increased investment is accelerating action on the ground - supporting projects that restore habitats, reconnect fragmented landscapes, and help wildlife adapt to a changing climate.

Wildflower meadow,
Wiltshire © Big Chalk



Fair Isle (Scotland): Demonstration and Research Marine Protected Area

Background

Designated in 2016, Fair Isle is currently the only Demonstration and Research (D&R) MPA in Scotland, established to primarily research the relationship between healthy seas and the maintenance of a local island community. Fair Isle is a small island within the Shetland Islands, owned by the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) and home to around 40 people. It hosts an abundance of wildlife, supports internationally important numbers of breeding seabirds and is rich in cultural heritage and community spirit. Around three quarters of the island is an SSSI alongside designations of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for certain European habitats and a Special Protection Area (SPA) for colonies of breeding seabirds.

Key outcomes

The community group has engaged extensively with stakeholders and established good governance in order to work effectively. A Steering Committee was formed with clear protocols and decision-making agreements and the Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation (FIMRO) has actively pursued partnership working with a range of organisations who help provide for both research and financial goals.

A number of priority projects and research topics were identified and are being delivered collaboratively with relevant partners. NTS lead on seabird monitoring research including the European shag tagging project, and have supported many other projects via funding from the NTS Players of the People's Postcode Lottery. As these studies produce information and baseline data, they evolve into further research projects and collaborative studies – for instance the first inshore fish survey highlighted an abundance of flapper skate and led to the Shetland Flapper Skate tagging project, with further focus on the species as important for Fair Isle.



Sheep Rock, Fair Isle, Scotland, UK
© Scottish Government

Another valuable partnership is that of FIMRO and the University of the Highlands and Islands, Shetland. Three consecutive years of inshore fish surveys have been carried out via this collaboration and research into seabed habitats will pave the way for future research, conservation, and marine management within the Fair Isle D&R MPA.

Conclusion

This case study shows how D&R MPAs can provide a role for community leadership in the marine environment. As a community-led initiative, FIMRO is a member of the Coastal Communities Network, participating on the leadership council and network gatherings.



Legacy Landscapes Fund (LLF)

Background

LLF was launched in May 2021 by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The UK government joined the group of contributors in 2024, as well as Norway and France and several philanthropic donors. This collaborative pool of funders reflects a shared interest to close a gap no single actor can address alone: conservation funding is most effective when it is long-term and programmatic. LLF embeds a rights-based approach to conservation across its operations and provides either 15-year or perpetual grants for large-scale, area-based conservation, through combined public and private contributions. One million USD is granted per year, supported by comprehensive KPIs, lean reporting and robust safeguards.

Key outcomes

LLF's unique funding model provides the security of long-term, plannable funding. This is a paradigm shift on the ground, ensuring that both finances and time are available to innovate, build strong partnerships, and create trust and collaboration locally. Difficult conservation questions can be addressed, tested and applied in ways that ensure Indigenous people and local communities have decision-making power and benefit from the outcomes.

A key outcome was the development of a biodiversity baseline through Indigenous monitoring. In June 2026, the LLF-funded Greater Tumucumaque's Program completed its first full cycle of biodiversity monitoring at the Grão-Pará Ecological Station. It established a baseline that will enable the team to track how climate change is affecting the region's flora and fauna. The work was carried out by 9 Indigenous monitors from the Boca do Marapi and Santo Antônio villages within the Tumucumaque Indigenous Territory, who were trained in and followed the official government forest protocol used across Brazil's protected areas.



Tumucumaque Indigenous people participating in local conservation planning
© Lepé, Legacy Landscapes Fund



Greater Tumucumaque, Brazil
© Lepé, Legacy Landscapes Fund

In total, 74 animal species were recorded (34 of which were newly documented) as well as 144 plant species. Biodiversity monitoring by Indigenous communities is helping to close an information gap in the region, while also becoming an activity that communities are engaged in and increasingly want to expand, including a new push to monitor jaguars next.

“The Zo’é tell us that protecting their territory is what they have done for their entire lives. They said, in essence: help us with the material things we need to continue caring for our territory – the rest, we know how to do.”

Denise Fajardo – Instituto Iepé (Institute of Research and Indigenous Training)

Conclusion

Long-term financing at scale plus a holistic area-based understanding of conservation coupled with partnerships with local actors who are part of the governance can make a difference in conservation and climate change efforts. We can see that it is in fact possible to reverse the trend of nature and ecosystem loss in key landscapes through insightful management, reliable funding, and intentional investment in broad partnerships.



Cover photo:

Manglares de la Bahía de Chame, Panama.
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UK Government

