

Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) Report 2021–2025

Chair: Kristen Walker Painemilla

VISION

A world where sustainability, social justice, diversity and equity are valued in nature conservation and in development.

MISSION

To advance the mission by generating knowledge, mobilising influence, and promoting actions that integrate nature conservation with social, cultural, environmental, and economic justice, while addressing the intersection of conservation and climate in an increasingly complex world.

STRATEGIC APPROACHES AND OBJECTIVES

The Commission undertakes its mission by engaging IUCN Members, CEESP members and other stakeholders on policy and field-based research, expertise and actions to:

- identify, analyse and learn from policies and practices at the interface between the conservation of nature, socioeconomic concerns, environmental justice, as well as cultural and spiritual concerns of human communities;
- promote a holistic approach to nature conservation and sustainable development across IUCN, recognising complexities and promoting dialogue and collaborative learning based on respect for diverse values, knowledge systems, and experience;
- conduct innovative research at multiple scales that provides timely responses to current environmental, economic and social policy issues identified by IUCN Members, staff, Commission members and partners in the field, such as environment and human health, population, migration, climate change and environmental human rights defenders;
- provide advice on the policies and practices of public, private and civil society institutions and organisations regarding conservation of nature, social and environmental justice, promotion of biocultural diversity, valuation and accounting for nature, sustainable and equitable governance, and use of nature and natural resources;
- contribute to the implementation of the IUCN Programme and enhance the capacity of IUCN by promoting the participation of diverse cultures and constituencies, as well as the inclusion of different forms of knowledge, experience and skills; and
- support and advocate for the full and effective participation and empowerment of indigenous peoples, local communities, youth, intergenerational leaders and communities of faith in all levels of conservation and development policy and practice.

PRIORITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

CEESP's priorities for the 2021–2025 quadrennium were guided by a bold call to fundamentally "Reimagine Conservation," which served as both a thematic anchor and a strategic lens, shaping

CEESP's work. Whether advancing governance and rights, supporting climate resilience, or strengthening sustainable livelihoods, CEESP has consistently worked to challenge entrenched paradigms and promote conservation approaches grounded in equity, justice, and cultural integrity.

This transformative vision directly aligns with the IUCN Programme 2021–2025 under its three pillars: People; Land and Water; and Climate Change. Reimagining Conservation has amplified IUCN's commitment to inclusive, rights-based conservation by fostering innovative, community-led solutions and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems. CEESP has contributed to all eleven programme priorities, including governance, equity, and rights-based approaches (People), equitable access to natural resources (Land and Water), and strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity (Climate Change).

Beyond CEESP, this vision has catalysed shifts across the Union, shaping the work of other Commissions, regional and national committees, and IUCN Members. It has inspired cross-sectoral partnerships, new participatory methodologies, and a learning movement centred on justice, care and cultural connection. CEESP has helped embed Reimagine Conservation into broader IUCN processes through tools such as the Reimagine Conservation newsletter, immersive dialogue series, national and regional conservation fora, and a growing body of knowledge products and collaborative research.

Over the past four years, CEESP's contributions – rooted in the diversity, expertise, and lived experience of its global membership – have played a vital role in realising the vision of the IUCN Programme: a just world that values and conserves nature. As we move forward, CEESP leads a global call to reimagine conservation in the service of a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future.

Reimagining Conservation

CEESP launched its flagship “Reimagine Conservation” initiative in 2021 to challenge traditional conservation paradigms and promote more inclusive, rights-based, and people-centred approaches. It aims to transform how conservation is conceptualised, practised, and led – focusing on justice, equity, leadership, and institutional change. The initiative has mobilised the IUCN community to rethink conservation across sectors and regions. Notably, the Asia Regional Conservation Forum (RCF) adopted *Reimagine Conservation* as its central theme, encouraging regional stakeholders to reflect on new pathways for action.

Key actions under this initiative include national dialogues, such as the Reimagining Conservation Forum hosted by the IUCN Australia National Committee and a Mexican National Committee event which centred the voices of Indigenous Peoples, women and youth. CEESP led immersive experiences and co-designed methodologies for reflection, learning and collective action, to explore better ways of protecting our planet, drawing from local experience and action.

The Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) has provided educational tools, dialogue platforms and communication strategies, to support broader understanding and uptake of Reimagine Conservation across the Union. The IUCN Council has also embraced the initiative, using its first meeting of the quadrennium to reflect on the movement's role and align it with the IUCN 20-year vision.

CEESP partners, such as Synchronicity Earth and Conservation International, have pushed the envelope on funding and design, advancing efforts to reimagine philanthropy and apply human-centred design to conservation. Collectively, these efforts are shaping a new conservation narrative — one rooted in inclusion, justice and shared responsibility for planetary health.

Thematic Groups

Governance, Equity and Rights (TGER)

The Governance, Equity and Rights Theme has strengthened its focus on collective learning and transformation through the Learning for Governance platform — a global network that unites

practitioners, Indigenous Peoples, and policy experts to share knowledge and improve environmental governance. The platform serves as a collaborative space to explore inclusive, rights-based governance systems, drawing on diverse legal traditions, lived experiences and cultural norms.

During this quadrennium, the theme convened a series of global learning exchanges and produced case studies and briefs on effective governance practices that centre equity and justice (Annex B). These informed IUCN dialogues and contributed to capacity-building efforts across multiple regions. The initiative also explored practical applications of co-governance, legal pluralism and Free, Prior and Informed Consent in protected and conserved areas.

CEESP has been a consistent voice in championing the rights of Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRD), particularly Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth on the frontlines of conservation and climate justice. Building on its long-standing work in this space, CEESP contributed to the development and launch of the IUCN working paper, ["Advancing Human Rights-Based Approaches to Target 3"](#), which outlines practical pathways to ensure that the implementation of area-based conservation measures under the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) respects human rights and ensures equitable governance. In partnership with other Commissions, Member Organisations, and global experts, CEESP also co-created the [Core Human Rights Principles for Private Conservation Organizations and Funders](#), released by UNEP in 2024, which provides critical guidance for rights-based approaches in conservation finance and practice. Furthermore, CEESP contributed to the development of IUCN's 2022 [policy brief on Environmental Human Rights Defenders and the GBF](#), advocating for the inclusion of clear safeguards and accountability mechanisms under Targets 3, 21, and 22. These efforts reaffirm CEESP's leadership in advancing governance models that are inclusive, rights-based, and protective of those who defend nature.

In addition, a new WCPA-CEESP Task Force on Advancing Indigenous and Community-Led Governance of Protected and Conserved Areas – co-led by Barbara Lassen, Neema Pathak, and Ahmad Hameed – was established to address barriers to Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' (IPs and LCs) leadership in the management, use and conservation of these areas. This new Task Force works to strengthen understanding and transparency of IP- and LC-led governance and to develop, test, and promote knowledge products that help assess and shift authority dynamics between IPs, LCs, and other actors. These tools are being shared globally to encourage broader uptake and influence policy and practice.

In parallel, the Theme is supporting work under [Resolution 7.119 Renunciation of the Doctrine of Discovery to Rediscover care for Mother Earth](#) (Marseille, 2020), including the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation working group and the development of a scoping paper prepared for the IUCN Council to guide institutional reflection and response. This paper will inform a series of discussions on truth, reconciliation, and the legacy of dispossession in conservation, building momentum in the lead-up to the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025.

Human Wellbeing and Sustainable Livelihoods (HWSL)

The Human Wellbeing and Sustainable Livelihoods Theme's work throughout the recent quadrennium focused on exploring innovative strategies for conservation action – particularly monitoring and funding – and leadership. Seeking to fill a gap in monitoring and policy discussions, this Theme convened a group to explore IP- and LC-led monitoring of conservation's social impacts. This group was commissioned by the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) in 2023 to produce a report on the findings of its investigation, which covered 87 monitoring initiatives around the world, and which is expected to be published as an FPP Briefing Paper. Relatedly, this theme helped to found the new joint WCPA-CEESP Task Force on Advancing Indigenous and Community-Led governance of Protected and Conserved Areas. Human Wellbeing and Sustainable Livelihoods members also authored or co-authored various knowledge products, including [a grey literature report reviewing methods for assessing the social impacts of conservation](#), [a WCPA report on advancing equitable governance in area-based conservation](#), and a forthcoming WCPA report on social justice and restoration. Finally, this Theme produced the 23rd issue of *Policy Matters*, ["Journeys to more equitable and effective conservation: the central role of Indigenous peoples and local communities"](#), which presents case studies detailing shifts in conservation approaches, challenges faced, lessons learned and outcomes observed.

This work on monitoring and livelihoods intersects with CEESP's parallel focus on conservation finance, just transitions, and business innovation, which are explored in the following section.

Business, Best Practice, and Accountability (BBPA)

The Business, Best Practice, and Accountability Theme advanced CEESP's work at the intersection of conservation, climate, and sustainable finance. The group produced peer-reviewed publications on topics such as climate finance, nature-based recovery, business engagement in conservation, and food system transitions (Annex B). A policy brief on Nature Positive Innovation is also slated for publication in *Policy Matters*.

As CEESP deepens its focus on equity in conservation finance and adaptation, parallel efforts have examined the systemic drivers of vulnerability – especially where environmental change intersects with migration, displacement, and conflict.

The group's Chair contributed technical expertise to the IUCN Global Fund on Ecosystem-based Adaptation and completed specialised training through the edX course on ecosystem-based adaptation. In collaboration with the University of Johannesburg, the group convened workshops on just energy transitions in Africa, comparing models in South Africa and Senegal and exploring pathways for innovation and entrepreneurship in conservation.

The Theme also played a key role in CEESP's strategic dialogue on regenerative finance. During the 2023 Steering Committee meeting in Costa Rica, its Chair led a session on reimagining IUCN's Nature 2030 finance and resource mobilisation strategy, emphasising equity, inclusion, and long-term sustainability.

Environment and Peace (TEP)

This thematic cluster advanced CEESP's leadership on conflict-sensitive conservation, environmental peacebuilding, and the links between migration, climate change and biodiversity. Working in close collaboration with IUCN's WCEL Environment & Armed Conflict group, CEM's Mountains group, and SSC's Human-Wildlife Conflict group, members of this theme co-developed training materials, hosted events and contributed to policy dialogues focused on decolonisation, displacement and ecological justice.

A major achievement was the publication of the award-winning report *Planet on the move: Reimagining conservation at the intersection of migration, environmental change, and conflict*, produced in partnership with members of MEC, Member organisations, academic institutions, and other CEESP members. This groundbreaking report examines how conservation practice must evolve in response to migration — both human and more-than-human — driven by climate disruption, conflict and socio-ecological transformation. It calls for a shift toward care-centred, adaptive, and justice-based approaches to conservation that recognize mobility, kinship and historical accountability.

Culture, Spirituality, and Conservation (CSC)

The Theme on Culture, Spirituality, and Conservation collaborated with other Commissions and Member organisations to entrench conservation approaches that place culture and spirituality at the heart of environmental advocacy. This group also contributed to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Working Group. In addition, it collaborated on a global project to build a database of sacred species with the objective of highlighting the need to reimagine our relationships with other species.

Specialist Groups

Gender (SGG)

Throughout the recent quadrennium, this Specialist Group increased its membership from 87 members in 34 countries to 139 members in 48 countries. Additionally, the Gender Chair reviewed four motions for IUCN's Proposed Motions Process for WCC 2025 as the Gender- and Health-specific

Technical Reviewer and reviewed 19 candidate applications as a Technical Evaluator for IUCN's Resilient Inclusive and Sustainable Environments (RISE) Grant Challenge.

Green Criminology (SGGC)

Between 2022 and 2025, the Green Criminology Specialist Group emerged as a leading voice within CEESP for interdisciplinary reflection on environmental harm, justice and accountability. The group organised and led the First and Second Interinstitutional Seminars on Green Criminology in Mexico (2022–2023), held virtually with participation from universities, civil society organisations, and government stakeholders across Latin America. These seminars offered a space to analyse socio-environmental conflicts and crimes through a green criminology lens, addressing issues like wildlife trafficking, organised crime, and environmental violence against Indigenous Peoples.

In collaboration with the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, the group also produced a widely shared video on the ethics and risks of keeping wild animals as pets, bringing attention to the intersections of public health, conservation, and animal welfare. Academic outputs from the group include journal articles and contributions to CEESP newsletters (Annex B), such as the December 2022 article "Violencia contra grupos indígenas defensores del ambiente en México".

The group also successfully delivered the Third Interinstitutional Seminar on Green Criminology from February to May 2024, further expanding its reach among youth, academics, and practitioners across Latin America. The seminar continued building momentum toward the IUCN Congress by deepening regional and thematic engagement. It showcased the group's commitment to bridging science, advocacy and education in confronting socio-ecological harms and advancing justice-centred conservation.

These efforts to address environmental harm and justice are complemented by the work of the Indigenous Peoples, Customary and Environmental Laws and Human Rights Specialist Group (SPICEH) in elevating Indigenous legal traditions and customary governance frameworks.

Local Economies, Communities and Nature (LECN)

The Local Economies, Communities and Nature Specialist Group serves as a CEESP focal point for members interested in applying socio-economic methods to the relationship between communities and the natural environment. It also supports other IUCN Commissions and the Secretariat with specialist advice and information.

During this quadrennium, the group developed a funded project to assess the true value of Indigenous economies in Protected Areas. This work seeks to better account for the full range of ecosystem services that IPs and LCs deliver – beyond subsistence livelihoods – including cultural, spiritual, and ecological contributions that benefit broader regional and global populations. Approximately 10–12 members have committed to contributing to this research initiative, which has already produced a literature review of over 50 sources, with plans to publish both a review article and a policy opinion piece in a peer-reviewed journal.

The group has also produced several peer-reviewed publications highlighting innovative frameworks and IP- and LC-centred approaches to ecosystem valuation, energy transition and conservation benefit-sharing.

People and the Ocean (PATO)

The People and the Ocean Specialist Group has significantly expanded IUCN's knowledge base on socially-just marine conservation through an impressive body of work. Over the 2021–2025 quadrennium, the group produced 17 peer-reviewed publications, two major reports, and multiple policy briefs and technical guidance documents (Annex B). These outputs cover such themes as human rights in the blue economy, marine tenure, small-scale fisheries governance, and the role of Ocean Defenders in protecting biodiversity.

At the heart of this work is the recognition and support of Ocean Defenders — coastal Indigenous Peoples, small-scale fishers and local communities on the frontlines of ocean stewardship. The

Specialist Group developed detailed guidance on equity-centred Marine Protected Area (MPA) design, participatory governance, and the integration of cultural and tenure rights into marine policy. This guidance includes tools and frameworks for incorporating social equity, human well-being, and gender justice into MPA management and evaluation.

The group's influence has been evident in global policy spaces, including through contributions to the United Nations (UN) Ocean Conference, International Marine Conservation Congress, World Fisheries Congress, and the International Marine Protected Areas Congress. Its knowledge products informed IUCN's input to UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) processes and helped shape marine policy language around the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable ocean.

Through its leadership, the People and the Ocean Specialist Group has helped reframe marine conservation within IUCN – from solely technical and ecological priorities to a broader, justice-oriented agenda that honours the rights, voices and knowledge of coastal peoples.

Sustainable Use and Livelihoods (SULi)

SULi aided in the design, development and population of a new Species Use Database (SpUD), which records who uses wild species, for what reason, and whether the uses are sustainable. SpUD takes social, economic, and environmental perspectives into account, as well as considerations of animal welfare and human health. The database, which currently contains almost 500 records documenting how 350 species are used in 117 countries, is currently entering a new phase of development, which will see it better integrated with the IUCN Red List. SULi also worked with IUCN's East and Southern Africa Regional Office to develop the First Line of Defence guidelines, a framework for better understanding and foregrounding community perspectives on conservation projects. Lastly, SULi collaborated with TRAFFIC, the Endangered Wildlife Trust and IIED to develop 5-DSAF, which is a framework for assessing the sustainability of wild species use by considering animal welfare, human health, and economic, environmental and social sustainability.

This work on sustainable use directly informs efforts by other groups – such as SPICEH and the Region, Spirituality, Environmental Conservation and Climate Justice Specialist Group (ReSpECC) – that foreground the interconnectedness of values, traditions, livelihoods and environmental governance.

Indigenous Peoples, Customary, Environmental Laws and Human Rights (SPICEH)

SPICEH collaborated with the Center for Indigenous Peoples' Research and Development to research the Shyagya customary practices of the Tumba and Nubriba Indigenous Peoples and the roles of these practices in conserving biodiversity, sustainably managing natural resources, and living in harmony with nature. The international dissemination of this research contributed to the legal recognition of Shyagya customary practices and Indigenous governance in a Nepali municipality through passage of the 2022 Shyagya Conservation Act. SPICEH also created knowledge products that raise awareness of the lived realities of Indigenous Peoples struggling against fortress conservation in various protected areas in Nepal (Annex B).

Region, Spirituality, Environmental Conservation and Climate Justice (ReSpECC)

This Specialist Group coordinated among faith-based organisations participating in IUCN events and engaged in multilateral environmental agreements including the UNFCCC and the UN CBD. This coordination has enhanced shared commitments to the achievement of global goals on biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and sustainable development. In addition, ReSpECC facilitated several workshops encouraging reflection on people's connection to the natural world, spirituality and value systems. Lastly, this group is engaged in research investigating the intersection of spirituality, conservation and climate action with the goal of providing insight into how we can create synergies between distinct actions to more impactfully protect nature.

These spiritually-grounded approaches are complemented by practical tools and capacity-building efforts to strengthen natural resource governance, as demonstrated by CEESP's working groups.

1. Working Groups and Task Forces

CEESP's working groups and task forces have served as agile mechanisms for deepening knowledge and building alliances on emerging topics, from biodiversity and family planning to the conservation of animal cultures.

Natural Resource Governance Framework Working Group (NRGF)

As part of Permitting Training Courses organised by the Endangered Wildlife Trust in 2023 and 2024, the NRGF successfully trained 150 permits officials from the South African Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries on good natural resource governance. These trainings delivered capacity-building to frontline conservation personnel and provided an opportunity to improve relations between the gatekeepers of our biodiversity and the many stakeholders who use natural resources. In addition, the group's Chair contributed to various publications for IUCN, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Terraspect, and the IUCN SSC-CEESP Biodiversity and Family Planning Task Force (Annex B). This working group also disseminated knowledge in the form of webinars co-hosted with other IUCN Members, periodic newsletters, briefing papers, and the establishment of a LinkedIn page for the group.

CEM-CEESP Task Force on Natural Capital Policy (NCP)

This joint Task Force was founded in 2022 to examine CEESP and CEM Members' perspectives on natural capital and natural capital accounting, to identify consensus and divergences in these, and to inform a proposal for an IUCN Policy Working Group on Natural Capital (IUCN Resolution 7.120 Towards a Policy on Natural Capital (Marseille, 2020)). The majority of the Task Force's work involved managing and disseminating knowledge throughout the IUCN via meetings, presentations, and briefings. A progress report from February of 2025 found that the Task Force had achieved its goal and recommended that it be disbanded and that a Natural Capital Policy Development Group be established to develop a Natural Capital Policy for IUCN.

SSC-CEESP Biodiversity and Family Planning Task Force (B&FP)

The B&FP joint Task Force, which works closely with the Margaret Pyke Trust, published guidance on how to ensure that National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans include Population, Health, and Environment (PHE) considerations and minimise barriers to voluntary, rights-based family planning. Its members also contributed expertise that led to the inclusion of PHE considerations, family planning, and sexual, reproductive and mental health in various IUCN action plans, the CBD Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health, and the IPBES Nexus Assessment. Finally, this Task Force convinced Blue Ventures, the International Crane Foundation, the PHE Ethiopia Consortium and CHASE Africa to formally pledge to expand access to voluntary, rights-based contraception as part of Family Planning 2030, a global partnership dedicated to ensuring universal access to family planning. See B&FP's 2024-2025 Annual Report.

Young Professional/Youth Engagement and Intergenerational Partnerships (YEIP)

At UNEP COP15, the Chair of this Working Group contributed to a youth-focused report and a dialogue aiming to improve intergenerational engagement between IUCN's Commission Chairs and youth members. The Working Group as a whole also contributed to the founding and implementation of the IUCN Youth Advisory Committee, whose activities and knowledge products aim to mainstream the IUCN Youth Strategy throughout the Union. Within CEESP, the group continues to create knowledge products and engagement opportunities centred around youth engagement (Annex B). Lastly, this group partnered with IUCN CEC, the Global Youth Biodiversity Network, and Kinship to create the Nature Cultural Fellowship, a fellowship focused on the nexus of nature, community, art, traditional knowledge and values, which will include a webinar series, a learning journey and grassroots community projects.

CEESP-SSC Conservation of Animal Cultures Task Force (CACTF)

In 2025, CEESP and SSC jointly established the Conservation of Animal Cultures Task Force to recognise animal cultures and integrate them into global conservation frameworks. This innovative

collaboration acknowledges that social learning and cultural behaviours among animal species are critical to resilience, adaptation and survivorship in the face of environmental change. The task force brings together experts from diverse disciplines and includes strong engagement with IPs and LCs to ensure both scientific and cultural perspectives shape conservation practices. By bridging ecological science, traditional knowledge and conservation policy, the CACTF aims to influence tools such as the IUCN Green Status and Red List assessments and advance the Nature-Culture initiative, which focuses on the interconnectedness of nature and cultural heritage. The CACTF is expected to expand its work into the next quadrennium, building momentum around this emerging frontier in conservation.

The work of the CACTF exemplifies CEESP's broader efforts to reimagine conservation by integrating diverse forms of knowledge – including Indigenous and scientific – and embracing relational, interspecies perspectives.

2. Regional Engagement and Leadership

In addition to its global, thematic and specialist group work, CEESP's impact has been deeply shaped by the leadership and coordination of its Regional Vice Chairs (RVCs). Throughout the quadrennium, RVCs have played a vital role in engaging members, fostering knowledge exchange, and supporting regionally-grounded conservation priorities aligned with CEESP's values. Across all regions, members have contributed to publications, events, policy dialogues, and capacity-building efforts that reflect CEESP's commitment to inclusive, culturally-rooted, and community-led conservation. The following section highlights selected regional achievements and collaborations that demonstrate the diverse and dynamic contributions of CEESP's global membership.

Oceania

CEESP Oceania members published two books in partnership with the Ebil Society's youth research programme (Annex B). These books, one of which focuses on Palau's dugong and the other of which covers the relations between Palau's Agroforestry and Food systems, compile research co-produced by local and international researchers. These research processes represent tangible steps towards decolonising research by including Indigenous protocols for borrowing knowledge and by building the capacities of the next generation of local researchers. CEESP Oceania members were also involved in a complaint filed with the UN Special Repertoire against violations of Palau's environmental laws as a result of a U.S. Military buildup.

North America (NA)

CEESP North America organised a Young Professionals Working Group to support young conservation professionals in developing their careers and their approaches to conservation. This Working Group provides a place to share experiences, learn about opportunities to contribute to conservation policy, and make contact with people who can serve as role models and mentors. This group emphasises bringing unconventional ideas and people from non-traditional backgrounds into conservation to build the kind of broad constituency required to address global challenges like climate change.

South America (SA)

CEESP South America focused its efforts on enhancing regional connections and cooperation. The region hosted two online discussion panels aimed at fostering dialogue between regional members to more effectively advance environmental policy solutions, the first of which explored challenges to conservation and biodiversity protection in South America. The second panel, which featured a presentation by Argentinian environmental lawyer Natalia Langer, focused on exchanging strategies to improve wildlife protection and green criminology in South America.

Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean (MCAC)

CEESP Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean reactivated this quadrennium, and a work plan was collectively developed to guide the region's efforts through 2025. Ahead of the WCC, this

region prioritised strengthening cohesion between its members and the parallel regional bodies of CEC and the Secretariat to facilitate knowledge exchange and align efforts on regional priorities. Members of this region also contributed articles showcasing their work and perspectives on conservation to the *Reimagine Conservation* newsletter.

South and East Asia (S&EA)

Between 2021 and 2025, CEESP's South and East Asia members contributed to over 40 events and hosted more than 12 webinars on the Sustainable Development Goals and advances in environmental conservation. The region's membership also increased from 190 to 411 members, and its RVC published two books on environmental ethics and law.

Europe and Mediterranean (E&M)

CEESP's Europe & Mediterranean region conducted a survey to gauge its members' priorities and areas of expertise. The information collected in this survey resulted in the inclusion of Eastern European and Central Asian members under the authority of the European RVC. Additionally, the RVC and Deputy RVC participated in the European Policy Advisory Group during the Interregional Committee for Europe and North and Central Asia meetings.

West Asia (WA)

CEESP West Asia collaborated with the IUCN Secretariat to expand access to the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions by translating it into Persian. The region also helped assess four protected areas in Razavi Khorasan, Iran, using the IUCN Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool co-produced by WCPA and the Secretariat. Aside from this, youth members of CEESP West Asia co-led the Youth and Tech4Nature Pavilion at IUCN's 10th West Asia RCF. The Bahrain Women Association – an IUCN Member Organisation in West Asia – also implemented an outreach strategy to increase regional awareness of and action on conservation. This Member Organisation also organised a conference entitled “The Four Jewels of Earth,” which sought to encourage attendees to reimagine what a sustainable future could look like for the planet.

Africa

CEESP Africa's YP Focal Point was particularly active throughout the quadrennium, contributing to a variety of conferences including the IUCN Youth Conservation Forum for Africa, the IUCN African Conservation Forum, UNCCD COP16, and various IUCN RCFs. Notably, she led, coordinated and created content for specific events at the IUCN West Asia RCF, UNCCD COP16, and UN CBD COP16. She also contributed to the design and implementation of the aforementioned Nature Cultural Fellowship. In addition to this, CEESP Africa successfully engaged new youth members, encouraged their participation in alignment with the IUCN Youth Strategy, and uplifted youth voices and collaboration throughout the quadrennium.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

Structure

The Commission is led by the Commission Chair, who is elected by the IUCN membership and by a Deputy Chair appointed by the IUCN Council on the recommendation of the Chair. CEESP's Steering Committee (SC) is appointed according to the IUCN Statutes and Regulations and assists the Chair and Deputy Chair in guiding and coordinating the activities of the Commission. How the Commission is organised to deliver results in the programme areas is at the discretion of the Chair, in consultation with the Deputy Chair and SC. The Chair also participates as a full voting member of the IUCN Council.

CEESP's work is organised into regions, themes, specialist groups, and working groups or task forces. A complete list of these subgroups, as well as their respective Chairs, Co-Chairs and Regional Vice Chairs for the 2021-2025 term, are listed and acknowledged with gratitude in Annex A of this report. CEESP is supported by the Secretariat's Commission Support Unit (CSU),

which is composed of Iain Stewart (Director, Membership and CSU), Michelle Kimeu (Manager, CSU), Laksith Fernando (Commissions Officer), Nestor Soler del Toro (Programme Finance Manager), Nishamini Amunugama (Commissions Administrator), Vivian Ejezie (Communications Assistant) and Donall McLoughlin (Commissions Finance Administrator).

Governance

CEESP's 18-person SC, which is 61% female, is composed of the Chairs, Co-Chairs, and RVCs of the Commission's subgroups, as well as the Commission's Chair, Deputy Chair and Executive Officer (Annex A). CEESP's day-to-day operations are run by a smaller executive team working with the Chair, but all policy and strategic decisions are made by the full SC, whose actions are guided by the Commission Bylaws. The Bylaws were reviewed, updated and approved by the SC in June 2019.

Membership

As of May 2025, CEESP had almost 1,700 members, of which 42% are female and 58% are male, and of which 8.8% identify as Indigenous. The Commission's members are distributed across eight regions, six themes, seven specialist groups and ten working groups/task forces (including four inter-Commission task forces). S&EA and CEESP E&M are the Commission's two largest sub-groups, with 417 and 279 members, respectively, followed by SULi, NA, and YEIP, which have 356, 284, and 250 members. For more membership distribution details, please refer to Annex A.

COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout the 2021–2025 quadrennium, CEESP significantly expanded its communications efforts to amplify its values-based conservation agenda and engage a broader audience. The Commission launched the *Reimagining Conservation* newsletter, featuring thematic editions that highlight stories from members, Indigenous leaders, and partners worldwide. These newsletters serve as platforms for sharing critical perspectives and emerging practices on conservation justice, equity and inclusion.

CEESP also enhanced its digital presence through IUCN platforms like Engage, and through the Commission's web pages, sharing calls for action, regional updates, publications and opportunities for involvement. The Commission increased its use of multimedia – including videos, webinars, and social media posts – to spotlight member-led initiatives and share learning tools and experiences.

Members actively contributed blogs, policy articles and interviews to IUCN Congress communications, CBD COP15 and COP16 engagement, and other global events, elevating the voices of traditionally underrepresented actors in conservation. Overall, CEESP's communications have been central to shifting conservation narratives and connecting diverse constituencies across regions and knowledge systems.

Appendix A: CEESP Officers, 2021-2025

Executive Office
Thematic Groups
Specialist Groups
Working Groups & Task Forces
Regions

Acronym	Sub-group	Position	Name	Number of Members
-	Executive	Chair	Kristen Walker Painemilla	-
-	Executive	Deputy Chair	Ameyali Ramos	-
-	Executive	Executive Officer	Iben Caroline Munck	-
BBPA	Business, Best Practice, & Accountability	Chair	Jacob Park	2
CSC	Culture, Spirituality, & Conservation	Co-Chair	Kevin Chang	179
		Co-Chair	Liza Zogib	
TEP	Environment & Peace	Chair	Elaine Hsiao	4
		Deputy Chair	Mirali Shukla	
TGER	Governance, Equity, & Rights	Chair	Melanie Zurba	4
		Deputy Chair	Ahmad Hameed	
		Deputy Chair	Isa Olalekan Elegbede	
HWSL	Human Wellbeing & Sustainable Livelihoods	Chair	Neil Dawson	2
IPE	Indigenous Peoples & the Environment	Chair	Jennifer (Jing) Corpuz	1
SGG	Gender	Chair	Meher Noshirwani	2
SGGC	Green Criminology	Co-Chair	Daan Van Uhm	28
		Co-Chair	Inés Arroyo Quiroz	
SPICEH	Indigenous Peoples, Customary, Environmental Laws & Human Rights	Chair	Pasang Dolma Sherpa	3
LECN	Local Economies, Communities, & Nature	Co-Chair	Kamaljit Sangha	4
		Co-Chair	Nicholas Conner	
PATO	People & the Ocean	Chair	Nathan Bennett	49
ReSpECC	Religion, Spirituality,	Co-Chair	Sarah French	172

	Environmental Conservation & Climate Justice	Co-Chair	Shantanu Mandal	
SULi	Sustainable Use & Livelihoods	Chair	Dilys Roe	356
B&FP	SSC-CEESP Biodiversity & Family Planning Task Force	Co-Chair	Carina Hirsch	3
		Co-Chair	David Johnson	
-	Working Group on Ecosystem Services & Indigenous Peoples & Local Communities	Co-Chair	Kamaljit Sangha	-
		Co-Chair	Nicholas Conner	
NCP	CEM-CEESP Task Force on Natural Capital Policy	Chair	Nicholas Conner	-
MEC	Migration & Environmental Change Task Force	Co-Chair	Elaine Hsiao	6
		Co-Chair	Galeo Saintz	
		Co-Chair	Richard Matthew	
NRGF	Natural Resource Governance Framework Working Group	Chair	Emmanuel Nuesiri	3
YEIP	Youth Engagement & Intergenerational Partnerships	Chair	Swetha Stotra Bhashyam	155
-	Africa	Regional Vice Chair	Monipher Musasa	248
		Deputy Regional Vice Chair	Emmanuel Lokpaka	
		Young Professional Regional Focal Point	Fatima El-aaraby	
E&M	Europe & Mediterranean	Regional Vice Chair	Luc Bas	379
		Deputy Regional Vice Chair	Tommaso Demozzi	
MCAC	Mexico, Central America, & the Caribbean	Regional Vice Chair	Amelia Arreguín Prado	78
NA	North America	Regional Vice Chair	Michael Painter	284
		Deputy Regional Vice Chair	Julia Whelan	
		Young Professional Regional Focal Point	Katia Carranza	

-	Oceania	Regional Vice Chair	Elise Huffer	98
		Deputy Regional Vice Chair	Ann Singeo	
		Young Professional Regional Focal Point	Daphney Kiki	
SA	South America	Regional Vice Chair	Pablo Crimer	95
S&EA	South & East Asia	Regional Vice Chair	Ritu Dhingra	417
		Deputy Regional Vice Chair	Swayamprabha Das	
		Young Professional Regional Focal Point	Adrian Dwiputra	
WA	West Asia	Regional Vice Chair	Mahnaz Kadhemi	57
		Young Professional Regional Focal Point	Georges Habib	

Appendix B: List of CEESP Publications 2021-2025

This compilation includes all publications officially released as of May 28, 2025.

Thematic Groups

Business, Best Practice, & Accountability

- [Alonso Martínez, M. et al., \(2025\) "More than closing loops: Community-based circular food systems as pathways for transformation," *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, Community Development*.](#)
- [Lall, Saurabh A. & Park, Jacob, \(2022\) "How Social Ventures Grow: Understanding the Role of Philanthropic Financing in Scaling Social Entrepreneurship," *Business & Society Journal* \(2022\).](#)
- [Park, Jacob, \(2021\) "Theorizing and Learning From Kenya's Evolving Solar Energy Enterprise Development," *Energy Research & Social Sciences Journal*.](#)
- [Park, Jacob, \(2022\) "How Can We Pay For It All? Understanding the Global Challenge of Financing Climate Change and Sustainable Development Solutions," *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*.](#)
- [Park, Jacob, \(2023\) "Sustainable Development Finance and Investments: Theoretical and policy implications for Africa," chapter in *Transformative Innovation in Times of Change: Lessons for Africa From COVID-19*.](#)
- [Park, Jacob, \(November 2023\) "Understanding the USD 10+ Trillion Climate Finance Dilemma: Implications for the 2023 COP28 Climate Conference PLOS Climate," *PLOS Climate*.](#)

Culture, Spirituality, & Conservation

- [Zurba et al., \(2024\) "Enhancing meaningful Indigenous leadership and collaboration in international environmental governance forums," *Environmental Science & Policy*.](#)

Governance, Equity, & Rights

- [HRBWG et al., \(2024\) "Advancing Human Rights-based Approaches to Target 3 Implementation," working paper developed by members of the Human Rights and Biodiversity Working Group and participants in the international workshop on Advancing Rights and Equity in Conservation \(Nanyuki, 2024\).](#)
- [United Nations Environment Programme, \(2024\) *Core Human Rights Principles for Private Conservation Organizations and Funders*.
Learning for Governance portal](#)

Human Well-being & Sustainable Livelihoods

- [Dawson, N.M. et al., \(2023\) "Journeys to more equitable and effective conservation: the central role of Indigenous peoples and local communities," *IUCN CEESP Policy Matters, Issue 23*.](#)
- [Dawson, N.M. et al., \(2024\) "Is it just conservation? A typology of Indigenous peoples' and local communities' roles in conserving biodiversity," *One Earth*.](#)
- [Dawson, N.M. et al., \(2024\) "Reviewing the science on 50 years of conservation: Knowledge production biases and lessons for practice," *Ambio*.](#)
- [Dawson, N.M. and Suich, H., \(2025\) "Advancing social impact assessments for more effective and equitable conservation," *Conservation Biology*.](#)
- [Franks, P. et al., \(2024\) *Advancing equitable governance in area based conservation*.](#)
- [Suich, H. and Dawson, N. \(2023\). Review of methods for assessing the social impacts of conservation. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.](#)

Specialist Groups

Gender

- [Dragomir, Cristina \(2023\) "Towards a systematic approach: Women, climate change and mobility," *IUCN CEESP*.](#)
- [McPherson, Jana M. et al., \(2023\) "A gendered perspective on the horizon in community conservation" for *IUCN CEESP*.](#)
- [Noshirwani, Meher M. & Dragomir, Cristina L, \(2024\) "Empowering Women: Driving Transformation in Conservation and Development," *IUCN CEESP Newsletter*.](#)

Green Criminology

- [Arroyo-Quiroz, Inés. \(2023\). "Responsabilidad de México como agente activo en el comercio de animales silvestres para mascotas," *Ecología, medio ambiente y sustentabilidad*.](#)

- [Arroyo-Quiroz, Inés, \(2025\) "Gender and environmental crime," in *Elgar Encyclopedia of Environmental Crime*, Ed. by Rob White. ISBN 978 1 80392 383 3.](#)
- [Arroyo-Quiroz, I., Carpio Domínguez, J. L. & Castro Salazar, J. I., \(2024\). "Green crimes and environmental harms in the Latin American region," *Research handbook on environmental crimes and criminal enforcement*.](#)
- [Arroyo-Quiroz I., Castro Salazar, J. I., & S.E. Serrano Oswald, \(2022\) "Using a feminist and green social justice perspective to understanding wildlife trafficking in Mexico," *Women and Wildlife Trafficking: Participants, Perpetrators and Victims*.](#)
- [Arroyo-Quiroz, I., Gore, Meredith L., & Reaser Jamie, K., \(2025\) "A framework for advancing the science of environmental justice along the international wildlife trade pathway," *Frontiers in conservation science*.](#)
- [Carpio Domínguez, José Luis, \(2023\). *Criminología verde para México: Desarrollo de una perspectiva verde en la herencia criminológica mexicana*.](#)
- [Carpio Domínguez, J.L. et al., \(2022\) "Trafficking of a Tiger \(*Panthera tigris*\) in northeastern Mexico: A social network analysis," *Forensic Science International: Animals and Environments*.](#)
- [Carpio-Domínguez, J. L., Castro-Salazar, J. I., & Arroyo-Quiroz, I., \(2022\) "Violencia contra grupos indígenas defensores del ambiente en México," *IUCN CEESP Newsletter*.](#)
- [Castro-Salazar, J. I., Carpio-Domínguez, J. L., & Arroyo-Quiroz, I., \(2024\) "Ingresos y egresos de fauna silvestre en Centros para la Conservación e Investigación de la Vida Silvestre de México durante 2005-2020," *CienciaUAT*.](#)
- [Castro-Salazar, J. I., Torres-Alfaro, D. del C., & Arroyo-Quiroz, I. \(2023\), "Derecho penal mexicano y maltrato animal. Un análisis desde la criminología verde," *Revista Española de Investigación Criminológica*.](#)
- [Esparza-Rodríguez, Z. et al., \(2024\) "Risk areas of illegal primate trafficking: estimating capture pressure and vulnerability," *Animal Biodiversity and Conservation*.](#)
- [Rytwinski, T. et al., \(2024\) "What is the evidence that counter-wildlife crime interventions are effective for conserving African, Asian and Latin American wildlife directly threatened by exploitation? A systematic map," *Ecological solutions and evidence*.](#)
- [Van Uhm, Daan P. \(2023\) *Organized Environmental Crime: Black Markets in Gold, Wildlife, and Timber*.](#)
- [Van Uhm, Daan P. \(2025\) "Illegal Mining" in *Elgar Encyclopedia of Environmental Crime*, Ed. by Rob White. ISBN 978 1 80392 383 3.](#)
- [Witbooi, Emma, Kamal-Deen Ali, Mas Achmad Santosa, Gail Hurley, Yunus Husein, Sarika Maharaj, Ifesinachi Okafor-Yarwood, Inés Arroyo Quiroz, and Omar Salas \(2023\) Organised Crime in the Fisheries Sector, Chapter 16, In: *The Blue Compendium From Knowledge to Action for a Sustainable Ocean Economy*, Eds. J. Lubchenco and P.M. Haugan, Springer.](#)

Indigenous Peoples, Customary, Environmental Laws, & Human Rights

- [Dolma Sherpa, Pasang, \(2022\) *Indigenous Peoples' Customary Governance for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and Protection of Biodiversity*.](#)

People & the Ocean

- [Andrews, N. et al., \(2021\) "Oil, fisheries and coastal communities: A review of impacts on the environment, livelihoods, space and governance," *Energy Research & Social Science*.](#)
- [Baker, D. M. et al, \(2023\) "Improving human well-being outcomes in marine protected areas through futures thinking," *One Earth*.](#)
- [Baker, D., Bennett, N. J., & Ban, N. C., \(2025\). "Human well-being outcomes of large-scale marine protected areas," *Marine Policy*.](#)
- [Beaty, F. et al., \(2024\) "Centering community values in marine planning," *Marine Policy*.](#)
- [Bennett, N. J. et al., \(2021\). "Access rights, capacities and benefits in small-scale fisheries: Insights from the Pacific Coast of Canada," *Marine Policy*.](#)
- [Bennett, N. J. et al., \(2021\). "Advancing social equity in and through marine conservation," *Frontiers in Marine Science*.](#)
- [Bennett, N. J. et al., \(2021\). "Blue growth and blue justice: Ten risks and solutions for the ocean economy," *Marine Policy*.](#)
- [Bennett, N. J. et al., \(2022\) "Environmental Justice in the Ocean," working paper for the *Institution for the Oceans and Fisheries, University of British Columbia*.](#)
- [Bennett, N. J. et al., \(2022\) "Local marine stewardship and ocean defenders," *npj Ocean Sustainability*.](#)

[Bennett, Nathan J., \(2022\) "Mainstreaming Equity and Justice in the Ocean," *Frontiers in Marine Science*.](#)

[Bennett, N. J. et al., \(2022\) "Social science for conservation in working landscapes and seascapes," *Frontiers in Conservation Science*.](#)

[Bennett, N. J. et al., \(2022\) "Social sustainability and equity in the blue economy," *One Earth*.](#)

[Bennett, N. J. et al., \(2023\) "Environmental \(in\)justice in the Anthropocene ocean," *Marine Policy*.](#)

[Bennett, N. J. et al., \(2023\) "Ocean defenders and human rights," *Frontiers in Marine Science*.](#)

[Bennett, N. J. et al., \(2025\) "Ocean equity: From assessment to action to improve social equity in ocean governance," *Frontiers in Marine Science*.](#)

[Bennett, N. J., Morgera, E., & Boyd, D., \(2024\) "The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable ocean," *npj Ocean Sustainability*.](#)

[Billon, P. L. et al., \(2025\). "Ocean governance and the protection of ocean defenders," in *A Research Agenda for Sustainable Ocean Governance*, Eds. J. Alger & U. R. Sumaila, Edward Elgar Publishing.](#)

[Précoma-de la Mora, M. et al., \(2021\) "Integrating Biophysical, Socio-Economic and Governance Principles Into Marine Reserve Design and Management in Mexico: From Theory to Practice," *Frontiers in Marine Science*.](#)

[The Ocean Defenders Project, \(2025\) *Ocean Defenders: Protectors of Our Ocean Environment and Human Rights*.](#)

Sustainable Use & Livelihoods

[Cowie, W. et al., \(2020\) *IUCN guidelines for gathering of fishers' knowledge for policy development and applied use*.](#)

[Skinner, D. et al. \(2018\), *Local communities: First Line of Defence against illegal wildlife trade \(FLoD\) Guidance for implementing the FLoD methodology*](#)

Working Groups & Task Forces

SSC-CEESP Biodiversity & Family Planning Task Force

[Johnson, David & Hirsch, Carina, \(2024\) "Reproductive choice in national biodiversity policy: Guidance on how to ensure PHE and removing barriers to rights-based and voluntary family planning are included in NBSAPs," *IUCN SSC-CEESP Biodiversity & Family Planning Task Force Report*.](#)

Migration & Environmental Change Task Force

[Baillat, A. et al., \(2022\) "Addressing the Silent Crisis: The Impacts of Slow-Onset Environmental Change on Human Mobility and Conflict," in *Compendium on the Future of Environmental Peacebuilding*, Eds. Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, the PeaceNexus Foundation, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and the Environmental Peacebuilding Association.](#)

[Hsiao, Elaine \(Lan Yin\), \(2022\) "Conviviality in Disrupted Socionatural Landscapes: Ecological Peacebuilding around Akagera National Park" *Conservation and Society*.](#)

[Hsiao, Elaine. \(2024\) "Pushing the limits in environmental law: transboundary conservation and climate change," in *Research Handbook on Climate Change and Biodiversity Law* Eds. Richard Caddell & Phillipa McCormack, Edward Elgar Publishing.](#)

[Hsiao, E. et al., \(2023\) "Protected zones in context: exploring the complexity of armed conflicts and their impacts on the protection of biodiversity," *International Review of the Red Cross*.](#)

[Hsiao, Elaine & Le Billon, Philippe, \(2021\) "Connecting Peaces: Transboundary Conservation and the Integration of International, Social, and Ecological Peace," *International Journal on World Peace*.](#)

[Hsiao, E., Margulies, J. & Massé, F., \(2023\) "Political Ecology of Wildlife," in *IUCN Human-Wildlife Conflict Guidelines*.](#)

[Hsiao, E., Matthew, R., Le Billon, P., & Saintz, G. \(Eds.\), \(2024\) *Planet on the Move: Conservation at the Intersection of Migration, Conflict and Environmental Change*.](#)

[Kalilou, O., Hsiao, E., & Aremu, F., \(February 2021\) "Pan-African Response to COVID-19: New Forms of Environmental Peacebuilding Emerge," *IUCN CEESP*.](#)

[Le Billon, P., Hsiao, E., & Matthew, R., \(April 2022\) "Species on the move: 4 ways conservation can adapt in an era of climate change," *The Conversation: Environment + Energy*.](#)

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[Sandström, C. & Hsiao, E., \(2023\) "Governing Human-Wildlife Conflict," in *IUCN Human-Wildlife Conflict Guidelines*.](#)

[Shukla, M. et al., \(May 2022\) "Environmental Peacebuilding for a Planet on the Move," IUCN CEESP Newsletter.](#)

Natural Resources Governance Framework Working Group

[IUCN ESARO \(2024\). "The state of protected and conserved areas in Eastern and Southern Africa," 2nd ed. IUCN State of Protected and Conserved Areas Report Series.](#)

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[Mwangi, E, \(2025\) "Mainstreaming Gender into Drought Management Policy in Africa: Recommendations for Decision-Makers," IUCN CEESP NRGF Policy Paper.](#)

[Pattni, Rajiv & Wilhelm Zhao \(2024\) "From co-benefits to core benefits: How to ensure carbon finance is equitably and transparently distributed," Terraspect report.](#)

Youth Engagement & Intergenerational Partnerships

["UN International Youth Day August 12, 2023," IUCN CEESP Newsletter.](#)

Regions

Africa

[IUCN \(2025\). IUCN ROWA annual report 2024.](#)

Oceania

[Ferguson, Caroline E. et al., \(2022\) "Local practices and production confer resilience to rural Pacific food systems during the COVID-19 pandemic," Marine Policy.](#)

[Ferguson, Caroline E. et al. \(2022\). "The tragedy of the commodity is not inevitable: Indigenous resistance prevents high-value fisheries collapse in the Pacific islands," Global Environmental Change.](#)

[Frazier, A.G. et al., \(2023\) "Ch. 30. Hawai'i and US-Affiliated Pacific Islands," chapter in Fifth National Climate Assessment.](#)

[Mamis, K., et al. \(2023\) Mesekiu Er a Belau Ebook: Dugongs of Palau. Austria, Lulu.com.](#)

[Ngiraswei, E. et al., \(2024\) Belau Agroforestry and Food Systems, Lulu.com.](#)

[Singeo, A. et al., \(2021\). Key findings from Palau's gender and marine resources assessment: Women and men both important for use, management and youth empowerment.](#)

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[Trauernicht, C. et al., \(2023\) "How people, rainfall and vegetation shape tropical island fire regimes across Micronesia," Journal of Biogeography.](#)

South & East Asia

[Dhingra, Ritu, \(2021\) "Environmental Defenders in India" in Policy Matters: Defenders and the many faces of repression.](#)

[Dhingra, Ritu \(2022\) "The War Between Russia and Ukraine – An Environmental Disaster," article for IUCN CEESP](#)

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[Dhingra, Ritu, \(2023\) Explorations into Sustainable Development with Forest and Biodiversity Conservation.](#)

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