



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Villagers plant seedlings to restore the seasonally flooded forest of Tonle Sap, the source of most of Cambodia's annual catch of freshwater fish. Photo: Jeremy Holden

Conservation is DEVELOPMENT

Conservation is an American tradition, and it is important to USAID's mission as an international development agency. Healthy natural systems provide goods and services that sustain life and improve human well-being. Unfortunately, over the last century, nature has been degraded at an increasingly rapid pace with disproportional impacts on the poor. Pollination, erosion control, water supply, and other ecosystem services provide benefits worth an estimated \$1 trillion per year to poor communities. When nature is damaged, the poor suffer. Conservation actions, such as enforcing wildlife laws and partnering with indigenous communities to protect forests, can safeguard nature's benefits while leading to equitable and sustainable development in rural areas. Through a comprehensive, collaborative, and evidence-based approach to conservation, USAID aims to diversify livelihoods, end extreme poverty, improve peace and security, empower women, and build resilient societies.

WHAT USAID IS DOING

USAID's new Biodiversity Policy builds on decades of conservation experience. The policy prioritizes investments in specific geographic areas, and offers clear guidance for achieving cost-effective results including the use of evidence-based approaches and partnerships. It offers clear guidance from USAID to:

- Address pressing threats to nature, including wildlife trafficking and illegal logging. These unlawful activities harm nature, endanger communities, increase corruption, and weaken national security.
- Use proven approaches to conservation, such as close collaboration and participation of communities and indigenous peoples, ensuring that local knowledge is respected and applied to development challenges.
- Partner with the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, research institutions, and fellow government agencies. Working together ensures that the best ideas are put into practice.
- Harness innovations in science and technology. Solving the biggest conservation challenges requires new tools and methods.

DID YOU KNOW?



Today, at least
1.6 billion people
worldwide
rely on forests
for some part
of their livelihood.

USAID'S WORK IN ACTION

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO REDUCE POACHING AND STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY

Through partnerships with communities in Nepal, USAID has achieved results that resonate beyond the country. Despite Nepal's extended civil war, USAID has worked with community groups to better manage their forests. Now, through community-based forestry, more than 40 percent of Nepalis enjoy greater transparency in decision-making, less corruption, more equitable benefit sharing, strengthened social networks, and greater economic empowerment of marginalized women.

USAID has also engaged the youth of Nepal to form 125 anti-poaching units with more than 1,840 members. These groups support park authorities by monitoring wildlife, helping to control forest fires, and providing critical information about ongoing illegal activities. They also generate awareness of poaching in their communities through public performances, home visits, pamphlets and posters, rallies, games, folk songs, and radio programs. USAID improves the economic future of these youth through training in marketable skills such as fish farming and repairing mobile phones, bikes, and electrical appliances. These consistent, long-term investments in community conservation have reduced the incentives for poaching and provided a better future for Nepal.

DID YOU KNOW?

No tigers or rhinos were poached
in Nepal in 2013.

The population of tigers in Nepal has increased **63 percent** in the past five years.



Community members in the Sacred Himalayan Landscape, Nepal, manage their natural resources through forest-user groups and anti-poaching patrols.
Photo: USAID-supported SCAPES program.