



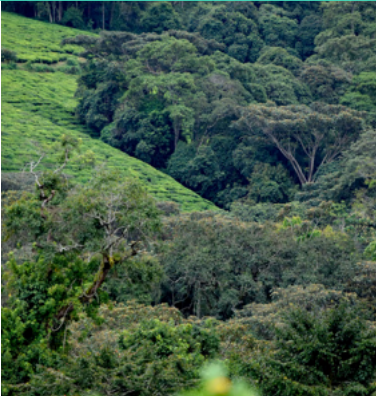
Nature  
Investment  
Facility

# ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

Protect



Restore



Sustain



2025



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Photo: Fernand Nigere/COH



# Acronyms

## Core Facility & Programme

NIF - Nature Investment Facility  
ORB - Cubango–Okavango River Basin  
PIF - Project Identification Form  
TLIF - Tiger Landscapes Investment Facility

## Finance, Biodiversity, & Conservation Terms

FW - Funding Window  
KBA(s) - Key Biodiversity Areas  
PES - Payment for Ecosystem Services  
REDD+ - Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation  
SMART - Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool  
WHS - World Heritage Sites

## Governance & National Institutions

CGC – Credit Guarantee Corporation  
IKI - International Climate Initiative  
INDER – National Institute of Rural Development  
OBPE – Office Burundais pour la Protection de l’Environnement  
OKACOM – Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission  
SC - Steering Committee

## UN Organizations & Partners

BIOFIN - Biodiversity Finance Initiative  
GEF - Global Environment Facility  
MPTFO - Multi-Trust Fund Office  
MSME(s) - Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises  
UNCDF - United Nations Capital Development Fund  
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme  
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



# Executive Summary

The Nature Investment Facility (NIF) aims to catalyse large-scale investment into the protection and restoration of landscapes of global importance, with a focus on Natural World Heritage Sites (WHS), Biosphere Reserves, and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), and the people that interact with them.

Established as a multi-partner trust fund between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Facility is joined by its initial donor Cartier Philanthropy for People and Nature, formerly Cartier for Nature.

In 2025, the NIF translated ambition into action. In Burundi, the Kibira Forest Sanctuaries programme increased its scale and supported capacity development in the region. In its second year of implementation, the programme reinforced an integrated peace, conservation, and finance model through strengthened governance arrangements, deepened community engagement, and the operationalisation of innovative financing mechanisms.

Notably, Burundi's first long-term Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) agreement for protected area management became fully operational, providing stable revenue for conservation while supporting livelihoods in surrounding communities. Progress on biodiversity monitoring, agroforestry restoration, and inclusive governance further positioned the Kibira programme as a national demonstration of blended finance in a fragile context.

2025 was also the year of the official launch of the Tiger Landscapes Investment Facility (TLIF). The Facility progressed from approval to operational readiness, completing foundational scoping and stakeholder engagement in Thailand and Malaysia. These efforts established the enabling conditions for investment in critical tiger landscapes by addressing financing gaps for conservation-friendly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and aligning with financial institutions, government partners, and local enterprises. Together, these activities laid the groundwork for the deployment and expansion of a scalable regional biodiversity finance platform.



# Executive Summary

Alongside its flagship programmes, the NIF advanced a robust pipeline of projects. With financial support from UNDP's Funding Window, projects were implemented in Costa Rica, Mexico, and the Cubango-Okavango River Basin in Botswana. These initiatives prioritised upstream system-building, strengthening policy alignment, governance architecture, and financing design, to prepare landscapes, institutions, and enterprises for future investment at scale. Across all pipeline countries, 2025 activities focused on establishing durable investment frameworks rather than short-term disbursements, consistent with the NIF's Theory of Change.

Resource mobilisation and partnerships continued to develop in 2025. The NIF welcomed two new bilateral government partners: the Federal Republic of Germany and the Government of Flanders. Additional co-financing was mobilized at a programme level to support both programme expansion and investment

readiness. These contributions reinforced the Facility's blended finance approach, enabling the use of grants, guarantees, and concessional capital to crowd in private investment over time.

Governance and institutional capacity were further reinforced. The NIF held its second in-person Steering Committee meeting, oversaw progress across active and pipeline programmes, and strengthened Secretariat capacity to support coordination, communications, and partnership engagement.

As biodiversity loss and climate risks intensifies, the NIF continues to scale its impact. By aligning with governments, communities, financiers, and the private sector around investable, nature-positive solutions, the NIF is building a credible pathway to mobilise long-term capital, deliver measurable biodiversity outcomes, and support resilient livelihoods across some of the world's most important landscapes.

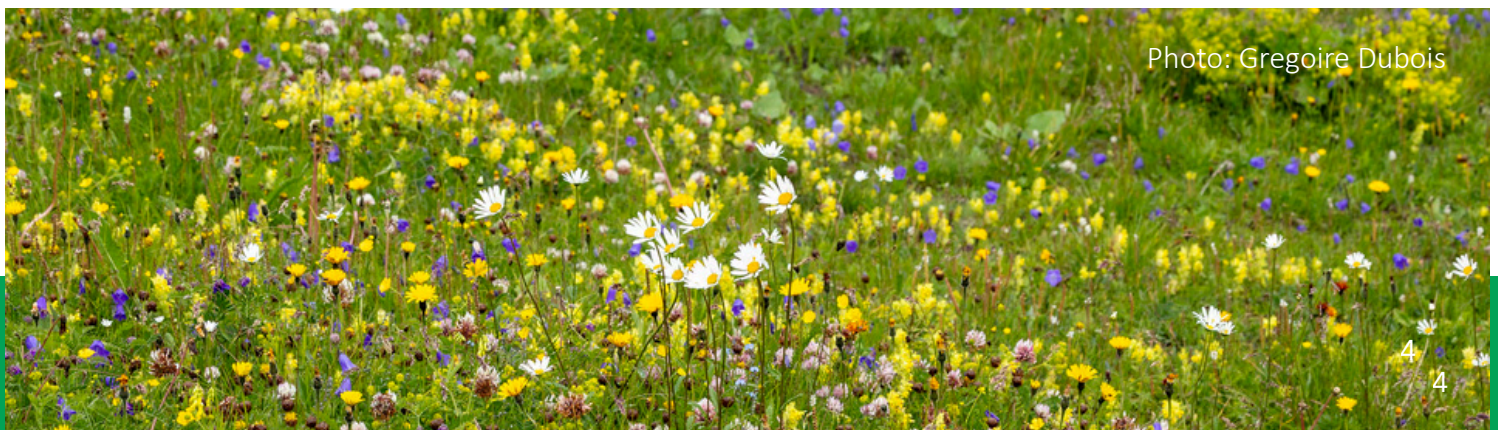


Photo: Gregoire Dubois



# 2025 Highlights

## Flagship Programmes Advancing at Scale

### Kibira Forest Sanctuaries Programme (Burundi):

In its second year of implementation, the programme has strengthened co-management governance, operationalised Burundi's first long-term Payment for Ecosystem Services agreement for protected areas, and advanced community-led restoration and livelihoods.

### Tiger Landscapes Investment Facility (TLIF):

Officially launched and operationalised, completing scoping studies and stakeholder consultations in Thailand and Malaysia to establish a regional platform for financing conservation-friendly MSMEs in priority tiger landscapes.



Photo: UNDP

## Project Pipeline Maturing

**Costa Rica, Mexico, and Botswana:** Advanced from concept to early delivery with UNDP Funding Window support, focusing on policy alignment, governance strengthening, and the design of innovative financing mechanisms to enable future investment at scale.



Photo: Gaurav Gupta

## Strengthened Resource Mobilisation and Partnerships

**New and expanded partnerships:** Welcomed two new government partners while existing partners increased multi-year commitments to strengthen the NIF's blended finance approach.



Photo: UNDP

## Reinforced Governance and Institutional Capacity

**Institutional strengthening:** Held the second in-person Steering Committee meeting, enhanced strategic oversight across the portfolio, and expanded Secretariat capacity to support coordination, communications, and partnership engagement.

Together, these achievements demonstrate NIF's transition from ambition to action in 2025, laying the groundwork for scaled impact, increased investment mobilisation, and measurable biodiversity and livelihood outcomes in the years ahead.



# Programme Context

The Nature Investment Facility (NIF) provides targeted investment through three pathways to unlock capital at scale and build a pipeline of nature-positive investable opportunities.

Through the **enabling investment**, the Facility strengthens policy, institutional, legal, and regulatory frameworks to create enabling environments for investment that deliver biodiversity impact as well as financial returns. The NIF supports national and local governments in priority countries, management authorities, the private sector, and other stakeholders to create conducive environments where both

real and perceived risks are mitigated, allowing investors to invest with confidence.

Through the **catalysing investment**, and with the enabling environment in place, the Facility deploys grants to develop a pipeline of investments and nature-based solutions that target drivers of ecosystem degradation. Opportunities for investment include reforestation projects, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, ecotourism, and biodiversity credits. The catalysing investment pathway will ensure that projects are ready for commercial funding and investments.



Photo: Fernand Nigere/COH



Photo: UNDP



Photo: UNDP



Through **direct investment**, the Facility will provide concessional capital, like below-market loans and first loss guarantees, to unlock and de-risk investment in pipeline projects. Direct investments will be tied to strict return on investment policies to ensure the viability of each investment opportunity.

The NIF's strategic deployment of capital sequences the enabling, catalysing, and direct investments to most effectively address barriers from the policy level through to enterprise growth. The Facility ensures that investments are both impact-driven and financially sustainable.

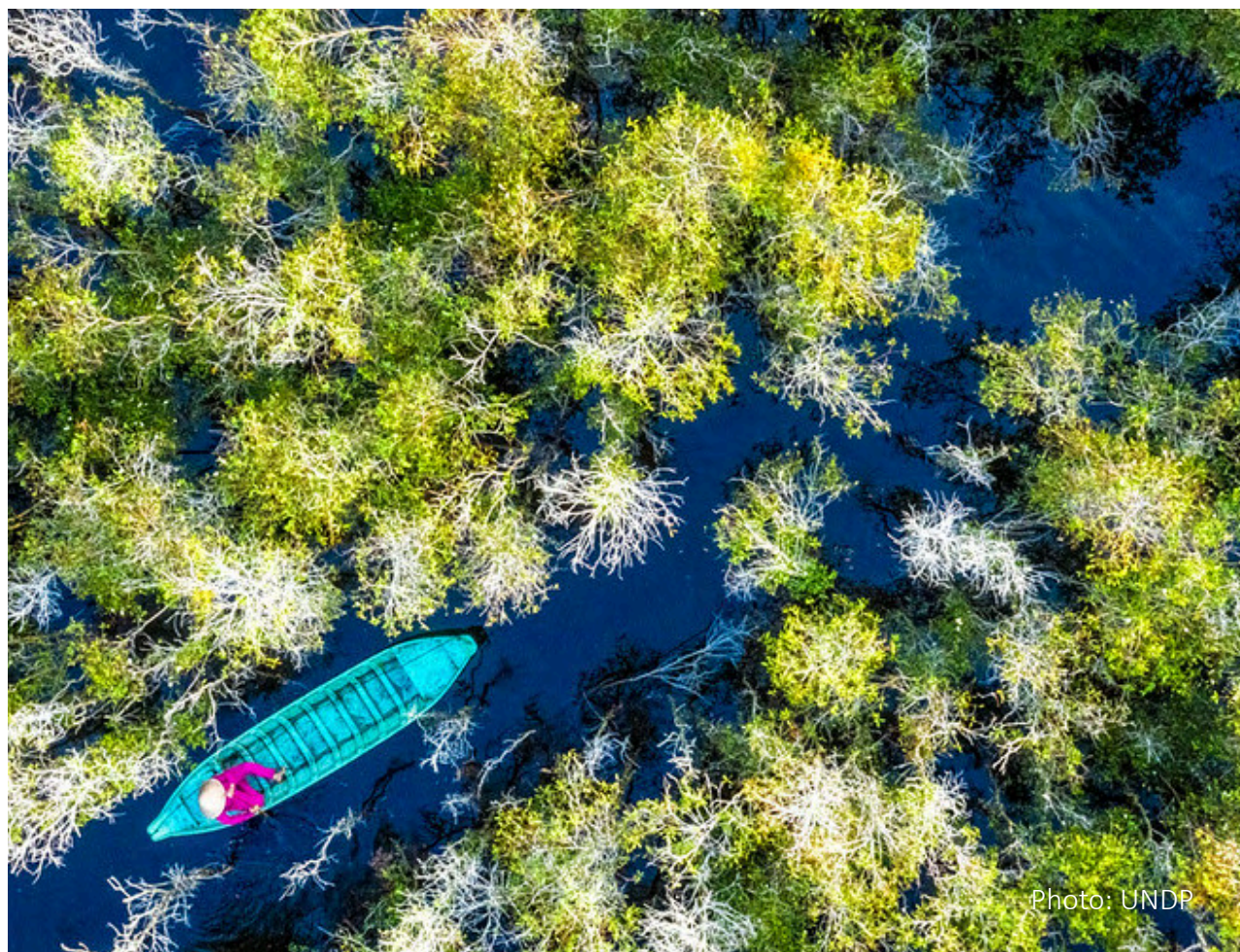
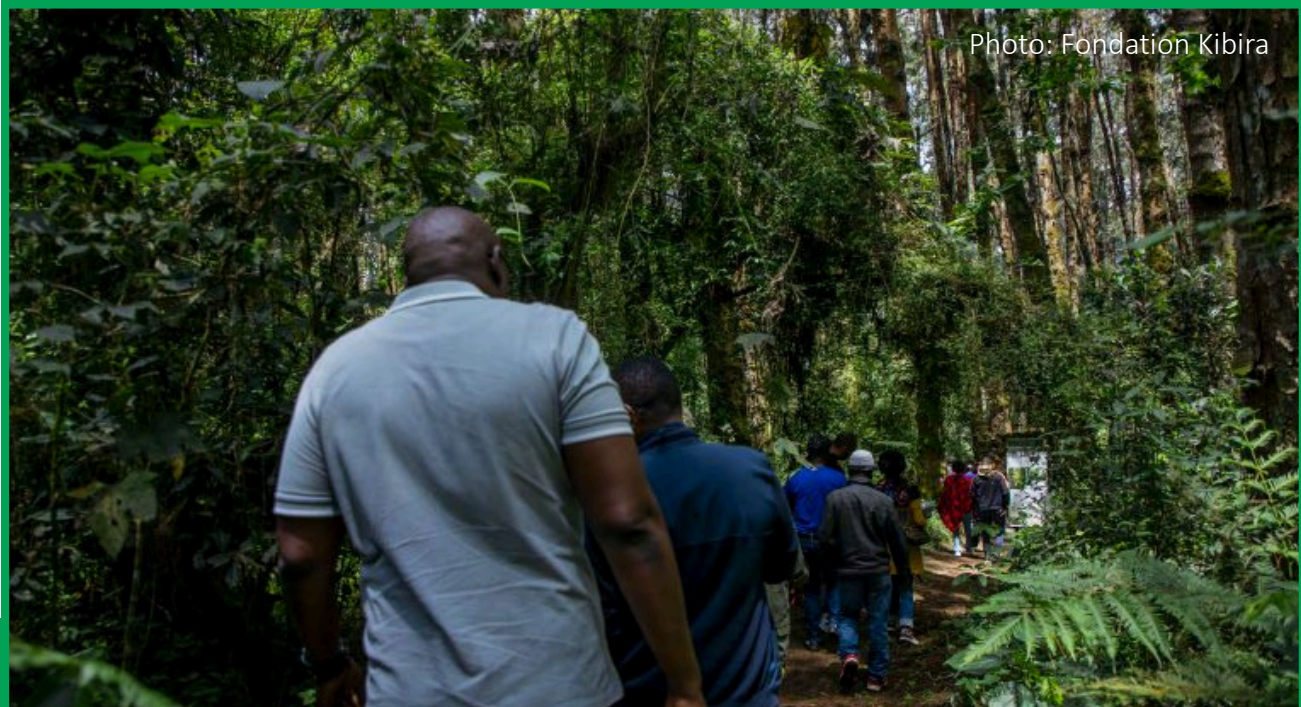


Photo: UNDP



# Kibira Forest Sanctuaries

## Burundi



The Kibira Forest Sanctuaries Programme is a flagship blended-finance and peacebuilding initiative designed to secure the long-term conservation of Kibira National Park in Burundi. The programme addresses the interlinked challenges of environmental degradation, socio-economic vulnerability, and institutional fragility.

Situated within the Albertine Rift, Kibira National Park is a critical montane forest ecosystem providing essential water regulation, climate resilience, and biodiversity, yet it has long been under pressure from population growth, land scarcity, and limited economic alternatives. The NIF-funded programme responds to these pressures by (1) strengthening governance through the Fondation Kibira, (2) empowering surrounding communities, particularly Batwa and women, as conservation partners, and (3) piloting innovative finance mechanisms such as Payment for Ecosystem Services and eco-tourism investment pipelines. By integrating conservation, social cohesion, and nature-positive investment, the programme lays the foundation upon which the measurable achievements and progress realized in 2025 were built.



# Key Achievements & Activities

This year the Kibira Forest Sanctuaries Programme in Burundi delivered strong progress in consolidating an integrated peace conservation investment model for the long-term protection of Kibira National Park. Implemented by UNCDF with local partners Communities of Hope (COH) and Conservation, Communautés de Changement (3C), and supported by the NIF, the programme moved decisively into a consolidation and scale-readiness phase, strengthening governance structures, deepening community engagement, and advancing sustainable financing mechanisms for conservation.

## 1 Further Operationalization of Fondation Kibira

A central achievement in 2025 was the operationalization of the Fondation Kibira as a formal co-management partner alongside the national environmental authority, Office Burundais pour la Protection de L'Environnement (OBPE), reinforced by a tripartite agreement with the Ministries of Environment and Tourism to align conservation and sustainable tourism development around Kibira National Park.

- Strengthened dialogue platforms and 119 Community Protection Committees (20 Batwa and 45 women) helped improve relations between eco-guards and surrounding populations leading to reduced tensions and higher participation in local decision-making processes.
- More than 120 beneficiaries, including eco-guards, Fondation Kibira staff, and youth leaders received trainings on areas related to biodiversity monitoring, eco-tourism management, digital data collection, and financial management.

These capacity building initiatives are vital for long-term conservation, solidifying local stewardship.



# 119

Community  
Protection Committees



# 120

Local  
Beneficiaries

Photos: Fondation Kibira



## 2 Ecological and Landscape Restoration

In terms of ecological and landscape restoration, the programme achieved tangible results through expanded biodiversity monitoring and agroforestry restoration.

- GPS- and Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART)-based monitoring tools were deployed to strengthen chimpanzee and wildlife protection, improving data quality and patrol coordination, while strengthening the ability of conservation teams to protect their habitat.
- In parallel, a women’s led nursery and a local-run nursery produced **45,000** seedlings (including Grevillea, avocado, and bamboo), enabling agroforestry planting across **144** hectares of farmland and benefiting **673** households, thereby reducing pressure on forest resources while improving soil conservation and farm productivity.

These activities directly linked conservation objectives with livelihood resilience in buffer-zone communities.



**144** Hectares of farmland



**673** Households supported



**45K** Seedlings produced



**2** Community- led plant nurseries



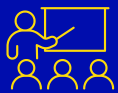
# 3

## Emerging Ecotourism Destination

Kibira continues to be positioned as an emerging ecotourism destination. UNESCO is in the process of designating Kibira National Park as a Biosphere Reserve and a potential World Heritage Site.

- Throughout the process, **30** experts have been trained, **5** trainers have been certified, and **8** training sessions have been held across **5** field missions.
- Of note, significant procedural development for site designation has taken place since the last reporting period. Under the current procedures of the World Heritage Convention, States Parties are now required to undertake a Preliminary Assessment before a full nomination can be considered.

Consequently, efforts have shifted towards preparing this Preliminary Assessment, which will enable a structured evaluation of the site’s potential Outstanding Universal Value and inform the pathway for a possible future nomination.



**30** Experts trained



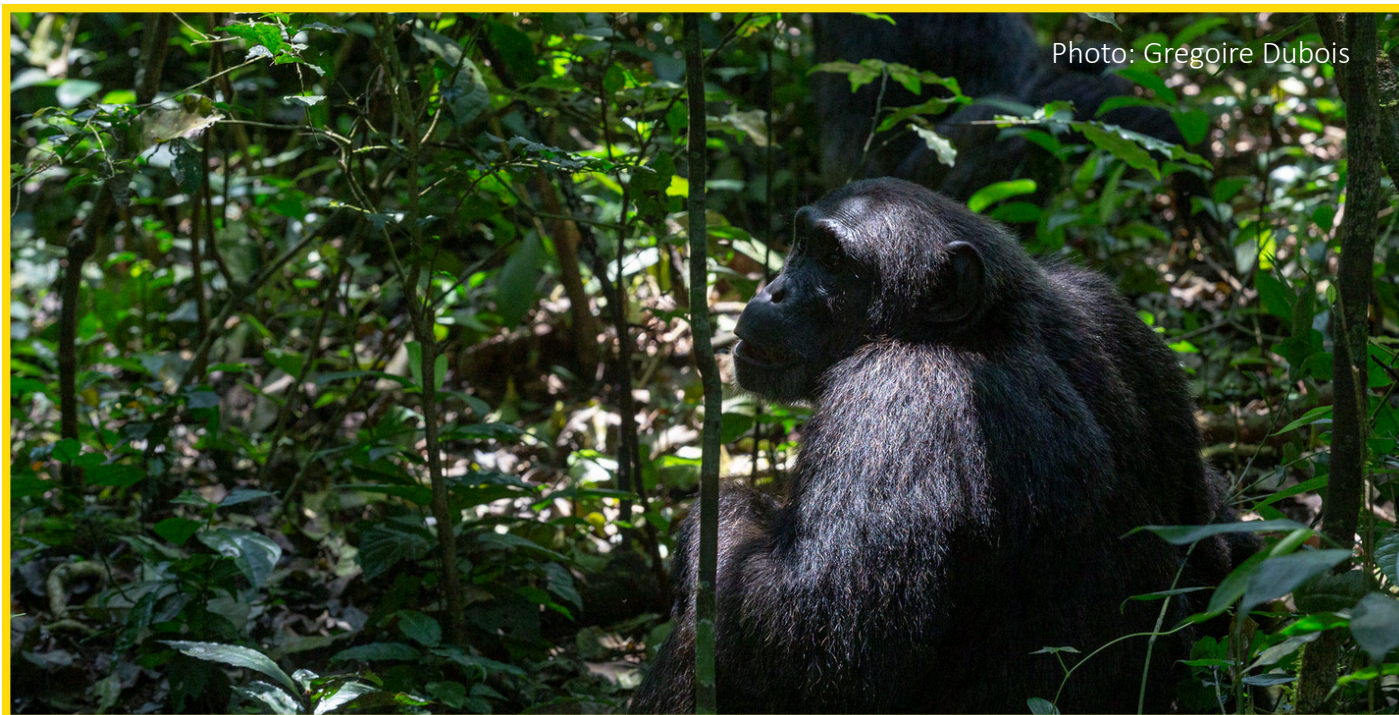
**8** Training sessions



**5** Trainers certified



**5** Field missions



## 4

### Innovative Financing

A major milestone in financial sustainability and co-financing was the full operationalisation of Burundi's first Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) mechanism, under a **10-year** agreement between Hydroneo and the Fondation Kibira, providing **USD 150,000** per year to support park protection, restoration, and community development.

- This stable revenue stream represents a significant step toward reducing dependence on grant funding and demonstrates the viability of blended finance approaches in fragile contexts.
- In addition, feasibility studies and architectural designs for eco-lodges and visitor facilities were launched, creating a concrete pipeline for future private-sector investment in sustainable tourism aligned with conservation goals.



Photo: UNDP

## Uplifting Marginalised Communities

The programme also made significant advances in social cohesion, inclusion, and livelihoods, particularly for historically marginalised Batwa communities.

- Livelihood diversification initiatives supported **170 cooperative members (33 Batwa and 76 women)** across **12 villages**, while **130 Batwa households** received targeted assistance for land access and income-generating activities.
- Women and Batwa participation in community governance structures increased, with Batwa representation reaching **16.8%** in local protection committees.
- Cultural and environmental education activities reached thousands of community members and schoolchildren through the Mwokora Cultural Centre, reinforcing trust-building and long-term stewardship of the forest.



## Challenges & Opportunities

Despite strong progress, the programme faces structural and contextual challenges, including land pressure driven by population growth, risks of illegal resource use, and the broader fragility of the regional security and development financing environment. These factors require continued attention to inclusive governance, livelihood alternatives, and phased expansion to manage rising expectations from neighbouring communities.

At the same time, the success of the PES mechanism, growing investor confidence in eco-tourism, strengthened institutional coordination, and increased community trust present significant opportunities for scaling and replication. The Kibira programme model now stands as a compelling national demonstration of how conservation, peacebuilding, and nature-positive investment can be jointly advanced, with strong potential to inform similar approaches in other protected and fragile landscapes in Burundi and beyond.



Photo: Fondation Kibira



# Tiger Landscapes Programme Thailand & Malaysia

Photo: Gaurav Gupta



Officially launched in 2025 at the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development, the Tiger Landscapes Investment Facility (TLIF) is a blended finance initiative dedicated to biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable livelihoods across critical tiger landscapes. The TLIF responds to the persistent financing gap facing conservation-friendly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by combining pipeline development support, technical assistance, and targeted de-risking instruments to enable financial institutions to invest in nature-positive business models.

TLIF began operations in Thailand and Malaysia, where scoping studies and stakeholder consultations laid the foundation for investments in sectors such as sustainable agriculture, non-timber forest products, ecotourism, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, and biodiversity technologies. By aligning conservation outcomes with viable economic returns, TLIF is designed as a scalable platform to support tiger recovery while strengthening local economies and offering a replicable blueprint for biodiversity finance across additional landscapes and countries.



# Thailand

In 2025, the Tiger Landscapes Programme in Thailand advanced a dual-track approach combining community-led conservation governance with nature-positive finance mobilization, reinforcing Thailand's position as a regional leader in tiger recovery. Thailand's Western Forest Complex (WEFCOM) hosts approximately **200** wild tigers, making it a critical regional blueprint for species recovery.

## Key Achievements & Activities

Key achievements in 2025 included the integration of inclusive governance mechanisms and the completion of TLIF scoping studies. TLIF undertook a comprehensive multi-stakeholder scoping study to identify key financing gaps and investment opportunities. The insights from this study are being used to inform the design of a catalytic guarantee facility to engage 35 organizations across government, civil society, financial institutions, regulators, academia, and business associations, complemented by field visits to community enterprises to deepen understanding of local challenges and opportunities. Negotiations were initiated with a domestic financial institution partner, alongside the launch of a "missing middle" study to unlock medium-sized enterprises with conservation impact. A low-value grant mechanism for MSME pipeline development was also designed for rollout in early 2026.





UNESCO, in partnership with the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, formalized national coordination arrangements under Thailand's 2025 Ethnic Protection Act, identifying two pilot "Special Cultural Zones" in Sanesong Village (Kanchanaburi) and Mae Chanta (Tak). These sites were selected to demonstrate how traditional rotational farming systems and cultural land-use practices can simultaneously strengthen livelihoods, conserve biodiversity, and contribute to carbon sequestration. Although field implementation is scheduled to begin in 2026, 2025 established the legal, institutional, and stakeholder foundations for community co-management, including engagement pathways through Protected Area Committees and commitments to increase women's and youth participation.

## Malaysia



In 2025, the Tiger Landscapes Programme in Malaysia primarily focused on establishing the enabling conditions for biodiversity finance. Centered on the Greater Taman Negara Landscape, the programme responded to the urgent need to address economic drivers of habitat loss and declining tiger populations by mobilizing finance for conservation-friendly MSMEs. Led by UNDP and UNCDF, activities concentrated on market scoping, stakeholder alignment, and facility design adaptation.



A major milestone was the completion of a national scoping study and multi-stakeholder consultations in Q4 2025. The study engaged government stakeholders, financial sector regulators, banks, NGOs, and enterprise support organizations, identifying significant biodiversity financing gaps despite Malaysia's relatively mature financial ecosystem. Two potential partner financial institutions and several pipeline development NGOs were identified, particularly in ecotourism, community-based enterprise development, and biodiversity conservation value chains. The process generated strong government interest, while also confirming that biodiversity finance remains an emerging and under-institutionalized field within mainstream financial operations.

A key achievement in Malaysia was the strategic adaptation of the TLIF design to align with national financial infrastructure. Unlike other pilot countries, Malaysia already operates well-established public credit guarantee mechanisms, notably through the Credit Guarantee Corporation (CGC). In response, the programme shifted from introducing stand-alone guarantees toward leveraging existing schemes, focusing instead on capitalization grants and targeted technical assistance to help financial institutions integrate biodiversity criteria into lending decisions. This adaptive approach enhanced country ownership and increased the likelihood of long-term sustainability and scalability.

## Challenges & Opportunities

Across Thailand and Malaysia, the TLIF faced a similar set of structural, ecological, and market-related challenges in 2025, even as enabling conditions for long-term impact continued to strengthen.

From an ecological perspective, poaching and prey depletion remain critical risks, particularly in Thailand's Western Forest Complex, where commercial snaring networks, cross-border pressures, and human disturbance continue to threaten tiger recovery gains. These risks are compounded by climate variability and land-use pressures that reduce habitat quality and prey availability.

In both countries, unresolved land tenure issues and historical mistrust between authorities and local communities pose ongoing governance risks, despite recent policy advances designed to address these gaps.



From a financial and institutional standpoint, the principal challenge in 2025 was the pace of engagement with financial institutions. In both Thailand and Malaysia, potential partner banks require extended internal consultations to integrate biodiversity considerations into lending operations, resulting in long negotiation timelines. Biodiversity finance remains a relatively new and niche area compared to climate finance, and most institutions lack established biodiversity screening tools or risk frameworks. In addition, the limited number of organizations capable of supporting pipeline development for conservation-friendly MSMEs, particularly those with both enterprise finance and biodiversity expertise, constrains the speed at which investable projects can be generated. Internal staffing transitions within the programme further increased coordination demands during the year.

At the same time, significant opportunities emerged in both countries. In Thailand, progressive legal frameworks, including the National Parks Act and the 2025 Ethnic Protection Act, create scope to operationalize community co-management models, shifting conservation from enforcement-led approaches toward inclusive governance that strengthens both biodiversity outcomes and livelihoods. In Malaysia, the presence of well-established national credit guarantee mechanisms, such as the Credit Guarantee Corporation, provides a strong foundation for embedding biodiversity considerations within mainstream MSME finance, reducing the need to create parallel systems from scratch. In both contexts, strong government interest, growing private-sector awareness, and increasing recognition of nature-positive value chains offer clear pathways for scaling impact from 2026 onward.





## Expansion of the TLIF

Building on the foundational work completed in Thailand and Malaysia in 2025, the TLIF is now positioned to transition from scoping and design into active deployment and geographic expansion. In both pilot countries, the completion of scoping studies, the development of MSME eligibility frameworks, and early engagement with financial institutions have established the core architecture of the blended finance model. From 2026, TLIF will focus on formalizing partnerships with financial institutions, operationalizing de-risking instruments (including guarantees and capitalization grants adapted to national contexts), and deploying targeted technical assistance to strengthen MSME investment readiness.



Photo: Gaurav Gupta



Photo: UNDP



Photo: Gaurav Gupta

Beyond Thailand and Malaysia, TLIF is expanding to Bhutan and Nepal, where pre-scoping and resource mobilization completed in 2025 confirmed strong demand for a comparable biodiversity finance facility. Together, these efforts position TLIF as a replicable regional platform for mobilizing private and public capital into tiger landscapes, progressively building a pipeline of nature-positive programmes while offering a scalable blueprint for biodiversity finance that can be adapted to other high-biodiversity landscapes globally.

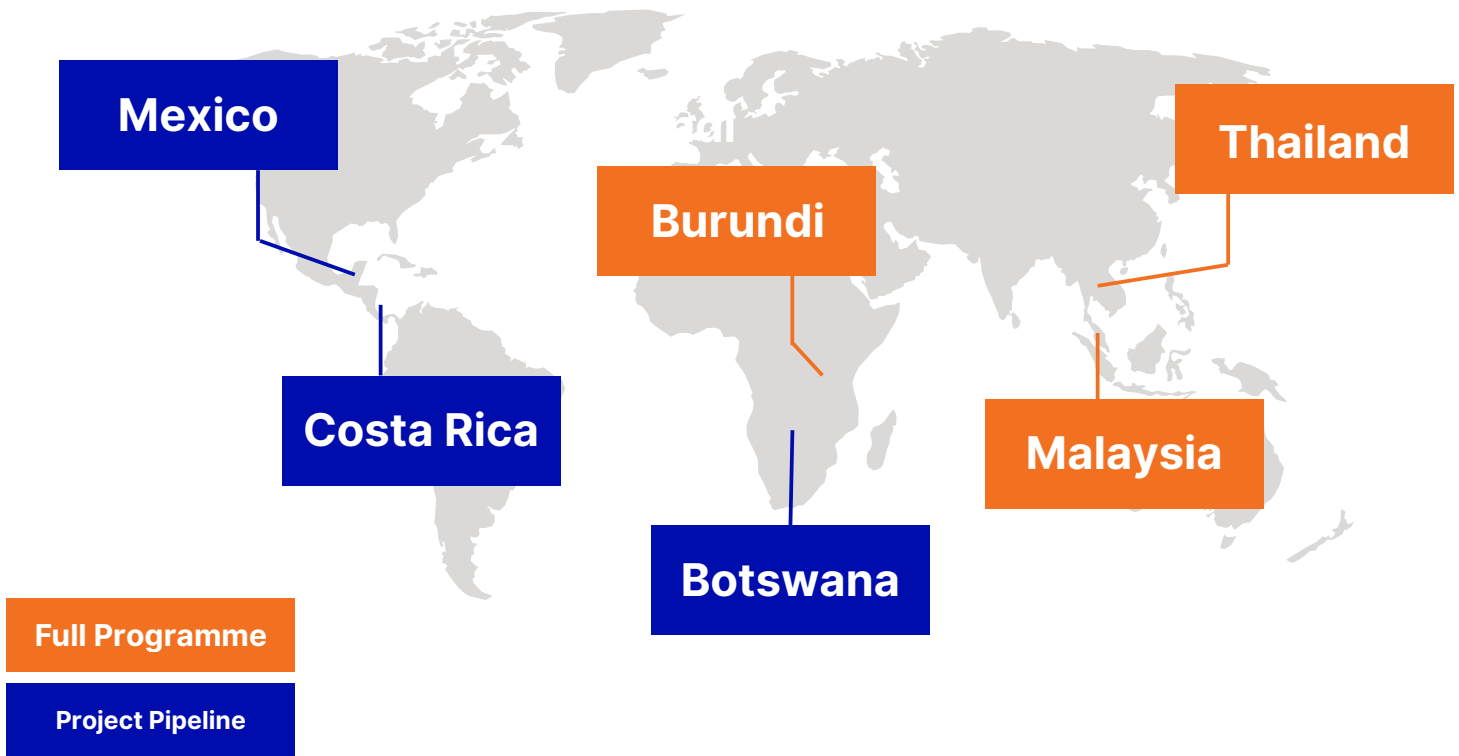


Figure 2: Displays NIF's portfolio of programmes and project pipeline

# Project Pipeline

## Co-Financed

Through UNDP's Funding Window (FW)\*, USD 800,000 of co-financing was secured from the Governments of Denmark, Luxembourg, and the Republic of Korea, to support foundational activities across three pipeline projects. These projects leverage existing efforts in each country while focusing on scaling impact and introducing innovative financial instruments to ensure sustainability.

\*UNDP's Funding Window is a co-financing mechanism through which donor governments provide supplementary, earmarked contributions to support targeted programme activities. These resources complement core programme funding and are designed to catalyse early-stage investments and accelerate results.



# 1

## Nature-focused investments for the inclusive development of the Cubango-Okavango River Basin (CORB) Fund

The project focuses on the Okavango River Basin, aiming to operationalize the CORB Fund and scoping innovative funding mechanisms. Implemented by UNDP in close coordination with basin and national institutions, the project focuses on strengthening the enabling environment, governance architecture, and financing readiness required to unlock scalable, inclusive nature-positive investments. Rather than pursuing immediate downstream financing, the initiative is deliberately sequenced to prioritize institutional alignment, financing architecture design, and transboundary coordination. This lays the foundations for long-term investment flows that support biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, climate-resilient livelihoods, and integrated water resource management across the basin.

### Key Achievements & Activities

The project made substantive upstream progress toward establishing the systems needed to mobilize future nature-positive investments. A major achievement was the successful development and endorsement of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)-8 Project Identification Form (PIF) for the CORB Fund, which provides a strategic financing and governance platform aligned with the revised Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) Agreement. This milestone strengthened institutional readiness for the operationalization of the CORB Fund, clarified future grant financing pathways, and improved coordination among national institutions, basin authorities, and international partners. FW resources also supported the procurement of key technical human resources, enhanced stakeholder engagement mechanisms, and integrated gender-responsive and inclusive financing principles into programme design. Across the broader flagship, Botswana contributed to outcomes reaching **1,055** people through stakeholder engagement and readiness processes, and to the preparation of **26** enterprises across countries for future nature-positive investment support. These results reflect planned, sequential progress toward long-term systemic impact rather than immediate financial deployment. While large-scale investments and enterprise financing have not yet commenced, these planned and deliberate actions substantially increased readiness for inclusive, scalable nature-positive investment implementation in subsequent phases.



# 1

## Nature-focused investments for the inclusive development of the Cubango-Okavango River Basin Fund

### Adaptive Management

Progress in 2025 was shaped by both sequencing-related and external challenges. Implementation pace was affected by delays in recruiting critical technical staff and ensuring that Responsible Partner arrangements were fully in place prior to roll-out, which temporarily slowed downstream activity initiation. More broadly, the initiative faced a tightening development finance context, including the loss of anticipated USAID funding, which reduced flexibility and reinforced the importance of diversified financing strategies. In response, the project adapted by prioritizing financing architecture development, partner alignment, and catalytic readiness activities that could proceed despite constrained resources. FW support proved especially valuable in this context, enabling UNDP to maintain momentum, sustain government confidence—including issuance of Letters of Endorsement for the OKACOM programme—and position the CORB Fund to crowd in future public and private financing. These adaptations strengthened resilience to funding volatility while preserving the long-term investment ambition of the initiative.





## 2 Hybrid Finance: Investing in the Sustainability and Connectivity of Yucatan Peninsula's WHS

This project targets the Sian Ka'an and Calakmul World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves within the Yucatan Peninsula, to drive a transformative shift in landscape management and biodiversity conservation. Implemented through UNDP's Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) in collaboration with national and sub-national partners, the project focuses on addressing structural financing gaps for biodiversity and climate action by designing innovative financial mechanisms that connect conservation objectives with community livelihoods. The initiative is deliberately positioned upstream, emphasizing policy alignment, financial architecture design, and partnership building, to enable scalable investments in community-based tourism, sustainable forestry, and climate-resilient livestock systems, while aligning with Mexico's National Biodiversity Strategy (ENBIOMEX) priorities.

### Key Achievements & Activities

In 2025, the Mexico programme delivered substantive catalytic results, advancing from conceptual design to concrete investment pathways. Two innovative financial mechanisms were designed:

- 1. A state-level environmental compensation mechanism in Campeche, establishing a regulatory basis to channel private-sector compensation toward biodiversity-positive investments
- 2. A community-based climate resilience fund for tourism cooperatives, developed with the UNDP Small Grants Programme and embedded within the Yucatán Peninsula Community Tourism Network.

Together, these mechanisms are expected to mobilize at least **USD 300,000** in subsequent phases and directly benefit five cooperatives, with wider spillover effects across the corridor.



Photo: UNDP



## 2 Hybrid Finance: Investing in the Sustainability and Connectivity of Yucatan Peninsula's WHS

In parallel, the project supported the development of a nature-positive investment pipeline across three key sectors. In the Balam Beh tourism corridor, covering 29 communities, businesses and infrastructure were mapped to design a community-based tourism model aligned with conservation objectives. In forestry, collaboration with the Dziuché ejido in Quintana Roo strengthened governance and business readiness for biodiversity markets, including engagement with private-sector partners such as Iberostar. In sustainable livestock, preparatory work began with at least 15 producers to improve practices and reduce deforestation pressure. Across these actions, 26 enterprises are positioned to benefit, with indirect benefits for approximately 11,000 people. Capacity -building efforts, including training on carbon and biodiversity markets, are expected to benefit around 1,000 people, at least half of them women, reflecting the programme's inclusive and gender -responsive design.

### Adaptive Management

Implementation in 2025 encountered operational and contextual challenges typical of early -stage initiatives. The relatively short implementation period for the FW's grant, combined with administrative procurement timelines, often requiring several months for consultancy contracting, limited the transition from design to full implementation within the reporting period. The scale and institutional complexity of the Sian Ka'an–Calakmul corridor, encompassing multiple communities, sectors, and governance arrangements with varying readiness levels, further constrained rapid rollout. In some areas, security considerations linked to illicit activities required cautious field engagement and adaptive planning.

In response, the project intentionally shifted toward high-impact preparatory actions, prioritizing financial mechanism design, governance platform strengthening, and partnership alignment rather than short-term quantitative delivery. Many targeted community enterprises remain at early stages of organizational and financial consolidation; accordingly, the programme focused on building enabling conditions and investment pipelines that can be scaled in subsequent phases. This adaptive approach has preserved momentum, strengthened institutional buy-in at state and community levels, and positioned Mexico's NIF project as a credible platform for mobilizing larger-scale public and private financing for nature-positive development beyond 2025.



## 3 Costa Rica's Bioeconomy Impact Accelerator

This project focuses on developing investible, nature positive bioeconomy projects in La Amistad National Park-Biosphere Reserve World Heritage Site Corridor in Costa Rica.

This project focuses on developing investible, nature positive bioeconomy projects in La Amistad National Park-Biosphere Reserve World Heritage Site Corridor in Costa Rica. The NIF supports a flagship initiative to catalyse nature-positive investments through public rural finance reform, with a strong focus on women-led bioeconomy enterprises in high-biodiversity landscapes. Implemented through UNDP-BIOFIN in close partnership with the National Institute of Rural Development (INDER), the programme targets systemic transformation of rural development financing by repurposing public subsidies toward business models that generate measurable biodiversity and livelihood outcomes. The programme is anchored in the Brunca Region, adjacent to globally significant ecosystems such as the Talamanca Mountains and La Amistad Biosphere Reserve, and is strategically positioned to advance Costa Rica's bioeconomy agenda while aligning with national biodiversity, gender equality, and shared prosperity priorities.

### Key Achievements & Activities

Costa Rica advanced the furthest among the NIF pilot countries. A major milestone was the formalization of a Memorandum of Understanding between UNDP and INDER in July 2025, enabling the co-design of the new +Natura, +Rural programme and securing USD 500,000 in public funding for implementation in 2026. This was complemented by extensive capacity building within INDER, including a structured virtual training programme on gender, Indigenous Peoples, and nature-positive finance that reached 61 staff, strengthening institutional readiness to manage the new financing window.





## Upskilling Rural Women

At the community level, the programme generated robust evidence to inform inclusive investment design. A baseline inventory mapped **438** rural women entrepreneurs in the Brunca Region, revealing significant structural barriers to finance and confirming the need for tailored, gender-responsive instruments.

In parallel, **20** Indigenous young women from the Talamanca territories strengthened digital and environmental monitoring capacities through training in drones and satellite imagery, delivered in coordination with the REDD+ Results-Based Payments project.



**It was a very beautiful experience. They taught us applications that many of us didn't know, showed us how to use them, what they are for, and how they can benefit us when we bring this knowledge back to our territory, our communities, and even for personal use. Our project focused on deforestation. We chose this theme because our territory suffers a lot of deforestation due to cattle ranching and farming. We identified the areas that have been most affected over the years and learned how the applications we were given help us monitor and address this issue. That was one of the main objectives of our project.**

***Keren Morales Vargas**, a 15-year-old participant from the Talamanca Cabécar territory*



Photo: UNDP Costa Rica

***Mayra Monge**, a lead instructor at an agro-ecological studies school.*

The +Natura +Rural program is set to be implemented in February 2026. Nevertheless, early-stage results signal a strong potential for future impact as the initiative contributes to national policy dialogue on gender-responsive biodiversity finance and generates knowledge relevant to future Nature+ bioeconomy initiatives under the NIF framework.



# Governance

The NIF held its second in-person Steering Committee (SC) meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. During this meeting, the SC reviewed progress on NIF's active programmes, including an update on the Kibira Forest Sanctuary Programme in Burundi and the Tiger Landscapes Investment Fund, and three pipeline projects that are now under implementation. These programmes are building on existing efforts in each country, with an emphasis on scaling up and developing innovative instruments.

The SC also reviewed the NIF's fund-level financials and resource mobilization strategy, with an emphasis on developing tailored narratives for different donor segments and strengthening engagement with multilateral development banks, philanthropic foundations, and the private sector. The SC meeting also concluded UNESCO's term as Chair of the Committee. Starting in 2026, UNDP will start its 2-year term as Chair of the Committee.



*NIF partners from UNDP, UNCDF, and UNESCO by the Broken Chair sculpture in Geneva's Place des Nations.*

## Secretariat

To strengthen its capacity to deliver on these growing ambitions, the NIF Secretariat recruited a Coordination and Communications Specialist in 2025. This addition bolstered the Global Team's ability to manage partner engagement, prepare governance meetings, and maintain the Facility's external communications and digital presence — functions identified as core secretariat responsibilities under the Facility's Terms of Reference.

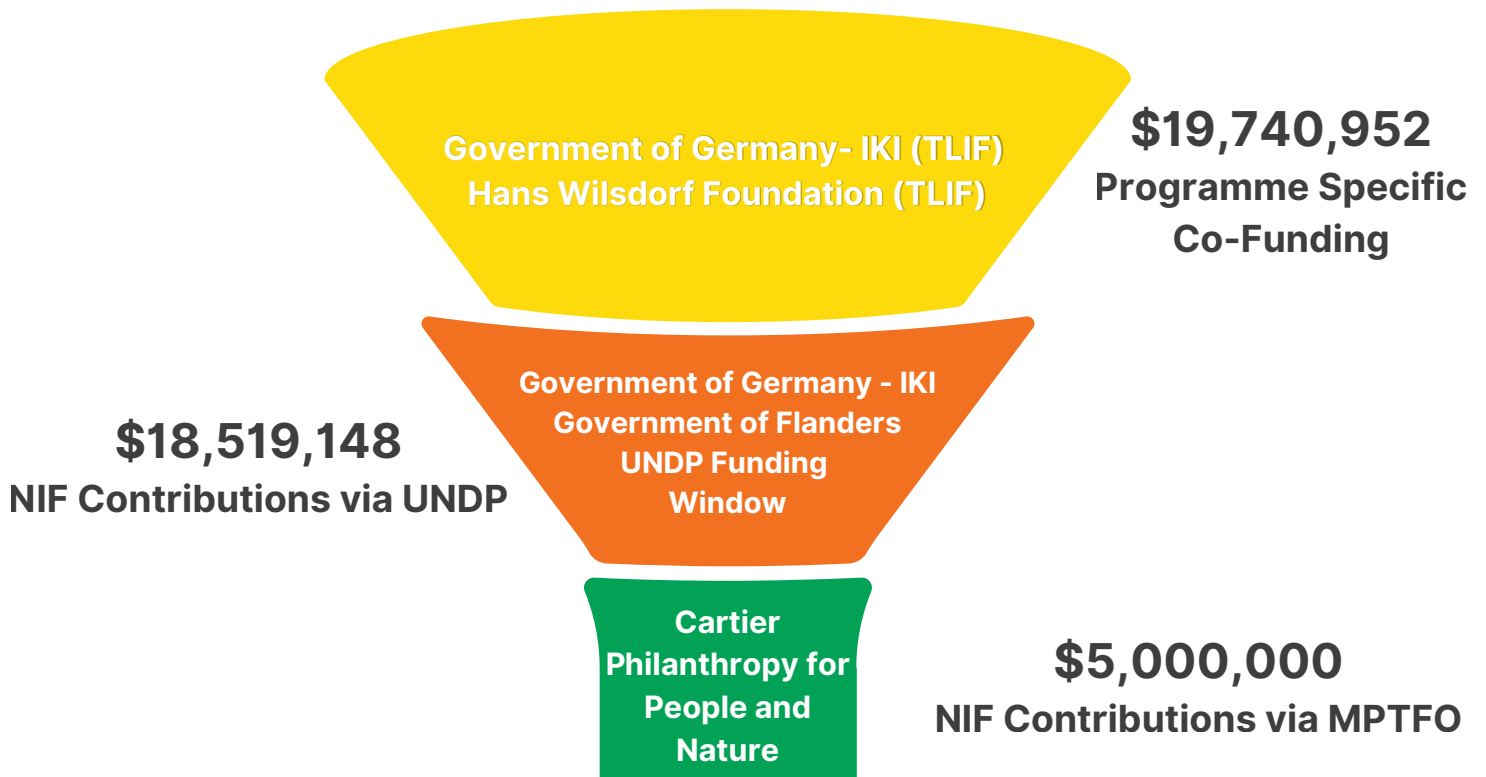
Likewise, the Secretariat continues to monitor and support the ongoing demonstration programmes, as well as pipeline of projects. This includes supporting partners in resource mobilization and partnership development.



# Global Partnerships & Engagement

The NIF welcomed two new donors to the Facility in 2025 via direct contributions to UNDP. Through the Government of Germany's International Climate Initiative (IKI), over USD 17.4 million was secured to support new programming across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Funding will enable the NIF to provide technical assistance and bring projects to an investment-ready stage through activities such as business planning, market access support, nature credits development, and the deployment of first loss guarantees and junior tranches through special purpose vehicles. The NIF also welcomed the Government of Flanders with a contribution of USD 287,828, which will support the core functions of the NIF Secretariat as well as the development of a new pilot project in Africa.

In parallel, co-financing was mobilized to further expand the Tiger Landscapes Investment Facility (TLIF). TLIF welcomed the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation, which provided a USD 6.2 million contribution, complementing the over USD 13.5 million received from the Government of Germany in 2024. With this additional funding, TLIF is expanding its activities into Nepal and Bhutan.





# Communications

## LinkedIn

In 2025, NIF's LinkedIn platform, its main communication platform, gained over 1,300 followers, with posts reaching over 36,000 impressions. LinkedIn has proven to be a vital tool for engaging stakeholders, disseminating key updates, and building a community around nature investments.

Analysis of LinkedIn engagement has provided valuable insights into Facility's audience demographics. The majority of followers come from international affairs (13.9%) and environmental services (13.6%), with strong representation from non-profit organizations (12.3%) and higher education institutions (4.4%). Geographically, NIF has attracted professionals from Paris (3.7%), London (3.2%), New York (2.8%), Geneva (2.3%) followed by cities in Latin America like Lima (2%) and Bogota (2%) and Africa like Kenia (1.7%) Cape Town (1.3%), reflecting the Facility's international reach.



**We believe this Fund can be a game-changer for tiger conservation and community resilience across Asia. We call on other donors and partners to join us on this journey.**

*Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN), Federal Republic of Germany, on the announcement of the Tiger Landscapes Investment Facility.*

## Events

TLIF participated in various events throughout the year, with its inauguration at the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville, Spain. Additionally, the programme was presented at the 6th BIOFIN Global Conference in Chile, Africa Regional Dialogue on Biodiversity Finance in Rwanda, and UNDP's Portfolio Expansion Conference. The NIF also participated in the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Dialogue on Biodiversity Finance in Mexico and met with local stakeholders in the Yucatán region.

## Newsletter

As part of its engagement and transparency efforts, the Secretariat produces an annual newsletter to keep donors and partners informed of key developments. The newsletter highlights donor engagement, program progress, and the evolving project pipeline.



# Looking Forward

Building on our successes in 2025, in 2026, the NIF looks to:



Expand the Tiger Landscapes Facility (TLIF) into Bhutan and Nepal



Develop a new blended finance programme to support several critical landscapes across Africa



Advance a pipeline of investable eco-tourism opportunities around Kibira National Park, Burundi



Engage with global partners and highlight the NIF's growing impact at the upcoming Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP 17

## Connect with us



LinkedIn

**@Nature-Investment-Facility**



Website

**<https://www.undp.org/nature/our-flagship-initiatives/nature-investment-facility>**

MPTFO Transparency Portal

**<https://mptf.undp.org/fund/naf00>**



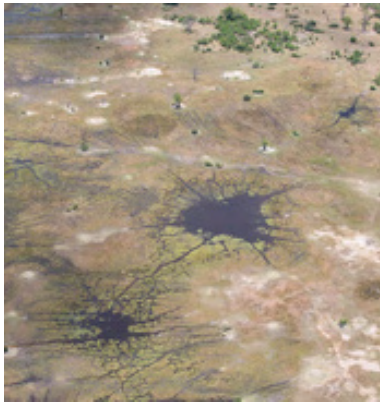
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**Front page: Fernand Nigere/COH, Gaurav Gupta, UNDP**

**Back page: Gregoire Dubois, UNDP**



# Nature Investment Facility



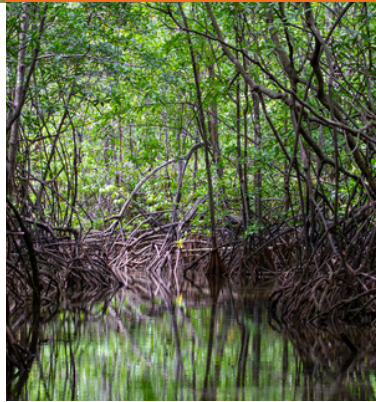
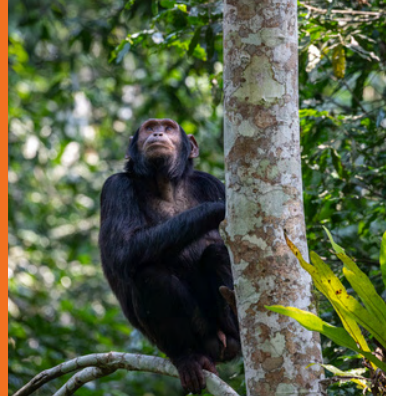
Sustain



Protect



Restore



2025



*Cartier*  
PHILANTHROPY  
FOR PEOPLE & NATURE



2025 ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

# Annexes





# Annex 1: Summary of Resources Mobilized (USD)

via MPTFO	
Cartier Philanthropy for People and Nature	\$5,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>
via UNDP	
Government of Germany - IKI	\$17,431,320
Government of Flanders	\$287,828
UNDP Funding Window	\$800,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,519,148</b>
Programme Level Co-Funding	
Government of Germany (TLIF, via UNDP)	\$13,506,072
Hans Wilsdorf Foundation (TLIF, via UNDP)	\$6,234,880
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,740,952</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$43,260,100</b>