

# Asia Pacific Innovation Fund

BACKING BOLD IDEAS FOR A  
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE





# Why Asia Pacific? Why now?

## THE CHALLENGE

Home to 4.3 billion people, Asia Pacific is the beating heart of global growth—but today, climate change and biodiversity loss are driving us down an uncertain path.

Across the region, large-scale agriculture and illegal logging fuel deforestation. Our seas are overfished and wetlands destroyed by unsustainable development. Warming oceans unleash ever-stronger typhoons onto our shores.

**No other region is more at risk.** Yet Asia Pacific holds the key to global climate and biodiversity goals, with rainforests, mangroves and wetlands storing billions of tons of carbon and sustaining one-fifth of the world's species.

Through its 2030 Global Goals, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is setting bold, science-based targets to tackle climate change and halt biodiversity loss. Achieving these goals requires transformative solutions and the agility to scale them rapidly.

**The Asia Pacific Innovation Fund was created to deliver these solutions to a world that cannot wait.**

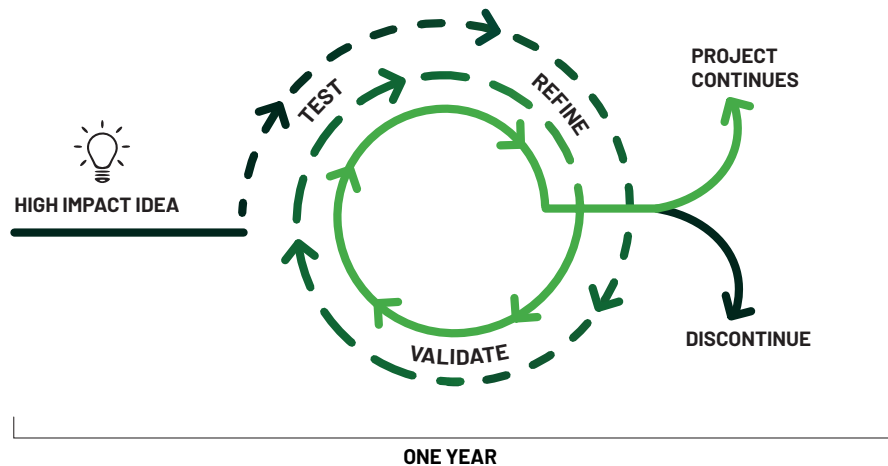


Cover: Alice Oembari conducts field work in a mangrove forest near Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea © Annette Ruzicka; This page: Aerial view of Sikopo, a small island in the Arnavon Islands of Solomon Islands © Robert Taupongi; Right: Mrs. Vira shows off seafood products at the Kedonganan Fish Market, Bali, Indonesia © Lauryn Wachs/TNC

# Asia Pacific Innovation Fund (APIF)

## THE SOLUTION

The Asia Pacific Innovation Fund, or APIF, provides catalytic funding critical to advance new science, technologies and conservation approaches that can unlock bigger impact over the long-term.



### APIF provides funding to:

- **Test and refine early-stage concepts** before committing to multi-year investments.
- **Fill critical evidence gaps** in a project's theory of change, ensuring alignment with regional portfolio priorities.
- **Move fast**—activities must be achievable within one year and fully funded with APIF support.

Some approaches may fail—and that's okay. Our goal is to learn quickly, adapt and lay the groundwork for turning global goals into global wins.

Each year, teams from across the Asia Pacific region apply to APIF for catalytic funding. Every proposal is carefully reviewed by TNC scientists to ensure strong science, clear results and alignment with our 2030 Goals. After this rigorous process, 3 to 4 outstanding projects are selected.

### What we look for

- Strong science and measurable outcomes
- Clear potential to scale and attract additional funding
- Active local ownership and community benefits
- Alignment with TNC's 2030 Goals

“

I've seen firsthand how an observation in the field becomes a thread we follow, revealing solutions we hadn't seen before. Once we do the science and gather the evidence, TNC's talented staff, sophisticated organization, and bold, committed supporters swing behind it to quite literally leave the world a different, better place.

**Eddie Game**  
Lead Scientist, Asia Pacific



Eddie Game in the Wehea Kelay forest © Arhaus/Peter Larson

# Asia Pacific Innovation Fund 2024-2025: Impact at a Glance

## NATURE FOR WATER

### **Water Security for Millions**

#### *Why It Matters*

Asia Pacific faces mounting water stress driven by climate change, population growth, urbanization and pollution. Rivers such as the Mekong and Yangtze are under intense development pressure. Increasing droughts and floods are widening the gap between water demand and supply—a shortfall projected to reach 40 percent by 2030.

#### *What APIF Supporters Made Possible*

- Groundwork for a regional Nature for Water (N4W) facility—part of TNC’s global initiative to scale nature-based solutions that protect freshwater sources, such as wetland restoration and upstream reforestation.
- Feasibility study for the Ghod River Water Fund, which could safeguard water for 4.5 million people and 200 industries.



#### *What’s Next*

Establish a regional hub to scale nature-based water solutions in China, India and Indonesia.

#### *Scaling Potential*

Once established, a regional N4W hub could provide technical support and accelerate freshwater projects, benefiting millions of people across Asia Pacific.

## AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

### **Wetlands: Nature’s Carbon Engine**

#### *Why It Matters*

New Zealand has lost 90 percent of its wetlands—ecosystems that store four times more carbon than forests and shield homes from storms. Restoring them is vital to protect people, livelihoods and climate resilience. Securing pathways to finance this restoration is essential to achieving scale.

#### *What APIF Supporters Made Possible*

- Field research at seven sites to close critical knowledge gaps on blue carbon potential.
- Financial models for blue carbon credits to test pathways for scalable climate finance.
- Policy report to inform national frameworks and enable future investment, developed with the Ministry for the Environment.

- Strengthened partnerships with iwi, local government and communities to ensure local ownership and co-design of solutions.

#### *What’s Next*

With partners, restore 500 hectares by 2030, which could sequester 1,000 tonnes of carbon annually—equivalent to taking 800 cars off the road each year— and benefit over 900 people through coastal protection and livelihood opportunities.

#### *Scaling Potential*

Long term, this model could help restore 40,000 hectares of degraded wetlands—an area about the size of Detroit—across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Left: Standing in water during the Chatth Puja Festival © Amish Jain/TNC Photo Contest 2022; The Pūkoro Mirānda intertidal area is listed as an internationally important wetland under the Ramsar Convention, but has suffered substantial erosion due to climate change and past agricultural use © Lauryn Wachs/TNC



## HONG KONG, SHENZHEN & BEYOND Building Urban Resilience

### Why It Matters

China's Greater Bay Area (GBA)—home to 86 million people across Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and nine other cities—is highly vulnerable to rising seas and stronger typhoons, all exacerbated by the loss of natural buffers that protect people and assets.

### What APIF Supporters Made Possible

- Launch of the GBA Resilience Accelerator in collaboration with Columbia University to integrate nature-based solutions (NbS) into urban planning, including reef restoration and flood resilience strategies.

### What's Next

Test real-world applications and scale nature-based solutions across Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area, such as restoring coastal wetlands to reduce flooding.

### Scaling Potential

Success here could create a blueprint for integrating nature-based solutions into urban planning across Asia's megacities.

## CHINA

### Places for Wildlife and People

#### Why It Matters

China is expanding its national park network to 110 million hectares by 2035—creating one of the largest protected area systems in the world. These parks are critical for climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable livelihoods. Optimizing their management will ensure benefits for both people and nature.

#### What APIF Supporters Made Possible

- Ecological planning training for managers of five existing parks.
- Habitat innovations—construction of 46 artificial panda dens in areas where dens had been lost and restoration of forest corridors to reconnect isolated panda populations.
- Advancement of two parks toward formal designation to accelerate protection at scale.



### What's Next

Strengthen China's protected area system to enhance biodiversity and climate resilience—with the potential to impact 23 million hectares and improve livelihoods for communities living in and around these landscapes.

### Scaling Potential

Long term, this approach could help optimize management across 110 million hectares of national parks—an area nearly twice the size of France.

Left to right: Mangroves near Pak Nai in Hong Kong's Deep Bay area represent a vital natural defense from violent storms © Derek Tang; Jiuzhai Valley National Park © iStock; A giant panda emerges from an artificial den in Sichuan's Giant Panda National Park © Dujiangyan Station of the Giant Panda National Park

## Why Your Support Matters

Your gift fuels innovation and opens new frontiers—and we're thrilled to have you on this journey with us. APIF supporters receive the following:

- An annual impact report showcasing the projects you make possible.
- Regular updates on progress and breakthroughs.
- Behind-the-scenes opportunities to engage with TNC scientists and conservation leaders.

## Join us

By supporting APIF, you help us take smart risks and back innovative approaches that spark breakthroughs to protect nature, stabilize our climate and create a future where people and nature thrive across Asia Pacific and around the world.

## Contact

**Jennifer Yoon**

Director of Development, Asia Pacific (Hong Kong)

[jennifer.yoon@tnc.org](mailto:jennifer.yoon@tnc.org)