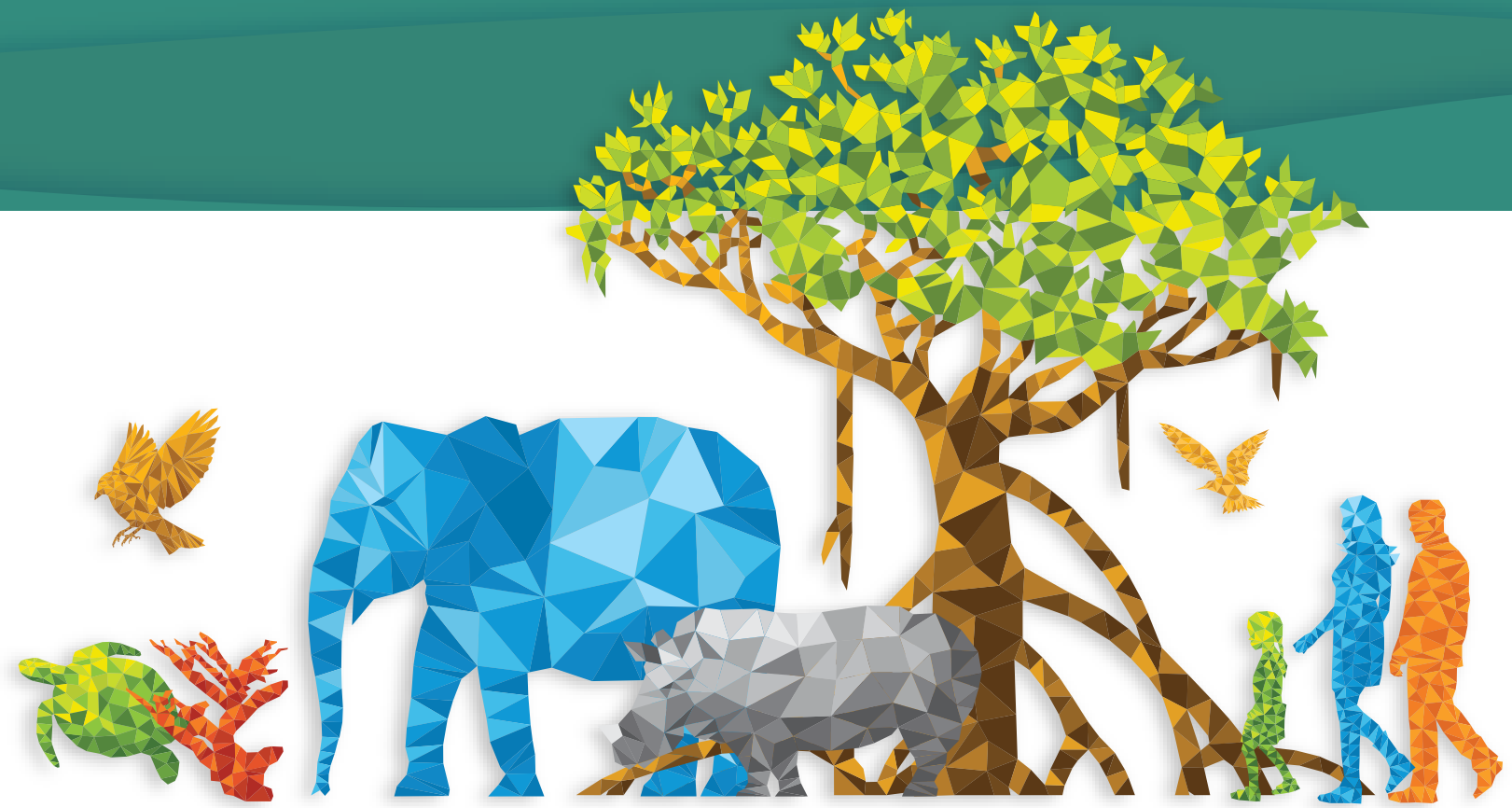
*The views expressed in this presentation are the views of the author/s and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Asian Development Bank, or its Board of Governors, or the governments they represent. ADB does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this presentation and accepts no responsibility for any consequence of their use. The countries listed in this presentation do not imply any view on ADB's part as to sovereignty or independent status or necessarily conform to ADB's terminology.*

# RCI Conference 2026
## Nature and Environment



**Yoko Watanabe**

Director, Nature and Environment

CCSD

ADB

# Nature for Development:
## Advancing Economic Growth, Livelihoods, and Resilience

**75% of Asia–Pacific's economy (about $21 trillion) depends on nature**

- ❑ Global biodiversity funding gap stands at about **$942 billion annually**
- ❑ Ecosystem services generate substantial economic value and deliver multiple benefits
- ❑ Nature-positive development can unlock over **$10 trillion in business opportunities** and create **400 million jobs** by 2030
- ❑ Nature-based solutions can **cost up to 50% less** than traditional infrastructure
- ❑ Coral reefs avoid millions in infrastructure damage yearly across Pacific island economies

Source: APCR 2025



# Nature and Environment: Approach and Programs

***Triple Planetary Crisis***

- BIODIVERSITY LOSS and ECOSYSTEM DEGRADATION
- POLLUTION
- CLIMATE CHANGE

***Global agreements***

- MDB Joint Statement on Nature
- Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- Multilateral Environmental Agreements
- Paris Climate Agreement

***ADB approaches***

- Increase Nature-Positive Investments
- Mainstream Nature and Environmental Sustainability in Sector Investments

***ADB Environment Action Pillars***

**BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT**

- Ocean and Coastal Management
- Terrestrial Ecosystem Management

**POLLUTION CONTROL & CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

- Air Quality
- Circular Economy

**NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS**

- Nature-based Solutions/ Green Infrastructure
- Environment Finance

**Strategic Operational Support | Knowledge Management & Innovation | Human & Financial Resource Development**



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# Why Regional Cooperation Matters

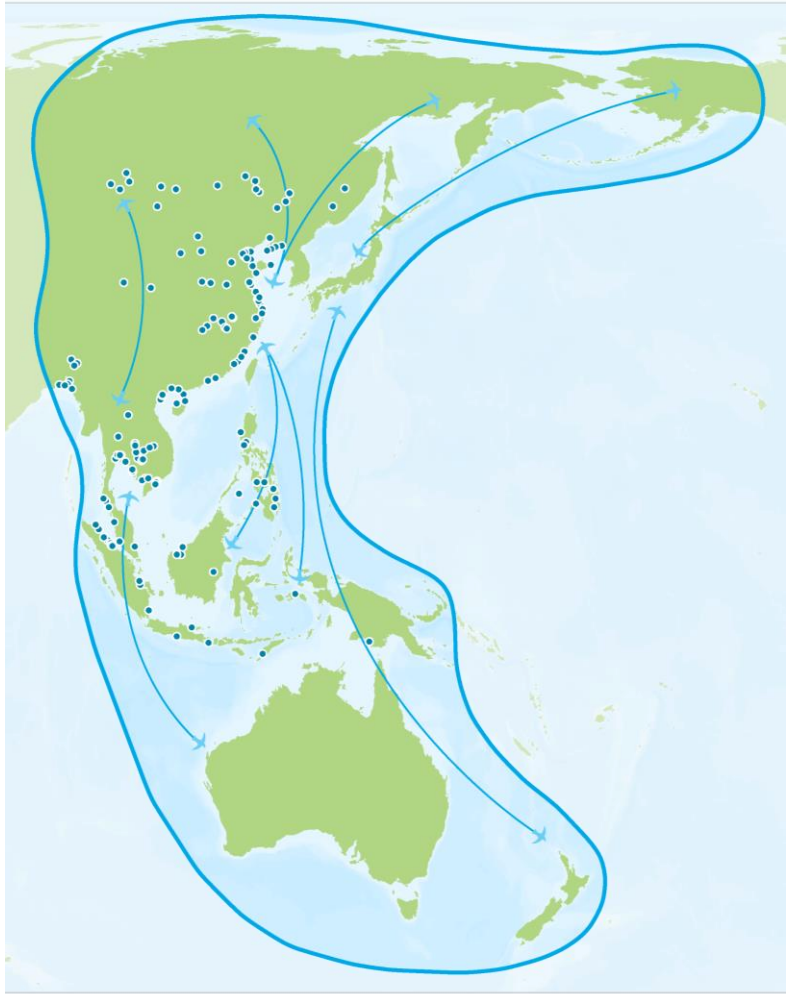
## Many Environmental Challenges Transcend National Borders

| Challenge | | Why Regional Cooperation Matters |
|---|---|---|
| Biodiversity |  | species and migratory routes span many countries |
| Ocean |  | connected seas need joint action on pollution, fisheries and coasts |
| Air Pollution |  | pollutants cross borders, so monitoring and policy must too |
| Nature Finance Gap |  | regional platforms pool capital and replicate what works |

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# Regional Flyway Initiative

- **Keys Partners.** BirdLife International, the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP)
- **Coverage.** 11 ADB developing member countries (DMCs) in the EAAF including Bangladesh, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam
- **Technical Assistance.** $2.6 million total grant from ADB (including GEF project preparation grant)
- **Capacity Building.** Ecosystem services assessment in 5 DMCs and nature credits case studies in 3 DMCs
- **Funding Opportunities.** Blended concessional / grant finance window, key to scaling up and government buy-in (e.g., Global Flyways Grant Mechanism)



# RFI Targets and Progress to Date



## $3 Billion Investment

Mobilized for protection and sustainable management of priority sites over next 10 years from 2024

## 147 Priority Sites

Coastal and inland wetlands selected through scientific a methodology with support and data from collaborators

## 50 Site Studies

Pre-feasibility concepts covering 5 countries, ready to take forward for further development to improve management of priority sites

## Regional Cooperation

Aligned to DMCs' commitments (EAAFP Strategic Plan, UN CBD, Ramsar, CMS, Paris Agreement, UNESCO )

## $425 Million Mobilized

As of December 2025
covering 11 RFI sites

## Sustainable Coastal and Marine Fisheries Project

First RFI linked project in Cambodia, covering Koh Kapik Ramsar Site ($350,000 | 2023)

## Hunan South Dongting Lake Project

First dedicated RFI investment and demo project in PRC, covering 12,000 ha restoration of degraded wetland ($150 million loan + cofinancing | 2024)

## Phil Flyway GEF Grant

Nature-based solutions in 3 RFI sites in Philippines ($3 million | 2025)

# Ocean Health, Coastal Resilience, and Sustainable Blue Economies

## Beyond just GDP, oceans and coasts underpin food security, fiscal stability, and regional security.

- **5th** largest economy in the world, if ocean economy were a country (OECD, 2025).
- **71%** of global fisheries and aquaculture production comes from the Asia Pacific (FAO, 2024).

**The risks are rising quickly**. Sea-level rise, storm surges, erosion, ocean warming, pollution, and illegal fishing are weakening that base.

**The consequences are systemic.** Food prices, public finances, trade, and regional security are all exposed.

- **$27B** in today's annual coastal flood damages across Asia and the Pacific could rise to $172B–$199B by 2050 (ADB, 2026).
- **$6B – 10B** in annual losses for the Asia Pacific region from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (WRI, 2019; TRACIT, 2023).

**Under the *Healthy Oceans Action Plan*, ADB committed $5 BILLION** (2019-2025)

### Five pillars of action

- Finance
- Institutional arrangements
- Knowledge and capacity building
- Partnerships
- Operational support and initiatives

### Focus areas

- Blue Economy
- Ecosystem Management
- Pollution Control
- Sustainable Infrastructure

### Projects launched across 30 countries,

including Fiji, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam.

**MAINSTREAMING OCEAN HEALTH**



Wastewater and Sanitation



Agriculture and Water



Solid Waste Management

**GROWING BLUE ECONOMY SECTORS**



Green Maritime Transport



Marine Renewable Energy



Sustainable Coastal Tourism

## ADB Oceans Financing 2019-2026

| 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $278.28 million | $335.09 million | $529.68 million | $900.01 million | $761.1 million | $1.09 billion | $1 billion |

Ocean Finance Framework: Asian Development Bank Ocean Finance Framework (adb.org)

# Blue Economy and Coastal Resilience Programs

## Ocean Resilience and Coastal Adaptation Financing Partnership Facility and Trust Fund

ORCA-TF works to **increase the quantity and quality of investments** in ocean health (including resilience and the blue economy) and coastal adaptation.

**2023**

Established in February 2023 and operationalized in October 2023

**$13M**

In grant commitments from the Nordic Development Fund and the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**10:1**

Co-financing ratio

**$10.55M**

Total allocation to date, supporting 8 projects in Fiji, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Palau, the Philippines and Viet Nam

## ADB BLUE PORTFOLIO: PROJECT EXAMPLES

### Ecosystem management and blue economy

Improving the management and resilience of fisheries across four coastal provinces in **Cambodia.**

Co-financing from ASEAN Infrastructure Fund and AfD

**Total cost: $63M**

### Pollution control

Supporting policy integration of coastal and marine ecosystem management in the **Philippines**, including support for developing circular economy for plastic waste, and natural capital policy and budget measures.

Co-financing from AfD and KfW

**Total cost: 500M**

### Sustainable blue finance

Providing capital to deliver sustainable shrimp procurement, processing and export, training, certification, R&D and sustainability pilots in **Thailand**.

**Total cost: $50M**

**Ocean health, Coastal resilience, blue Economy and Nature (OCEAN) 2027-2032.** Building on ADB's Healthy Oceans Action Plan (2019–2024), this new operational approach will guide ADB's ocean-related operations, with launch planned for 2027.

# Asia Clean Blue Skies Program

Scaling Up Clean Air Investments
in Asia and the Pacific

Launched in 2022 in Suwon, ROK, the ACBSP helps strengthen air quality management by improving policy and regulations, building institutional and technical capacity, mobilizing finance, and preparing and implementing investments across transport, energy, industry, agriculture, and urban development

## PILLARS

**1 Strengthen policies, plans, and strategies**

Helping governments develop and strengthen clean air policies, action plans, and strategies at national, subnational, and city levels.

**2 Build knowledge and capacity and support regional cooperation**

Strengthening technical expertise, air quality monitoring, institutional capacity, and regional knowledge sharing

**3 Designing investments and financing solutions**

Preparing projects and financing solutions that cut air pollution and deliver climate, health, and development benefits across sectors

## AQ Regional Programs and Investment Projects under preparation

**Financing AQ in ADB Portfolio**

| | Direct AQ benefit | AQ co-benefit | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2022 | **0%** | **25.4%** | **25.4%** |
| 2023 | **5.5%** | **23.8%** | **29.3%** |
| 2024 | **7%** | **20%** | **27%** |
| 2028 Target | **10%** | **40%** | **50%** |

ADB | Urban Resilience Trust Fund | UK International Development — Partnership | Progress | Prosperity | JFJCM Japan Fund for the Joint Crediting Mechanism | From the People of Japan | ASIA CLEAN BLUE SKIES PROGRAM

# The Nature Solutions Finance Hub

*Financing Resilient Nature Positive Growth*

## THE NSFH VISION

Transforming finance to integrate Nature Based Solutions (NbS) into mainstream investment, achieving measurable climate and biodiversity outcomes.

**2030 OBJECTIVE** The NSFH aims to catalyze at least **$5 billion** in capital flows into NbS investments across Asia and the Pacific by 2030.

## ACTIVITY PILLARS

### Nature-positive Investment Project Origination and Pipeline Development

Establish a network of flagship NbS investments to scale

### Sustainable Nature Finance and Financial De-Risking

Deploy catalytic finance to crowd in private investments for NbS

### Capacity and Policy Development

Scale proven NbS solution through policy, capacity, and knowledge

## NSFH TIMELINES

**Dec 2023:** NSFH Launch at COP 28, Dubai

**Apr 2024:** 1st Partners Forum, Vienna

**Nov 2024:** NSFH TA Approved

**Feb 2025:** NSFH initiated NbS support for PHI, THA, and UZB.

**Mar 2025:** 2nd Partners Forum, Bangkok

**Apr 2025:** EU approved EUR 15 Million

**May 2025:** GIZ-NSFH partnership mission

**Jul 2025:** Paris Dialogue on Innovative Finance

**Nov 2025:** BMZ-GIZ Partnership with NSFH

**Dec 2025:** EU signing of Cooperation Agreement

## STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE NSFH:

1. **Catalytic role for ADB:** Positioning ADB as a leader in scaling nature finance.
2. **Mobilizing new finance:** Unlocking private, philanthropic, and concessional resources.
3. **Strategic partnerships:** Build partnerships with bilateral and multilateral donors, the private sector, and regional stakeholders.
4. **Delivering on ADB's 2030 Strategy:** Alignment with climate, biodiversity, and resilience priorities.

# Key Takeaways



**NATURE**
is productive capital

**FINANCE**
is the key to scaling impact

**REGIONAL COOPERATION**
turns shared challenges into shared solutions

**75%**
of regional GDP depends on nature

**Wetlands, oceans, clean air**

**$5 billion**
NSFH target by 2030



## Building a Nature-Positive and Resilient Future Together

By strengthening regional cooperation, mobilizing investment, and integrating nature into development decisions, we can build a more resilient, inclusive, and prosperous Asia and Pacific.

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# THANK YOU