



Conserving the Beauty  
of the Peaceful Amur  
Heilong Ecoregion

# AMUR HEILONG ECOREGION COMPLEX

WWF STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

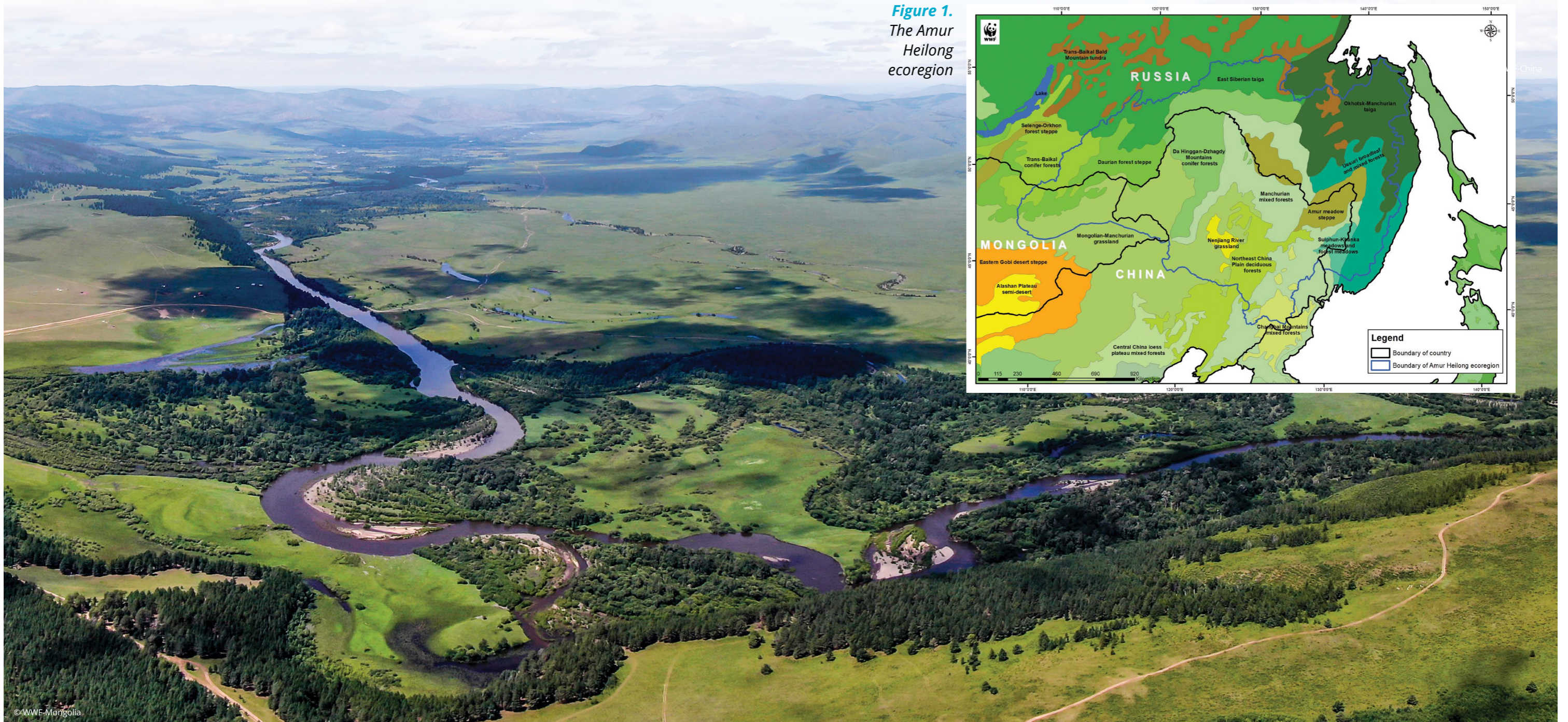
SUMMARY

# AMUR HEILONG ECOREGION

The Amur-Heilong River, the largest river in Northeast Asia, flows through China, Mongolia, and Russia. It originates from the Onon River in Mongolia and the Argun River in China. Stretching nearly 4,500 kilometers without dams, it is the ninth longest free-flowing river globally and has the tenth largest watershed, covering over 2 million square kilometers. The river basin is vital for biodiversity conservation, as it includes several ecoregions of global significance.

# STRATEGY SCOPE

WWF's initiatives to protect forests, freshwater, wetland, and grassland ecosystems, as well as key species such as the Amur tiger, Amur leopard and Mongolian gazelle, will primarily be carried out in the AHEC Landscapes in China and Mongolia. Additionally, efforts to safeguard migratory bird species along the East Asia-Australasia Flyway (EAAF) in line with WWF's Wetlands for Asian Flyways Initiative will be expanded to enhance cooperation with partners across other regions.



**Figure 1.**  
The Amur  
Heilong  
ecoregion





## CONSERVATION TARGETS



**FRESHWATER:  
RIVERS & LAKES**



Swan goose

Cranes

**WETLAND  
AND FLYWAY**



Amur tiger

**ASIAN  
BIG CATS**



Amur leopard



Great bustard



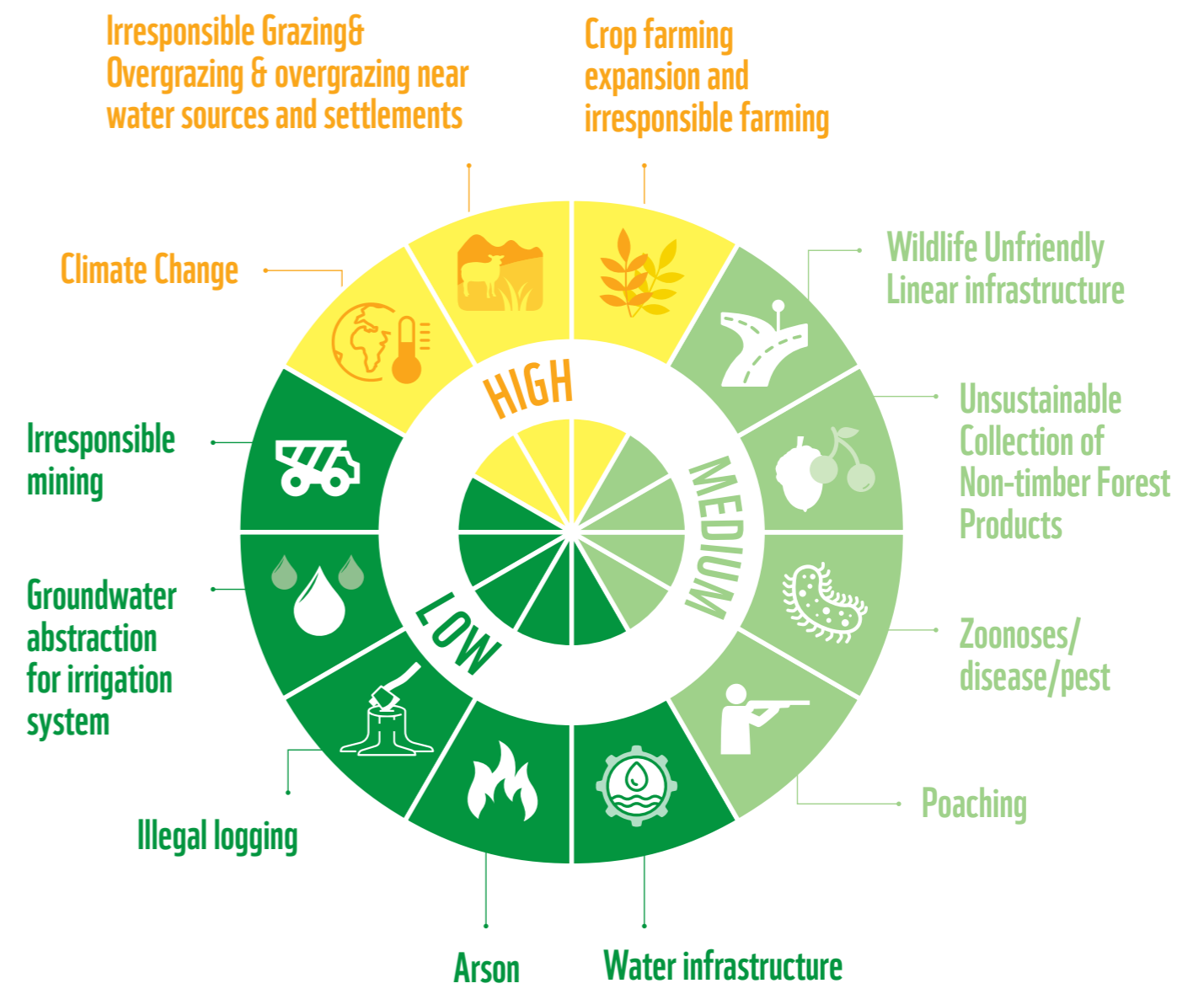
**FOREST**



Mongolian gazelle

**GRASSLAND  
STEPPE**

## THREATS TO THE CONSERVATION TARGETS



# CONSERVATION STRATEGY

## PROGRAMME VISION

The ecosystems of the Amur-Heilong Ecoregion maintain their integrity and functionality. They are well-connected, protected, inclusively managed, and climate-resilient, supporting biodiversity, key species, and human well-being through:

### Free-Flowing Amur River & Living Wetlands:

The Amur River and its tributaries enhance climate resilience by sustaining wetlands and floodplains that support diverse wildlife. The ecoregion provides globally significant stop-over sites and crucial breeding grounds for migratory birds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

### Intact Forests:

Forests are safeguarded by effective-managed conservation areas, and responsible forest management, ensuring their health and functionality. Connected habitats and corridors allow tigers and prey to move freely, which is crucial for maintaining genetic diversity and ecological balance.

### Pristine Grassland Steppe:

Grassland steppe is effectively protected and managed to maintain ecosystem integrity and support its flagship species, benefiting both nature and people.



## Goals & Strategic interventions

<p><b>Goal.</b> By 2030 the populations of wild Amur tiger and leopard in China increase to appr. 100 and 120 respectively through habitat restoration, connection, expansion and reintroduction/relocation of big cats in the AHEC.</p>	<p><b>Goal.</b> Inclusive forest landscape governance and management are enhanced in a forest area of 550,000 hectares to benefit biodiversity, communities, and climate resilience.</p>	<p><b>Goal.</b> By 2030, Freshwater ecosystems and their services are maintained.</p>	<p><b>Goal.</b> 20 million hectares of PCAs in the AHEC are effectively managed to ensure ecosystem services and protection for migratory species and their habitats.</p>	<p><b>Goal.</b> Grassland steppes are protected, maintained &amp; restored.</p>
<p><b>Strategy: Tiger habitat restoration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop &amp; advocate forest restoration, connectivity guideline for ABC habitat</li> <li>Develop science-based prey recover plan in key tiger and leopard habitat.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: Support the ABC Reintroduction/ Translocation Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify &amp; recommend at least 2 sites for translocation or reintroduction of ABC.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: Wildlife Crime Reduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support stakeholders effectively respond wildlife crime against ABC &amp; preys.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: Towards coexistence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure HWC, associated costs &amp; risk are managed at locally acceptable level.</li> <li>IPLC living in tiger landscapes benefits from ABC appropriately &amp; equitably.</li> <li>Public awareness on tiger and leopard conservation increased in northeast China.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategy: Forest landscape restoration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restore at 10,000 hectares of forest landscapes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: Inclusive Forest Landscape Governance and management benefiting BD, people and climate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effectively and inclusively manage at least 550,000 hectares of forests outside PAs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategy: Flyway habitat restoration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restore at least 10 critical wetlands along EAA Flyway</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: AHRB Wetland Conservation Network &amp; Flyway hub</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build capacity and enlighten stakeholders for sustainable wetland management.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: Environment friendly, climate smart cropping practice to reduce water use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate initiatives to reduce impact of agriculture on wetlands.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: Nature-Based Solutions for Ecological Connectivity and Free Flow of the Amur River</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate NbS as the effective &amp; efficient mechanism for disaster prevention, sustainable socio-economic development &amp; BD conservation</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: Good water governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement comprehensive water governance frameworks and IWRM.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategy: PCA expansion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand protected and conserved area network.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: Effective management of PAs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve Management effectiveness of PAs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: Locally Led Conservation Initiatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure local communities' benefit and protect high conservation value areas.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategy: Grassland watch initiative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote "Grassland Watch" initiative to support sustainable management of grassland.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: Grassland restoration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restore at least 3,000 hectares of critical grassland.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: Climate smart pasture management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate sustainable livestock &amp; pasture management based on ecological carrying capacity.</li> <li>Reduce the environmental footprint of agriculture on 105,000 hectares.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy: Green linear infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt green linear infrastructure in planning and construction to align sustainable development with ecological health.</li> </ul>

<p><b>KEY ASSUMPTIONS</b></p>	<p>Stakeholders, especially private sector, are increasingly open to appreciating and monetizing the value of natural capital, ecosystem services, and NbS for sustainable development and climate resilience.</p>	<p>Government policies and the public are becoming more conscious and pro-environmental consumers regarding the derivatives of illegal wildlife trade and unsustainable production.</p>	<p>Central and local governments and their affiliates appreciate the role of IPLC in conservation and sustainable NRM, including the management of PAs, OECMs, and the restoration of ecosystems and endangered wildlife, emphasizing inclusive conservation.</p>	<p>Stakeholders understand the urgent need to halt the biodiversity crisis and to continue collaborating with WWF and other conservation organizations.</p>
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<p><b>Barriers to natural resources' sustainable management</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited economic opportunity and reliance for NTFP and wildlife in rural communities</li> <li>Misperception of HWC root cause leading to low tolerance to wildlife</li> <li>Low awareness for natural capital value and nature based solution</li> <li>Weak public participation due to low awareness &amp; capacity</li> <li>Low efforts/nudging to motivate private sector for CSR, green business</li> <li>Inadequate Government agencies' capacity and coordination</li> <li>Inadequate legislation and/or policy caused by lack of awareness, lobbying for short term gains.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Positive drivers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National level commitments to GFBD, NDC, LDN</li> <li>Good collaboration of states in AHEC</li> <li>Availability and acceptance by partners tools like CAITS, METT, TFFM, C2C, IRBM</li> <li>Accrued lessons and best practices for PA, CBNRM</li> <li>Sector wide assessment reports, studies, data available</li> <li>Wide access to e-gadgets like e-banking service, BD monitoring tools (SMART, rangeland health) etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Causes and negative drivers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demand for NTFP and traditional medicine at local &amp; international market</li> <li>Increasing need for food and global food security concern</li> <li>Lack of agricultural product value adding and value chain</li> <li>Investments without full consideration of BD impact</li> <li>Habitat encroachment by livestock, people, increase disease and alien species transmission</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats to the ecosystems, BD and human wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overgrazing</li> <li>Crop farming expansion and irresponsibility</li> <li>Wildlife Unfriendly Linear infrastructure</li> <li>Unsustainable Collection of NTFP</li> <li>Zoonoses/disease/pest</li> <li>Poaching</li> <li>Water infrastructure</li> <li>Arson</li> <li>Irresponsible mining</li> <li>Overuse of groundwater</li> <li>Illegal logging</li> </ul> <p>• Climate Change (incl. drought, dzud, sand &amp; dust storms)</p>	<p><b>Negative impacts on ecosystems, BD and human wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Habitat loss</li> <li>Loss of biodiversity</li> <li>GHG emission from degraded wet-/peat-lands and rangelands</li> <li>Livelihood, inequality,</li> <li>Health and safety (food, physical, spiritual) risk for all</li> </ul>
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**OUR MISSION IS TO STOP THE  
DEGRADATION OF THE PLANET'S  
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND TO BUILD A  
FUTURE IN WHICH PEOPLE LIVE IN  
HARMONY WITH NATURE.**



Working to sustain the natural  
world for the benefit of people  
and wildlife.

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