

Executive summary

Alongside their contribution to biodiversity conservation, **protected and conserved areas** (hereafter: protected areas) are increasingly recognised as important sources of a wide range of benefits, or ecosystem services, that humans gain from intact, natural ecosystems. Well-governed and well-managed protected areas are among the most effective tools for maintaining ecosystems – such as forests, natural grasslands, coastal areas and freshwater wetlands – and their associated ecosystem services.

The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, will be the driving force behind global efforts for sustainable development and conservation over the next decade. Analysis by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas found that 34 of the 169 targets of the seventeen SDGs link back to ecosystem services supplied at least in part by protected areas.

This report explores how protected areas contribute to achieving the SDGs. It does this by analysing case studies from **PANORAMA – Solutions for a Healthy Planet**, an initiative of IUCN and several partners that aims to provide knowledge and facilitate exchange and learning on successful approaches in conservation and sustainable development, and to support the broader application of proven solutions.









HOW THE STUDY WAS CARRIED OUT

PANORAMA includes what is currently the world's most extensive case-study portfolio of successful approaches – solutions – that illustrate the role of protected areas in delivering both biodiversity conservation and human development outcomes. Each solution is described in a standardised format,

including information about the *context* it arose from, the *process of its operation*, and its *impacts*.

In total, 106 protected areas solutions were reviewed for this report. They were clustered according to the SDG to which each contributed the most, aside from SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land), since all protected areas contribute to one or both of these SDGs, considering their primary objective of nature conservation.

The solutions reviewed for this study were clustered under the following SDGs:

-  **SDG 1 (No Poverty)**
-  **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)**
-  **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being)**
-  **SDG 5 (Gender Equality)**
-  **SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)**
-  **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)**
-  **SDG 13 (Climate Action)**
-  **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)**

KEY FINDINGS

This study confirms that protected areas are already **contributing to all of the SDGs (Figure 1)**.

Unsurprisingly, SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 14 (Life below Water) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) are among the goals to which the solutions reviewed contribute most frequently. Still, contributions to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG1 (Poverty Alleviation) also feature prominently, underlining the fact that protected areas are important in social and economic dimensions.

The finding that protected areas contribute positively to the achievement of all SDGs strengthens the relevance of protected areas and provides

governments with clear evidence to support their reporting on the SDGs. It also provides additional arguments for further expansion of protected areas in national and global conservation and development strategies.

Mangroves and wetlands, including swamps, marshes and peatland, are the ecosystems most frequently covered by the solutions. This is not surprising, as they are threatened in many parts of the world and also supply multiple ecosystem services. Nevertheless, the emphasis on relatively few ecosystem types is a concern, in that many critical conservation issues may not be receiving the attention they deserve. A key focus of PANORAMA is identifying the ‘building blocks’, such as key success factors, of each solution. This study found that the most commonly described building blocks of

protected area solutions fell into three categories: *alliance and partnership development*; closely followed by *education, training and other capacity development activities*; and, thirdly, *communication, outreach and awareness building*.

An overarching observation on the process is that many of the 106 solutions illustrate that success was achieved through careful engagement of a broad group of people over more extended periods, allowing for flexibility throughout all stages of implementation.

A theme that emerges throughout this summary of PANORAMA solutions is that getting conservation right means first getting the **contextual governance, social and economic issues** right. Textual review of the impact descriptions of the solutions found that *community/communities* is by far the most

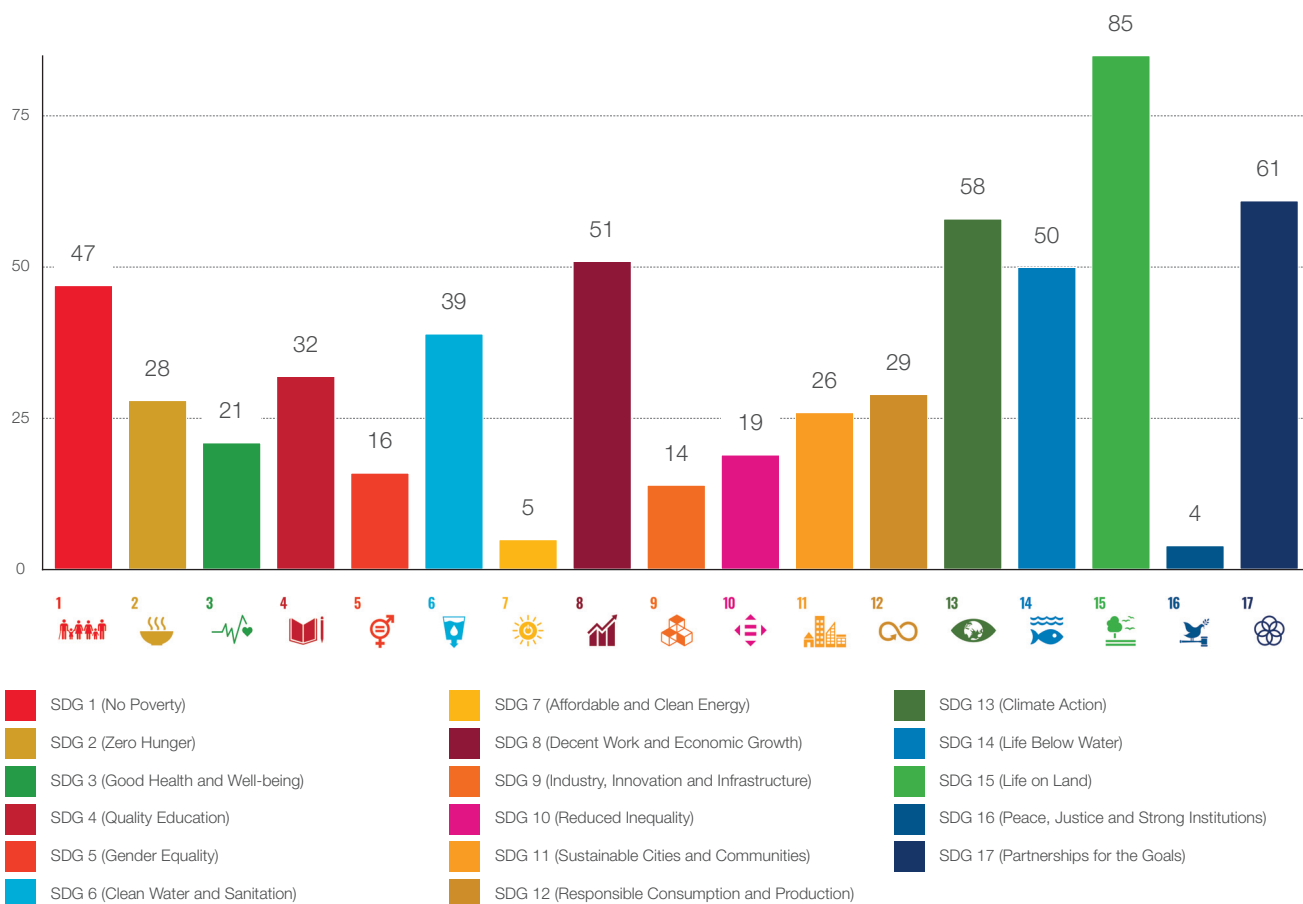


Figure 1. Number of solutions contributing to each of the SDGs (NB: a solution generally contributes to multiple SDGs).



Arakwal elder and ranger at Tallow Creek - Arakwal National Park, Australia. © David Young.

commonly appearing term. This points to the importance of **working closely with local communities to find** mutually satisfactory options for management of protected areas if there is a reasonable chance of success, such as a “solution” outcome. The emphasis on local communities is not simply a way of addressing any concerns they have about a protected area – it is shifting to sharing responsibility with communities as actively engaged stakeholders in the process, as well as being beneficiaries of the outcomes of solutions. Future efforts could focus on closer examination of such inclusive cooperation models.