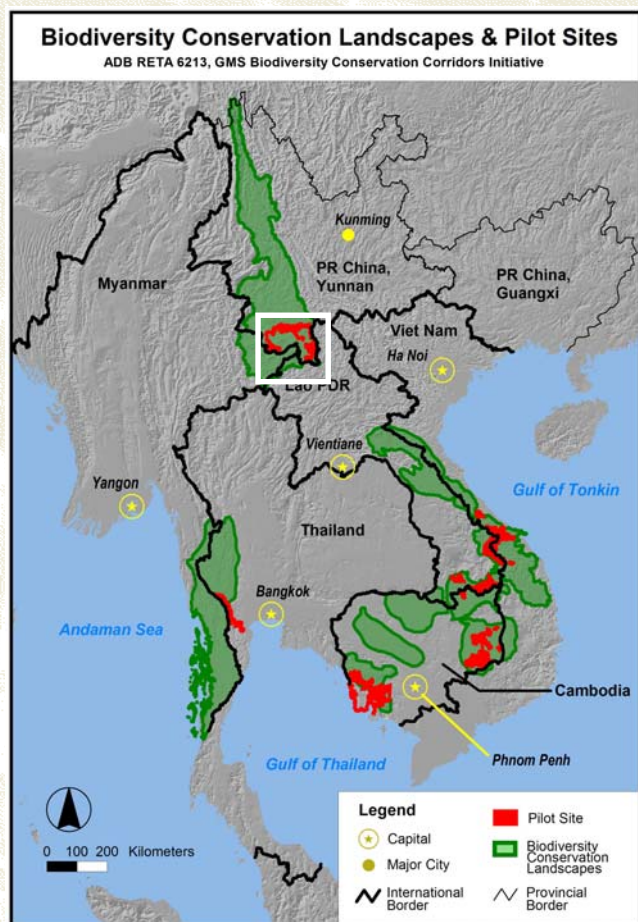


Greater Mekong Subregion Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative



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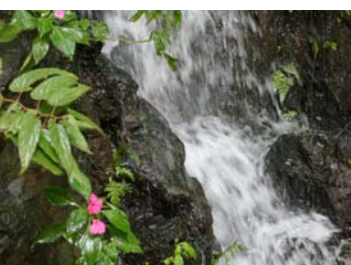
People's Republic of China Pilot Project Profile: **Xishuangbanna**



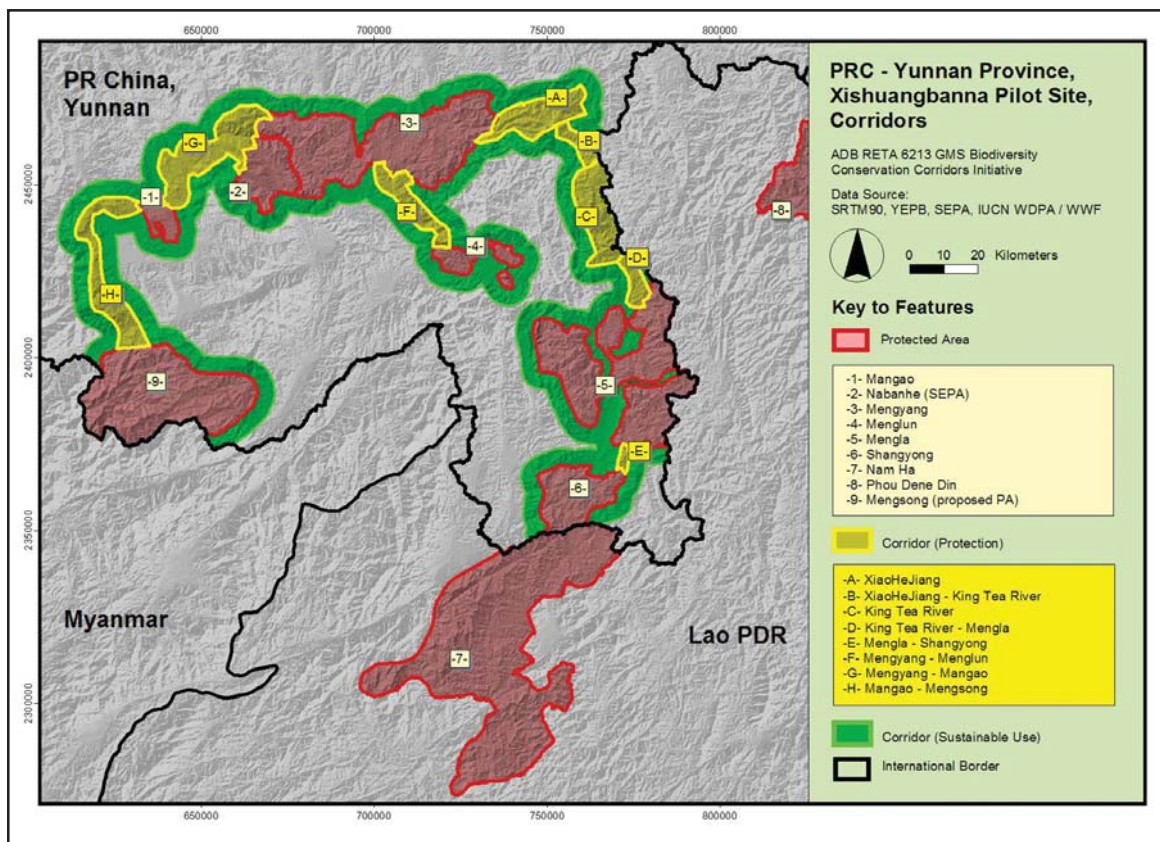
The biodiversity conservation corridors project in the People's Republic of China (PRC) will connect reserves of the Xishuangbanna conservation complex, a unique formation of tropical and subtropical forests in southern Yunnan Province stretching down to the border with the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), through a series of corridors.

The Xishuangbanna project is one of five pilot sites in the Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)—which consists of Cambodia, PRC (Yunnan Province and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam—to conserve habitats for wildlife and their movements; conserve and enhance ecological services, such as water supply and flood protection; and improve local community welfare through sustainable use of natural resources. The Initiative is part of the GMS Core Environment Program.





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In the GMS countries, development activities, particularly in economic corridors being developed across the subregion, can adversely affect the functioning of important ecosystems, such as forests, by breaking them into small fragments.

The GMS Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative will support the subregion's countries in restoring fragmented landscapes to enhance ecosystem functioning, the productivity of natural systems, and equitable sharing of development benefits in the subregion.

In the PRC, the reserves that make up the Xishuangbanna conservation complex in southern Yunnan Province—Mengyang, Mangao, Menglun, Mengla, and Shangyong—which are fragmented due to the development of large-scale rubber plantations, will be connected through a series of corridors.

The forests of Xishuangbanna are unique because of its transitional geographic location and climatic features crossing the tropics and subtropics. Northern and southern biota meet in this region.

Although Xishuangbanna covers only 0.2% of the area of the PRC, it maintains nearly 16% of the higher plant species of the country. Included are 114 rare and endangered animal species, and 57 rare and endangered plant species.

Conversion of natural forests, especially for rubber plantations; clearing the ground for planting ginger (used in traditional medicines); and the cross-border trade in illegal wildlife and forest products are the major threats to the corridor areas. Some of these areas will need to be strictly protected because of their importance for biodiversity and ecosystem service values, whereas other corridors can sustain various intensities of use.

As well as restoring habitat connections, the project will focus on reducing poverty among people living in or near the corridors, clearly defining land uses and appropriate land management regimes, helping all concerned to protect natural resources in the corridors and move toward community-based management, and long-term financing of conservation activities.

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