Regional Protected Area Collaboration across Asia

Discussion Paper

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACB	ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity
ACTO	Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AHP	ASEAN Heritage Park
APC	Asia Parks Congress
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASOEN	ASEAN Senior Officers on Environment
ATF	ASEAN Tourism Forum
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AWGCME	ASEAN Working Group on Coastal & Marine Environment
AWGNCB	ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation & Biodiversity
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CI	Conservation International
COP	Conference of Parties
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development - UK
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFI	Flora and Fauna International
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MoE-J	Ministry of Environment, Japan
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
Natura 2000	European Union protected area network
NGO	Non Government Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NZAID	New Zealand Aid Programme

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PA	Protected Area
PAPAC Working Group	Pan Asia Protected Area Collaborative Working Group
PoWPA	CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas
Ramsar	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance
RBCP	Regional Biodiversity Conservation Programme, IUCN Asia
RCF	IUCN Regional Conservation Forum
RECOFT	The Centre for People and Forests
REDPARQUES	La Red Latinoamericana de Cooperación Técnica en Parques Nacionales, otras Áreas Protegidas, Flora y Fauna Silvestres (protected area Network among Latin American countries)
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SBSTTA	CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-WCMC	UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCC	IUCN World Conservation Congress
WCPA	IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WDPA	World Database on Protected Areas
WHITRAP	World Heritage Institute of Training and Research Asia Pacific
WII	Wildlife Institute of India
WPALF	World Protected Area Leadership Forum
WPC	IUCN World Parks Congress
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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Introduction

This discussion paper focuses on potential mechanisms to promote better collaboration between protected areas and their management agencies across the entire Asia Region. For the purposes of this paper the Asia Region is as defined by IUCN and includes the 24 countries of South Asia, East Asia and Southeast Asia illustrated in Figure 1.

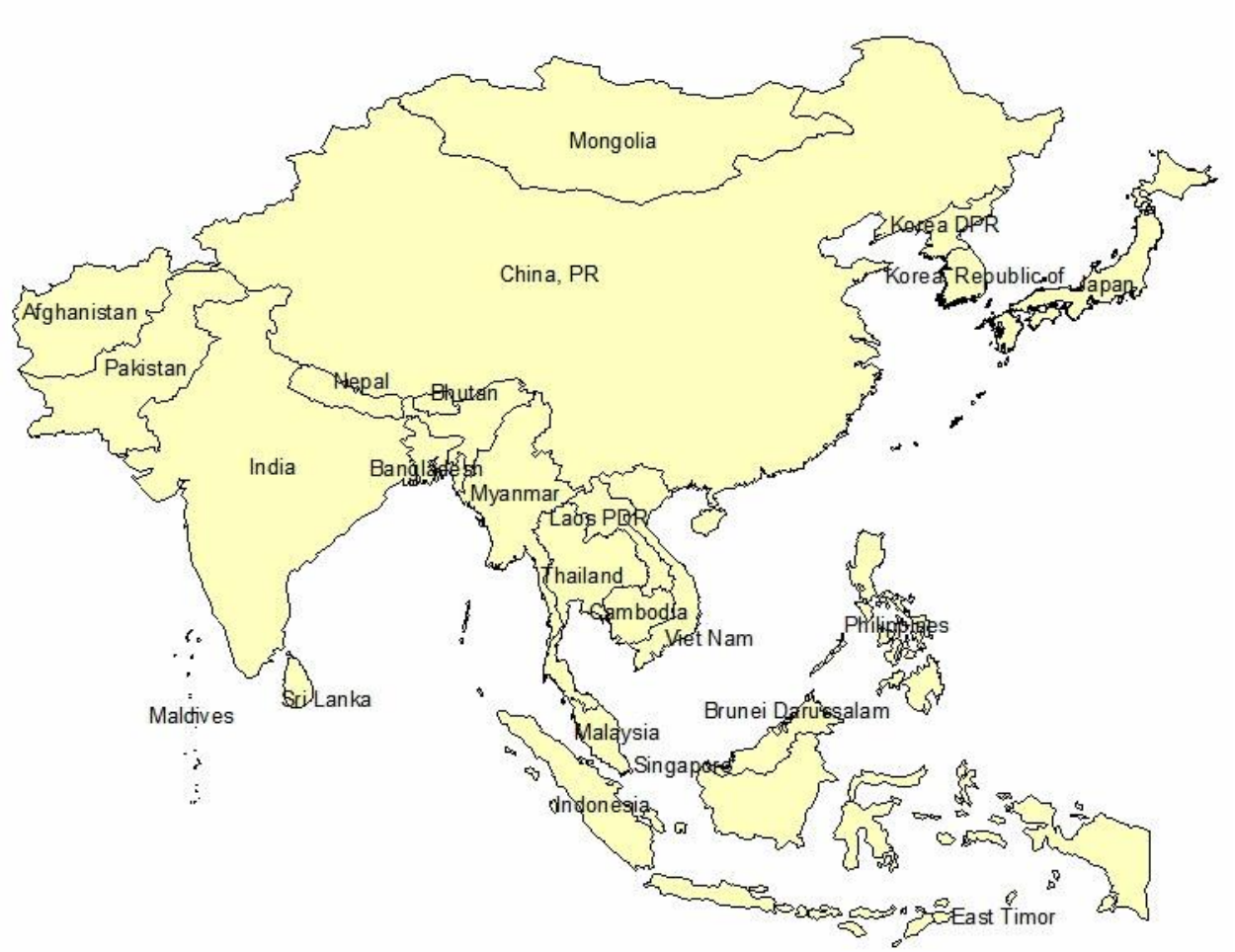

Figure 1 IUCN's Asia Region

The paper has been prepared at the request of the Asia Parks Congress Steering Committee which hopes to use the occasion of the 2013 Congress to stimulate a constructive dialogue on improving protected area collaboration across the whole of Asia. The Steering Committee wishes to draw on the experience of other regional mechanisms from around the world; to assess their relevance to the Asian context; and to formulate some proposals on protected area collaborative mechanisms which have high potential to work in the region.

The paper investigates the need for improved protected area collaboration in Asia and explores some of the history of past collaboration. Selected supra-national scale protected area networks and collaborative mechanisms from around the world are examined in terms of their history, motivation for establishment, aims and operation. An assessment of their strengths and weaknesses is offered leading to lessons for Asia and a series of options to take this idea forward. The focus on the 24 countries within Asia does not, of course, overlook the critical need to connect Asia's protected areas to the rest of the world and, in particular, through the closer ties that exist within the Asia-Pacific Region. A number of

regional structures operate at the larger Asia Pacific scale such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) structure and that of many regional structures within the UN system.

Four objectives have been identified by the Steering Committee to improve protected area collaboration at the pan-Asia scale:

1. enhancing regional protected area collaboration, partnership building and capacity sharing;
2. fostering a culture of healthy internal competition to improve the quality of protected area management within the region;
3. building stronger pan-Asian tourism branding and marketing of the region's protected areas; and
4. setting and sharing common protected area management standards.

It is worth noting that the 2013 Asia Parks Congress is a ground breaking event bringing together the protected area community for the first time from across the entire region. Despite sub-regional and bilateral efforts to date the idea of collaboration for protected areas at this pan-Asia scale is still at an early stage of thinking. The discussion paper and deliberations at the APC seek to take the first important steps toward improved collaboration. It is hoped that the timing of the once-in-a-decade World Parks Congress (WPC) to be held in Sydney, Australia, November 2014 will herald a further milestone for establishing more effective protected area collaboration for Asia.

Acknowledgements

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Why collaboration?

Collaboration for protected areas is a means to an end not the end in itself. Working across national boundaries, sharing experience, transferring capacity and jointly tacking issues is vital to the end goal of establishing effective protected area systems for Asia. An end goal that is best expressed within the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD's) Aichi Biodiversity Target 11:

"By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascapes."

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Asia's Protected Areas in the 21st Century

Much has been written about the rise of Asia in the 21st Century – the idea that Asia will dominate in the 21st Century in the same way that Britain dominated the 19th Century and America the 20th Century. The trends for Asia have been clearly laid out by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) which predicts that, based on current trajectories; Asia by 2050 will see a six-fold increase in per capita income and a further 3 billion people who are considered affluent by todays' European standards (ADB, 2012). A combination of influences in Asia will make for some challenging scenarios when it comes to balancing the conservation of nature against increasing standards of affluence and the consumption patterns that follow.

The ADB note that Asia's ongoing prosperity will be led *"by seven economies, two of them already developed and five fast growing middle income converging economies. These are PR China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Malaysia. Under the Asian Century scenario, their share of population by 2050 would be 75% and their GDP would be 90% of Asia. They alone will account for 45% of global GDP."* (ADB, 2012).

Specific environmental challenges for Asia centre upon intense completion for finite and diminishing natural resources as standards of living increase and domestic consumption patterns rise. The implications around energy usage lead the ADB to conclude that Asia will be the most affected by, and responsible for, an excessive reliance on energy imports. Out of self-interest, it will need to take the lead in drastically improving energy efficiency and diversification programs by switching from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Asia's future competitiveness will depend heavily on how efficiently it uses its natural resources and progresses to a low-carbon future (ADB, 2012). The amplifying effect of climate change and the threats to agricultural production, coastal populations and urban areas along with increasing vulnerability to natural disasters will push Asia's citizens to radically change their relationship to nature so as to alleviate pressures on finite natural resources.

The ADB conclude that central to coming to grips with the above issues will be an ability to resolve a broad array of politically

What do we mean by collaboration?

For the purposes of this paper it is instructive to unpack the terminology of networks, cooperation and collaboration in relation to protected areas.

'Networks' are literally any netlike combination of filaments, lines, veins, passages, or the like. In other words an interconnected group or system. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/network. For protected areas we can think of networks of sites but also networks of professionals as with other business and social networks.

'Cooperation' in the social sciences refers to the process of groups of organisms working or acting together for their common/mutual benefit, as opposed to working in competition for selfish benefit. Cooperation in other words is a form of joint action. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/cooperation

'Collaboration' is working with each other to do a task and to achieve shared goals (Wikipedia, 2013). It is a process where two or more people or organizations work together to realize shared goals, (this is more than the intersection of common goals seen in co-operative ventures, but a deep, collective, determination to reach an identical objective, for example, an endeavour that is creative in nature by sharing knowledge, learning and building consensus. (Marinez-Moyano, 2006)

For the purposes of this discussion paper the terminology 'collaboration and/or collaborative networks' has been used when describing protected areas. This is seen as a stronger, more encompassing term than cooperation which concerns helping each other for mutual benefit however, does not necessary imply deeply shared goals. On balance all the nations of Asia do in fact share the same goals for protected areas. Collaboration also requires leadership and a degree of formal structure to achieve shared end goals.

difficult issues over a long period. Hence regional collaboration between nations is viewed as critical.

It is not difficult to imagine the implications for protected areas of such global and regional changes for development, energy and natural resources. The specific challenges for the region's protected areas have been spelled out in WCPA's Regional Strategy for Asia which points to the fact that Asia's population density of 1½ times the global average placing great pressure on the natural underpinnings of life. *"Almost all ecosystems are under pressure and species losses remain high in many countries. Protected areas have been used as an effective conservation land use decision and, since 1990, many countries in the region have shown an impressive energy to create protected areas…. however, many protected areas are only evident on maps, with little or no effective protection on the ground. Protected areas in Asia as in other parts of the developing world are under increasing impact from encroachment and habitat loss compounded by climate change and increasing numbers of invasive species. Other significant problems persist, including legislative and institutional frameworks some of which are out of step with current thinking; poor human and financial capacity; local communities which have been denied access to natural resources and benefits; and a failure to mainstream protected areas with other socio-economic sectors and production landscapes. These areas are struggling to maintain the flow of essential ecosystem services which underpin development and human welfare. On the positive side, robust Asian economies coupled with increasing travel and tourism offer potential for integrating well-managed protected areas into national development and growth strategies. Protected areas must be promoted and positioned as valued national assets that provide a range of benefits to local people and that underpin sustainable development aspirations."* (IUCN/WCPA, 2010).

Significant differences exist from country to country, however, the circumstances above are challenging all countries within the region. Many common protected area issues exist and addressing them calls for greater supra-national exchange of experience, learning and approaches. As the numbers and extent of protected areas continues to grow in Asia it is self-evident that greater regional collaboration will become more important than ever.

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The Jewels of Asia

The UNEP WCMC World Database of Protected Areas records over 8,600 protected areas in Asia (http://www.protectedplanet.net/). As a subset of these the Region already possesses an impressive portfolio of internationally and regionally significant protected areas. These amount to some 428 World Heritage Sites (natural and mixed); Biosphere Reserves; Ramsar Sites; Geoparks; and ASEAN Heritage Parks across the Region's 24 countries (Table 1). Few would argue that these represent a very special collection of Asia's most remarkable places. Improving the collective management and promotion of these jewels of Asia provides a compelling reason for regional collaboration.

COUNTRY	World Heritage Sites	ASEAN Heritage Parks	Biosphere Reserves	Geoparks	Ramsar Sites
Afghanistan					
Bangladesh					2
Bhutan					2
Brunei Darussalam		1			
Cambodia		2	1		3
China PR	14		32	27	46
India	6		9		26
Indonesia	4	3	8	1	6
Japan	4		5	5	46
Korea (DPR)			3		
Korea (Republic of)	1		5	1	18
Lao PDR		1			2
Malaysia	2	3	1	1	6
Maldives			1		
Mongolia	1		6		11
Myanmar		7			1
Nepal	2				9
Pakistan			2		19
Philippines	2	4	2		6
Singapore		2			
Sri Lanka	2		4		6
Thailand	2	4	4		13
Timor Leste					
Viet Nam	2	5	8	1	5
TOTAL	42	32	91	36	227

Table 1 Asia's internationally and regionally designated protected areas (as at October 2013, WH sites natural and mixed only)

The call for greater protected area collaboration

The call for improved collaboration between protected areas in Asia has come over many years and from numerous quarters, some internal and some external to the region.

As noted above the ADB has been clear that Asia's future growth is heavily dependent on enhanced regional collaboration across a range of fields. Protected areas, like other fields of endeavour, must equally embrace greater collaboration if they are to have a prosperous and central future in the Asian Century. The ADB have outlined the reasons why Asia must improve its ability to work together:

"*Regional cooperation (including integration) is critical for Asia's march toward prosperity for the following reasons:*

- *it will cement the region's hard-won economic gains in the face of vulnerabilities to global shocks;*
- *it could be an important bridge between individual Asian countries and the rest of the world;*

- *it can help those Asian economies that are rebalancing growth toward "internal" (domestic and regional) demand to fully open their markets to neighbours in the region;*
- *with development assistance, it can help reduce cross-country disparities in income and opportunities (which, if left unchecked, could generate instability or conflict);*
- *it can be a stepping stone for poorer countries to move up the value chain and maximize their growth potential; in technological development, energy security, and disaster preparedness,*
- *it can help respond better to global challenges, and yield significant synergies and positive spillovers; and*
- *through managing the regional commons, it can contribute to Asia's long-term stability and peace.* (ABD, 2012)

It is not difficult to see how most of the above general benefits of Asian collaboration also apply to protected areas. For example cementing the gains for protected areas in the last 50 years; building bridges to the rest of the world; balancing inequities between extremely diverse countries; better managing the common heritage of the region; and providing a shared approach to dealing with global challenges such as climate change, invasive alien species, tourism impact or human wildlife conflicts.

In addition all of the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) by definition enshrine principles of collaboration. The CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) identifies strategies for implementation at regional level and specifically "*invites Parties to foster the formation of (Regional scale) initiatives and formulate regional action plans….and through regional technical support networks, to coordinate funding, technical support, exchange of experiences and capacity-building for implementing the programme of work on protected areas"* (CBD COP 10, 2010). CBD's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets commit Parties to follow through on the strategy via more national and regionally tailored targets (CBD, 2010).

Similarly the World Heritage Convention embodies supra-national shared responsibility for heritage of outstanding universal value. Article 6 of the Convention states that whilst fully respecting the sovereignty of States, it is the *"duty of the international community as a whole to cooperate"* in the protection of World Heritage. (UNESCO, 1972). Concepts of collaboration across the network of World Heritage sites have been a by-word of the Convention's operation for more than 40 years.

IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) has had a long history in Asia and has consistently worked toward supporting national efforts for protected areas through a regional approach. A WCPA Asia survey carried out in 2010 indicated that over 89% of respondents were in favour of developing a pan-Asian protected area system similar to the ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs) or other regional systems such as Europe's Natura 2000. This survey only generated 127 responses, however, respondents were working in all 3 sub regions and about ⅔^{rds} were WCPA members, normally of long standing with 10 years or more experience. Given WCPA membership in Asia of only about 100 individuals, the survey was considered an accurate reflection of strategic directions and priorities.

Investigating the feasibility of a pan-Asia protected area system was identified as a high priority in the WCPA-Asia Strategy for 2011-14. The strategy acknowledges the renewed impetus that the CBD PoWPA has given to national protected area efforts and recognises that most protected area interventions will occur at national level. The strategy identifies the need to learn from other regional systems around the world to come up with a workable

system for Asia, one that would gain the necessary high level political support at a pan-Asian scale.

Preparatory events for the APC have also reinforced the desirability for greater collaboration across the region. The International Workshop on Governance in Asian Protected Areas, Akita, Japan, January 2011 had the theme of "*exploring governance in protected areas in Asia and developing collaborative partnerships among Asian countries."* This workshop was attended by participants across Asia and laid the groundwork for investigating mechanisms for enhanced regional collaboration. The Akita workshop also advocated the development of an "Asian Protected Area Philosophy" to articulate the values and aspirations which underpin the establishment and management of protected areas in Asia and so reflect the unique culture and outlook of the region. In November 2011 the Preliminary Asia Parks Congress held in Tokyo, Japan convened 70 leading protected area experts from across 18 Asian countries. The congress addressed a number of common challenges for protected areas with a view to forging new regional partnerships. Participants were unanimous in their support for holding a pan-Asia Parks Congress and the workshop report called for regional partnerships be struck to support the achievement of the CBD Aichi Targets and that a Pan Asia protected area network should be established.

A further global trend is strengthening the case of better protected area collaboration at a regional level. This is the move to set internationally agreed standards and benchmark national and site level performance against these. IUCN's pioneering of protected area management effectiveness evaluation and the more recent IUCN Green list of Well Managed Protected Areas, launched in 2004 are driving renewed interest in working regionally. The potential of the Green List to lead to certification of protected area management standards adds additional weight to arguments to bolster regional collaboration across networks of protected areas. A number of Asian countries (China and R.O. Korea) have been early adopters of the Green List.

Although focused primarily on economic goals regional economic cooperation mechanisms in Asia also provide a framework and incentive for enhanced protected area collaboration. Most notably the 10 Southeast Asian Members States of ASEAN have established strong collaborative programmes for environment and protected areas through the AHPs. This is analyzed in greater detail below. ASEAN and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity have provided great impetus and a model for expanding sub-regional collaboration to a larger scale in Asia.

In a similar fashion the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) which was formed in 1985 has provided support for cooperation on various environmental issues. One of SAARC's objectives is to *"to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields"*. SAARC also has a number of regional centres established by member states to support thematic areas. Whilst none focus specifically on protected areas a number relate to environmental issues such as disaster management, forestry and coastal zone management. Since 1987, the SAARC member country Heads of State at successive Summits, have reiterated the need to strengthen and intensify regional cooperation to preserve, protect and manage the diverse and fragile eco-systems of the region including the need to address the challenges posed by climate change and natural disasters. Periodic meetings of the SAARC Environment Ministers have been held to take stock of progress and to further enhance regional cooperation in the area of environment, climate change and natural disasters. Since 1992, the SAARC Environment Ministers have met eight times. (SAARC Secretariat, 2013). The Wildlife Institute of India has been offering fellowships since 1992 to candidates from SAARC member states to build capacity in wildlife and protected area management (Vinod Mathur, pers comm).

Finally the timing of the APC leading one year later to the WPC in Australia offers an ideal roadmap of significant protected area events to gain political support and move forward on regional collaborative mechanism commitments for Asia. Planners for the WPC and especially the host country Australia are eager to promote a series of WPC legacies including programmes to improve regional cooperation for protected areas at the Asia-Pacific scale.

History of regional collaboration on protected areas

The rationale for lifting the levels of regional collaboration for protected areas outlined above also speaks to some of the history of collaboration that has taken place in Asia. Regional intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, membership organizations and associations with an interest in protected areas have, by and large, also driven collaboration efforts, however, this has to date been patchy, somewhat opportunistic and sporadic. The opportunity of the APC is to raise this to a new level of consistency and inclusiveness. A brief summary follows on the history of protected area collaboration in Asia. This is by no means exhaustive.

IUCN and the World Commission on Protected Areas in Asia

IUCN is the world's oldest and largest conservation network. It is a global membership organization of essentially three parts: its Members, its Secretariat and its six expert Commissions. IUCN's democratic governance and Government and Non-Government membership are significant factors in its ability to work with diverse interests to find solutions which balance conservation and development. Its global reach allows it to bridge national, institutional and political gaps whilst bringing the world's best science to bear on challenging conservation issues. IUCN holds 4 yearly World Conservation Congresses (WCCs) which serve the needs of its members through convening them around issues related to the conservation and equitable use of nature. Two WCCs have been held in Asia 2004 (Bangkok, Thailand) and 2012 (Jeju, R.O. Korea). The IUCN Asia Region also stages Regional Conservation Forums (RCFs) for members within Asia. These are usually between 3-500 participants and are normally held as preparatory events for WCCs. Since 2000 three RCFs have been held in Asia: 2003, Colombo, Sri Lanka; 2007, Kathmandu, Nepal; and 2011 Incheon, R.O. Korea. Both WCCs and RCFs play a significant role in supporting technical collaboration across protected area networks of practitioners. IUCN's Programme which specifies its work focus over 4 yearly periods is also a vehicle that supports regional approaches. Protected area issues (both technical issues and motions) feature highly in IUCN WCCs and RCFs reflecting the interest of members.

IUCN Asia is the largest of the Union's Regional Programmes, with over 350 staff and an active portfolio of project work across most of the region. 11 Country Offices together with Regional Thematic Programmes work to support members on critical issue such as protected areas. Much of IUCN's work operates across national boundaries and so contributes to a regional approach to protected areas. The IUCN Asia Regional Biodiversity Conservation Programme (RBCP) is based in Bangkok and responsible for protected areas, species conservation and regional support to the implementation of CBD. RBCP has the advantage of addressing protected area challenges in a more integrated fashion, an essential response to the broader drivers of biodiversity conservation in the region.

IUCN's work is ably supported through the work of its six volunteer Commissions, made up of experts in environmental law; ecosystem management; species conservation; economic and social policy; education and communication; and protected areas. All of IUCN's Commissions have played significant roles in supporting work on protected areas with WCPA naturally being the pivotal Commission. WCPA globally was established in 1958 and is

widely promoted as the world's leading body of knowledge on protected areas. The Commission is structured around a series of regions and themes addressing the full spectrum of protected area issues. See www.iucn.org for more information. WCPA expanded considerably in the mid-1990s through a regionalization process that resulted in three regions across Asia: South Asia; East Asia and South East Asia. During the period 2008-2012, the three major sub-regions of Asia were combined into one pan-Asia WCPA Region, however, following the 2012 WCC WCPA Asia is again structured across the three main sub regions each under a different Regional Vice Chair.

WCPA has a strong history of activity in Asia, including: preparing Regional Action Plans; convening many protected area conferences, meetings and workshops; tailoring technical guidelines; and supporting protected area projects in various countries. The three sub regions of Asia have all held major workshops bringing together the protected area community and developing strategic directions. Prior to the last WPC in 2003 all sub regions convened WCPA preparatory workshop. Despite this activity, current WCPA membership numbers in Asia are considered low and unrepresentative given the size and complexity of the Region and the growing number of protected area specialists.

CBD

As has also been noted above the CBD has and continues to play a critical role for protected areas regionally. Despite being driven primarily through national level actions, the CBD and PoWPA have bought together national interests and raised capacity for site managers at a regional scale. The CBD has supported COPs and SBSTTA meetings as well as expert working groups and regional capacity workshops throughout Asia, especially since the adoption of the PoWPA in 2004. For example protected area regional workshops have been held in Asia in 2011, 2009 and 2007 Dehradun India; 2011 Manila, Philippines; 2009 Jeju, R.O. Korea; and 2006 Bangkok, Thailand (CBD, 2013).

The CBD's financial mechanism the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has provided substantial resourcing in support of protected areas and so aided in strategic planning, capacity building and improvements to management effectiveness. Other financial investments from a range of multilateral and bilateral donors have similarly supported protected areas across Asia. The CBD notes that *"significant bilateral and multilateral funding and donor commitment has been allotted to protected area implementation over the last decade.* (Globally) *the GEF has channelled investments of 1.89 billion USD towards the creation and management of over 2,302 protected areas, covering more than 634 million hectares. In its fourth and fifth replenishment cycles alone, GEF programmed 1.15 billion USD for protected areas."* (CBD, 2013).

The LifeWeb Initiative which supports partnerships for financing biodiversity has brokered additional donor support for protected areas. The LifeWeb Initiative was validated at CBD COP 10 in Nagoya, Japan and provides a new line of support for protected areas once again supporting regional level capacity (CBD, 2013).

Regional Economic Cooperation

Asia has established several mechanisms to promote regional economic cooperation, most notably the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). These mechanisms generally support national interests around trade and security, however they have provided a vehicle to support environment and protected area interests at a sub-regional scale.

The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) provides specialized support to the member states and acts as the Secretariat for the AHP system which has been mentioned above. AHPs

represent one of the most active and sophisticated protected area collaborative networks within Asia and worldwide. AHPs were established 10 years ago and the system is well supported. Three yearly AHP Conferences and various AHP programmes/projects provide excellent support at a sub-regional scale to the 32 significant Southeast Asian protected areas which are designated as AHPs. AHPs are discussed in more detail below.

ASEAN also established an ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) in 1981 to support regional cooperation to promote the ASEAN region as one tourist destination showcasing Asian hospitality and cultural diversity. The ATF is an annual event involving all the tourism industry sectors of the 10 member nations of ASEAN. (ATF, 2013)

SAARC is an organisation of South Asian nations, which was established in 1985 when the government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka formally adopted its charter providing for the promotion of economic and social progress, cultural development within the South Asia region and also for friendship and co-operation with other developing countries. It is dedicated to economic, technological, social, and cultural development emphasising collective self-reliance. SAARC currently has eight member states. The SAARC Charter calls for *"...meaningful co-operation among the Member States which are bound by ties of history and culture"*. Furthermore that *"…regional co-operation among the countries of South Asia is mutually beneficial, desirable and necessary for promoting the welfare and improving the quality of life of the peoples of the region"* (SAARC, 2013).

A SAARC Environment Action Plan was adopted in 1997 and identified some of the key concerns of Member States and set out the parameters and modalities for regional cooperation. Periodic meetings of the SAARC Environment Ministers have been held to take stock of progress and to further enhance regional cooperation in the area of environment, climate change and natural disasters (SAARC, 2013).

SAARC also works actively on tourism cooperation between its member states with an adopted Tourism Action Plan and series of technical committee and working group structures to support this. Regular meetings of Member State Tourism Ministers also take place. (SAARC, 2013)

Whilst SAARC do not have a dedicated programme based on protected areas as ASEAN does it has worked on related areas such as environment and tourism. It is also concerned with a range of social issues across the sub region.

Tourism and protected areas

It is worth pointing out that tourism has been a significant motivation for networking within the Region. As covered above both SAARC and ASEAN support sub-regional tourism networking, mainly from a Government perspective. However, the tourism industry in general has worked in a somewhat ad hoc fashion and achieving sustainable tourism networking has been hard to attain. For example an Asia Pacific Tourism Society (APES) was previously active but has ceased to exist. There are several community based tourism networks in Asia which are growing and promoting local, cultural and indigenous tourism services, however, these are not systematically organised. The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is an exception having been in operation since 1951. PATA is a travel industry association with 41 chapters worldwide including a presence in 10 Asian countries. PATA has interests in protected areas with respect to their importance to the tourism industry (PATA 2013).

The tourism industry is quite fractured being driven around individual; tourism businesses and so not well organised at a regional scale. Nevertheless tourism's natural affinity with protected areas, and the tourism assets they conserve, makes for a good alignment of this sector's interests with those of protected areas. More on this is discussed below.

Others

In addition to those outlined above there are a host of other UN organisations, intergovernmental institutions, NGOs, multilateral and bilateral donors, foundations and academic institutions involved with protected areas in Asia. For example organisations such as UNESCAP, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), ICIMOD, UNDP, FAO and UNESCO have active programmes in the region which support protected areas. Multilateral donors such as the ADB, GEF and the World Bank as well as bilateral donors such as JICA, AUSAID, NZAID, DANIDA, NORAD etc have all invested considerably in protected areas. A suite of International NGOs such as Birdlife, Wetlands International, WWF, FFI, WCS, TNC and CI maintain active programmes throughout many Asian countries thus contributing to regional collaboration. Finally a range of regional protected area academic and training institutions have actively supported protected area training and research thereby fostering regional collaboration. Notable examples include RECOFT, WHITRAP, Tsukuba University, Akita University and WII.

Analysis of Regional Protected Area Collaborative Networks

The rapid expansion of protected areas globally and in Asia has happened over the relatively short space of around 50 years. Professional networks to support protected area collaboration are therefore relatively new. Nevertheless there are a number of systems which have been established in different parts of the world and it is prudent to review these in terms of Asia's needs. Following is a review of selected protected area networks and collaborative mechanisms operating beyond the national scale. They have been reviewed according to several criteria:

- History and motivation for establishment
- Objectives, programmes and activities
- Political support
- Governance
- Funding model and sustainability; and
- Strengths and weaknesses

Through assessing strengths and weaknesses we are able to draw lessons for Asia and a series of recommendations and steps to take this idea forward.

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PA COLLABORATIVE NETWORK	History & motivation for establishment	Objectives, programmes & activities	Political support	Governance	Funding model & sustainability	Strengths	Weaknesses
Natura 2000	European Community-wide network of nature protection areas with the aim of ensuring the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species & habitats. Natura 2000 is an EU wide network of nature protection areas (comprising Special Areas of Conservation designated under the 1992 Habitats Directive and Special Protected Areas designated under the 1979 Birds Directive). The system covers more than 26,000 protected areas covering 950,000km^2 (EC, 2010). At the outset it should be noted that Natura 2000 is a legally binding designation process different to other networks which link organizations. (Boris Erg, pers comm) Need for a network of this kind was a response to continuing	Site management is carried out at national level, however, network scale support is available through EC programmes. EC has developed guidelines on management & planning issues. Best practice advice is available on site management/protection; different biomes and & on specific sectors. GIS for Natura 2000 established, however, there are problems with overlapping areas & discrepancies between regional & national scale data. Broader EC programmes on alien invasive species, climate change, green infrastructure & partnership building benefit Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 seminars held & annual Europarc Federation Conferences	At the time of establishment Natura 2000 was seen as a centrepiece initiative for the EU – *"the most important initiative ever undertaken in the EU to conserve areas of high importance for threatened species and habitats"*. The aim was to halt the decline in Europe's biodiversity by 2010. (EC, 2000) There was clearly resistance to Natura 2000 from some stakeholders at the time as evidenced by EC statements countering criticism and issuing assurances that social goals could be reconciled with nature conservation. (EC, 2000)	Responsibility for proposing Natura 2000 sites lies with Member States, however, it is guided by exclusively scientific criteria. Furthermore the Habitat Directive identifies six biogeographic regions across Europe and strives to ensure a representative system protecting the biodiversity richness of the region. Site management is the responsibility of Member States however, various programmes provide centralized support. The Europarc Federation which existed long before Natura 2000 plays a central role in supporting this system of priority sites. (Europarc Director, pers comm). Natura 2000 is a network that includes nature reserves but most of the land is	Natura 2000 sites are primarily funded through Member States. However, Article 8 of the Habitats Directive legally links delivery of necessary conservation measures to the provision of the EU co-financing. LIFE+ is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects. This fund continues to be of strategic importance for the financing of Natura 2000. Other EC funding can be used to support Natura 2000 – e.g. Rural Development Policy and Regional Development Fund. The EC have undertaken various studies to understand the cost of managing the Natura 2000 system and the economic benefits they generate. It is estimated that approx. 6 billion EUR p.a. are	EU provides a powerful high level umbrella for the Natura 2000 system. The bureaucratic machinery of the EC adds weight & stability to the system. Solid legal basis for the network – Habitats & Birds Directives. The size and geographical spread of the system gives it a critical mass. Regular contact and dialogue with the Member States is providing a forum for early discussion of emerging issues. Network financial support mechanisms – Life + & other EC programmes.	A delicate balancing act is required to respect sovereign rights whilst taking a regional perspective on nature & conservation priorities which will not be geographically spread across all countries. EC not empowered to intervene in matters of state. Delays in fully establishing the Natura 2000 network as well as in putting in place and applying the associated safeguards. Natura 2000 focuses attention on a selection of Europe's protected areas which may be at the expense of other lower priority sites. Natura 2000 still has work to be done to better align it to the IUCN PA categories, recognized governance types and to ensure consistent reporting via the WDPA. Variable consultation

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	and increasing large scale destruction and fragmentation of wildlife habitats which had taken place up until 1992. The motivation for a network approach was an acceptance that isolated pockets of protection was alone not enough the halt the serious loss of species in Europe.	support the Natura 2000 network.		likely to continue to be privately owned and the emphasis will be on ensuring that future management is sustainable, ecologically, economically and socially.	needed for the system with economic benefits estimated at 200-300billion EUR p.a. Further studies have showcased innovative approaches to funding Natura 2000 sites. (EC, 2013) The EC in late 2011 reviewed current funding models to improve effectiveness and ensure funding supports the "prioritised action frameworks" required under the Habitats Directive. (EC, 2013)		processes from county to county in establishing Natura 2000 sites
Europarc Federation	Europarc Federation, known as the "Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe", was founded in 1973. The Federation has grown to become the recognised, professional organisation for European PAs. Europarc facilitates international co-operation in all aspects of PA management through exchange of expertise, experience	The key aims of the Federation are to: 1. promote good practice in the management of PAs 2. facilitate the establishment of new PAs 3. raise the profile of PAs as a vital means of safeguarding many of the continent's most valuable natural heritage assets, and thereby to increase	Primary benefit for members is *"networking, sharing & dissemination of knowledge – Europarc is the 'research & development department' for every PA"* (Europarc Director – pers comm) Peace & international cooperation still an underlying driver. Return on investment for members, centres on innovation, sharing	Europarc is an independent NGO. Its membership brings together the organisations responsible for the management of most of Europe's PAs. Many of these are Natura 2000 sites. Members are a mix of PA agencies (8%), sites (64%); NGOs (25%) and individuals (3%). Governance is through	Annual base operating costs, exclusive of projects, are around 500,000 euro. (Europarc Director – pers comm) Europarc has a diversified funding base: 1. Membership fees – sliding scale (50% of operating expenditure) 2. Project funding – Europarc competes for EC grant funding	Europarc has demonstrated sustainability as one of the oldest PA collaborative networks in the world (40 yrs in 2013). Diverse funding base – member contributions, projects, consulting arm etc. Membership contributions provide 50% of operating costs thereby buffering against financial fluctuations in other sources.	A perception of complex governance structures and lines of communication. Sub-regional structures operate independently. A review of governance was undertaken in 2008 to revise structure & communications. Potential for confusion and competition between different PA networks in Europe – Natura 2000, Europarc Federation, Eurosite (Eurosite 2013) and a

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	and best practise. The Federation also collaborates with others to ensure the value and meaning of PAs is at the heart of Europe. The Federation consists of some 400 members in 35 countries. Strong site based approach motivates the network. Ii should be noted a range of other site based networks exist within Europe at different scales. For example *Carpathian Network of PAs* (Transnational PA network); *MedPan* (Mediterranean marine parks network); *ALPARC* (Alpine National Parks); *Dinaric Arc Parks*; *European Green Belt* (Transnational Connectivity Networks). (European Sub-Regional PA Networks, 2013)	support for their future protection 4. influence the future development of public policies and programmes, especially with the EU, to the benefit of PA objectives. Europarc's work is closely linked to the EC - Environment, the LIFE and Natura 2000 programmes. Europarc encourages cooperation, exchange and the promotion of their work between PAs, managers & staff. Strong partnership programmes: '*Efficient managers for an efficient Natura2000 network'; 'Sustainable Tourism Destinations'; 'Volunteer Management in European Parks' (Life Long Learning EU); 'Wild Europe Initiative'; 'Action for Youth in Parks'; & 'Parks and Benefits'.* Annual Europarc Conference & General	& so saving money. That said there is an ongoing need to justify the value of Federation for members. Europarc promotes many partnerships with international organizations and encourages cross network memberships.	the annual General Assembly which appoints a Council of 10 for a 3 yr term. The Council is headed by a President and is supported by several working groups. Europarc also has a sub-regional/country structure. Core secretariat of 7-8 multi-lingual staff based in Germany & led by a Director, however, this is augmented by partner offices in other countries.	(20%) 3. Europarc Consulting (generates a small profit) 4. Alfred Toepfer Scholarships 5. Other Foundation & NGO support Europarc Consulting was established 2001 as an independent commercial consulting business. A share of profits is returned to the Federation.	Sizable & flexible membership base accommodating institutions, individuals and sites. The network encompasses more than just Governments. Federation seeks complementary relationships with other networks at sub-regional or national scale. Majority of members are sites: a powerful grassroots driver of the network. An enhanced capacity to lobby in partnership with NGOs. Sustainable tourism certification/labelling system can drive regional improvements in tourism management. Well respected and comprehensive transboundary PA programme. Relatively small	number of sub-regional scale networks. After 40 yrs funding security is still a year to year challenge. Funding is not adequate to address all strategic objectives. Workplan ambitions which cannot be resourced. Challenges in prioritizing and reconciling strategic direction based on diverse views of Europarc Council. Country x country variability in capacity. Ongoing need to demonstrate value of the Federation to membership. Challenge of servicing the needs of diverse members. Burden of organizing a successful major conference each year. Secretariat sometimes viewed as disconnected from the field level,

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		Assembly held (500 participants). Advocacy role: establishing new PAs, policy advice, initiatives, good PA practice. Communication role: public education, *'European Day of Parks', 'Junior Ranger Programme', 'World Ranger Day'*. PA scholarship programme for young people in the environmental field studies. Transboundary programme: "Transboundary Parks - Following Nature's Design" including "TransParcNet" which is the Europarc's network of cross-border PAs. Charter for Sustainable Tourism a flagship product helping PAs to develop sustainable tourism programmes.				multilingual secretariat to serve a sizable membership base. Partnerships amplify the capacity to undertake work. Annual Europarc Conference a galvanizing event for the membership.	however this is being rectified through enhanced communication and relationship building with members. Language barriers.
MedPAN	MedPAN operates at a sub-regional scale in Europe to support the	MedPAN's Mission is "*to promote, through a partnership approach,*	The institutional framework provides a degree of political	MedPAN members are the MPA managers themselves. Then,	Since the end of 2009 funding has been mainly through projects	Clear Strategy articulates the network is about knowledge,	Financial sustainability remains elusive. Membership fees are

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	network of Mediterranean marine protected area managers. MedPAN began in 1991 as informal exchanges between managers, when it was operated through a European INTERREG project led by WWF France. It was formalized, on request from MPA managers as an independent organization in 2008. Current membership of 52 from 18 Mediterranean countries. 27 partners work with MedPAN and the system includes more than half the Mediterranean's marine protected areas (>80 MPAs). (Monbrison et al. 2013)	*the sustainability & operation of a network of MPAs in the Mediterranean which are ecologically representative, connected & effectively managed to help reduce the rate of marine biodiversity loss."* (Monbrison et al. 2013). To achieve this mission MedPAN's objective is to promote the creation of a sustainable and efficient Mediterranean network of MPAs. The 2013 MedPAN Strategy outlines five main pillars: 1. supporting implementation actions through fundraising 2. supporting exchange and communication between members 3. advocating for the needs & interests of members 4. reinforcing coordination & collaboration 5. addressing operational &	support (Barcelona Convention, CBD, European policies). Member Governments are responsible for managing MPAs at national level within the network.	MedPAN has several partners working on MPAs (WWF, IUCN etc). MedPAN is governed via a Board of Directors supported by three committees: scientific, advisory and expert (made up of managers and external experts). MedPAN functions within a broader institutional framework comprising UNEP (The Regional Seas Programme), CBD, and the EC. Secretariat of 6 staff. Board of Directors who are much involved in the daily management of the organization (one meeting per month by phone).	submitted to several donors on a 3-year project basis: French GEF (FFEM) and also private Foundations (e.g. Mava & Albert II of Monaco), local territories and French MPA Agency. Several regional partners (WWF, RAC/SPA, IUCN etc) have also co-funded some activities of the network. Membership fees are a nominal contribution with a minimum of 50 euros per year, which is small enough to encourage members with small means to join the network. (Marie Romani MedPAN Secretariat - pers comm)	information sharing & synthesizing as well as anticipating new challenges for MPAs. MedPAN have undertaken an excellent analysis to identify 8 pillars of success for a managers' PA network. Network is site based & is a vehicle supporting member interactivity. Scientific Committee provides credible advice. Development of a database for Mediterranean MPAs and information on the status of the MPA network useful to all stakeholders of the Mediterranean's marine environment Strong partnership approach (27 are aligned with MedPAN). MedPAN has the role of coordinating activities implemented by different regional partners.	minimal suggesting reliance on project /grant/donor funding. Overall funding is fragile. Challenges in sustaining the network: resources, prominence & governance. MedPAN is going through a transitional phase after 20 years of operation. Variable capacity amongst members. Weak presence on the ground that may be rectified through future exchange visits with a smaller group of managers.

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		funding aspects of the network itself.					
European Green Belt	The separation of East & West Europe during the Cold War caused in large parts an insuperable border for humans. The remoteness of the former border of the Eastern and Western Blocs created and preserved a "Green Belt" of valuable pristine landscapes through Europe from the Barents to the Black Sea. Green Belt concept was put forward in 2002 by several organisations from all parts of the European Green Belt. In 2003 the European Green Belt was officially established with the merging of existing regional Initiatives into one European Initiative. The Green Belt is a transcontinental axis along the former 'Iron Curtain' totalling in length over 12,500 km.	The main aim of the Green Belt is to ensure protection and sustainable development along the former Iron Curtain. This entails coordination and alignment of activities between the participating countries. The initiative seeks to involve all levels and sectors of society. Green Belt aims to link local level actions to the overarching coordination structure. Exchange and cooperation in both directions is a desired result of the initiative. (Coordination Group of the European Green Belt Initiative, 2013)	Political support has been forthcoming from its inception from a number of sources. Several governmental institutions notably the German Federal Government as well as other organisations have provided funding and support. On its 10th anniversary it was acknowledged that the Green Belt had made a significant contribution to seeing European policies implemented on the ground. The Green Belt was noted by European Commissioner Janez Potocnik as a good example of effective cooperation between member states, NGOs and other stakeholders. (Coordination Group of the European Green Belt Initiative, 2013)	The Green Belt initiative brings together both EU and Non-EU countries. There is no legally binding mechanism in place for the initiative. IUCN provided a coordination structure from 2004 to 2010 with the back-up of a secretariat based in the IUCN European Regional Office. In 2011 a Research and Development Project was launched aimed at the development of new concepts for the sustainable over-all coordination and long-term financing of the initiative. The initiative is organised in regional sections with a Regional Coordinator for each. Since 2012 the initiative comprises four regional sections: Fennoscandian Green	A long-term funding for the initiative is being developed but is not yet completed. It recognises the need for a long-term funding model in order to secure the continuity of its activities, independent of funding through short-term projects. Different models are being evaluated for suitability including partnership models; network models and foundation models. (Coordination Group of the European Green Belt Initiative, 2013)	Both NGOs and Government agencies are working closely together. Their specific approaches complement one another. (Coordination Group of the European Green Belt Initiative, 2013) Sharing of approaches across common PA issues. Green Belt is a socially unifying concept in a region of past political divisions.	Whilst the support and involvement of government agencies is necessary, it may potentially lead to more complex coordination and decision-making processes. Whilst stakeholders and partners are committed and motivated, the Green Belt Initiative remains a non-formalized consortium. This can lead to the involvement of a country being determined by the commitment of a single individual. To date there is no legally binding document in place to support the Initiative. (Coordination Group of the European Green Belt Initiative, 2013) Financial sustainability remains a significant challenge ten years on from the Green Belt's creation. There is a need to break away from dependence on the

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	It passes through 8 biogeographic regions and 24 states. It encompasses many valuable landscapes as well as serving as a refuge for numerous threatened species & habitats. (Coordination Group of the European Green Belt Initiative, 2013)			Belt; Central European Green Belt; Baltic Green Belt and Balkan Green Belt. In 2012 a governance structure was determined with a Coordination Group consisting of regional Coordinators, selected National Focal Points and selected National NGO Partners. (Coordination Group of the European Green Belt Initiative, 2013)			project funding model. (Coordination Group of the European Green Belt Initiative - pers comm)
ASEAN Heritage Parks	ASEAN member states have declared certain national parks and reserves as ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs) based on their uniqueness, diversity and outstanding values, in order for their importance as conservation areas to be appreciated regionally and internationally. AHPs have been defined as "*Protected areas of high conservation importance, preserving*	The key aims of AHPs are to: 1. Maintain essential ecological processes and life-support systems; 2. Preserve genetic diversity; 3. Maintain species diversity of plants & animals within their natural habitat; 4. Ensure sustainable utilization of resources; and 5. Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, tourism, education	AHPs are established within the framework of an intergovernmental agreement which has the commitment of Heads of State. Matters concerning AHPs are also dealt with at the level of Minister of Environment for the Member States. AHPs considered a flagship programme of ASEAN. ASEAN Declaration gives legal and political weight to the AHP network. The	Individual states are primarily responsible for their respective AHPs. AHP management guidelines specify a number of considerations on issues such as alien invasive species, endangered species protection & development control. The ASEAN Secretariat provides political oversight & the ACB serves as the Secretariat of the AHP Programme & the AHP	AHPs are essentially funded by individual states although they do attract some international funding. ACB was funded by the European Commission for its first five years (until 2010). ACB funding from 2011 has been a combination of Philippines govt support as host of the Secretariat; ASEAN Biodiversity Fund comprising member voluntary contributions	Within Asia the AHP network is the most advanced making it an obvious point of departure in considering pan-Asia systems. Intergovernmental network an advantage as it signals high level political support AHP database & Clearing House Mechanism provide a significant benefit to members and allows for more effective reporting.	Intergovernmental structure can be slow to establish with complex systems. It results in cautious consensus approaches as all Member States must be in agreement. (Monina Uriarte, ACB – pers comm). Complex multilayered governance systems. AHP management effectiveness evaluations/performance & tourism potential still a priority for most AHPs.

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	in total a complete spectrum of representative ecosystems of the ASEAN region" (ACB, 2010). Original declaration signed in 1984 by Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, declaring a total of 11 AHPs, and this was updated in 2003 after Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam joined. There are now a total of 32 AHPs in the system. The AHP network was motivated by recognition of the high biodiversity values of SE Asia and the need to address common threats (weak laws, habitat loss, illegal hunting & logging, human-wildlife conflict.) (ACB Presentation, 2013) Major Categories of AHPs include natural parks, natural reserves, cultural sites,	& research to make people recognize the importance of natural resources. (A-Z Areas of Biodiversity Importance, 2013; ACB, 2010). ACB promote AHPs by developing resource materials & building the capacity of site managers. For example the AHP PA Staff Competency Standards. Regional support is provided in the areas of: 1. regional conservation & management plans that complement national efforts; 2. promotion of a common identity across AHPs and regional education, awareness and ecotourism programmes; 3. exchange of information and best practice; 4. training & capacity building;	Declaration calls for management plans to be prepared and facilitates technical support. ASEAN Member States are responsible for nominating AHPs through a well-developed process & against a set of criteria specifying ecological integrity & representativeness; high conservation importance; legal protection, approved management plan; transboundary values; uniqueness; high ethno-biological importance; and importance for endangered or precious biodiversity (ACB, 2010). Regular AHP Conferences are a vehicle to ensure political buy-in & support.	Committee, with representatives of the 10 AMS serving as members. The ACB is supported through various working groups and committees. Two working groups – ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation & Biodiversity (AWGNCB) and the ASEAN Working Group on Coastal & Marine Environment (AWGCME) provide technical advice, coordination & review of new AHP nominations. There is also an ASEAN Senior Officers on Environment (ASOEN) and an AHP Committee representing AHP managers. (ACB, 2010)	and projects. ACB is working to set up a Trust Fund of $30m USD to provide ongoing funding security. AHP Conferences are subsidized by host countries and delegates pay a reduced registration fee. (Clarissa Arida, ACB – pers comm).	3 yrly AHP Conferences are seen as a significant benefit to members. AHP network accommodates other sub-regional PA collaborative networks in a complementary way. Such as the Coral Triangle initiative; Heart of Borneo Initiative; Greater Mekong Sub-Region etc. (Clarissa Arida – ACB pers comm). Having a dedicated Secretariat – the ACB is a great strength. AHP supported by a good informal network of researchers & national centres of excellence who work in partnership. A site based system (AHPs) drives manager to manager cooperation that happens independently of the ACB.	AHPs focus attention on a select 32 SE Asian protected areas which may be at the expense of other lower priority sites. Language barriers – most capacity building is carried out in English.

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	prehistoric sites and Peace Parks. (ACB, 2010).	5. partnerships with other regional & international bodies; 6. AHP database including a Clearing House Mechanism. AHP site managers receive resource material & capacity training via ACB more so than direct financial support. ACB run a small grants programme funded by German Financial Cooperation (KfW). AHP Conferences are held every 3 years on themes of interest to the AHP membership. The 4th is scheduled for the Philippines in Oct 2013.					
Redparques	Redparques is the Latin American Network for Technical Cooperation in National Parks. Redparques was created in 1983 in order to strengthen the conservation of biodiversity in the region and the	Redparques is a technical alliance of public institutions responsible for PAs within 19 Latin American countries. It is aimed at progressively increasing technical capacity through the exchange of	Redparques was formally created in 1983 following a request by countries of the region to the UN during the 1976 Montevideo Summit. The call was with a view to enhancing regional collaboration between member	FAO's regional office in Santiago, Chile acts as Redparques Technical Secretariat, however, the network is coordinated through the Colombian National Parks Authority. It is composed of the National Directors of the 19 protected area	Redparques lacks secure permanent funding relying more so on member financing and projects. FAO have traditionally provided financial support to the network. Resources have also	The network has successfully supported member countries for more than 28 years, to join efforts and human and technical resources to arrive at solutions to common biodiversity conservation problems. Success stories include payment for	Redparques is a network of Government PA agencies so may not cater specifically to the needs of individuals, sites and NGOs. Country x country variation in capacity and priorities.

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	development of national systems of PAs, with particular emphasis on the Amazon region, providing a conservation vision for the Amazon Biome. Redparques aims to promote self-reliance within the region through sharing successful approaches. (Miranda Londono, 2013)	experience & knowledge between member countries, using basically their own technical, human and financial resources (Redparques, 2012) Redparques objectives are to: 1. promote cooperation between countries of the region by combining efforts and exchanging knowledge and experience. 2. stimulate the training of human resources at all levels. 3. strengthen the technical capacity of the national organizations, mindful of their shortcomings and & potential strengths, and for the articulation of adequate solutions. 4. foster confidence of member countries on their own resources, knowledge and	countries. Networks works closely with CBD to support implementation of CBD PoWPA.	systems. Oversight of the network is through an Executive Committee and national coordinators are appointed by each of the 19 members. (Miranda Londono, 2013) Redparques operates in close partnership with the CBD Secretariat, WWF, IUCN, & with participation from the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization – (ACTO) and the Andean Community. Redparques defined its statutes and rulings in 1985 with aims at contributing to the conservation of the region's biodiversity, emphasizing on the development of national systems of protected areas as representative samples of the region's biodiversity with a strong public system, as well as on the	been allocated by institutions that are party to a Redparques MoU (CDB Secretariat, WWF & IUCN). The Netherlands Embassy in Colombia has provided some financial resources and the national system of protected area has provided matching funding (in kind technical involvement & support). Government of Spain support the network (Tilman Jaeger – pers comm)	environmental services, innovative financial mechanisms, participatory management and establishing common regulatory standards. (Miranda Londono, 2013) Redparques work to construct a shared vision for the conservation of the region. The network focuses on a level of overview that is beyond individual countries. Political support derives from strong alignment to CBD PoWPA. Long term intuitional support from FAO. Interestingly Redparques promotes a concept of self-reliance within the region, drawing upon the expertise between its member countries. Explicit technical focus responding to PA agency priorities.	Financial solvency a constant challenge. Reliance on traditional support from FAO and other partners. Ongoing need to raise the profile and public awareness of the network and what it stands for.

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		skills. 5. expedite development through a more efficient use of the human, physical and financial resources of the region. (Redparques 2012). Types of cooperation include: 1. technical meetings, round tables, workshops, seminars 2. courses or other types of group training 3. exchange of information, publications, audiovisual material & others 4. training on the identification, design and execution of pilot & demonstrational development projects. 5. training on service about mutual interest issues. 6. technical personnel exchange in order		management of wild flora and fauna. In 2010 these statues were reviewed and adjusted. A Regional Coordinator is appointed (currently Julia Miranda Londono Director General of Colombia Parks). Four sub –regional coordinators are also appointed for Central America & Mexico; Andes & Amazon; Caribbean; and the South Cone sub region (Redparques 2012)		Operates as a clearing house mechanism – an information system that promotes cooperation.	

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		to assess mutual in situ experiences. (Redparques 2012)					
World Protected Areas Leadership Forum	The World Protected Area Leadership Forum (WPALF) was established in 2000 during the preparations for the IUCN Vth World Parks Congress in 2003. It is a forum for the leaders of protected areas agencies to discuss the most important issues facing their agencies and to contribute towards the global dialogue on future directions for PAs (Shadie 2002) The WPALF is usually hosted in the country of one of the WPALF leaders. Participation in the WPALF is by invitation, with the criterion being that the leaders are willing and able to participate as part of this peer group. From time to time, the WPALF invites extra participants from agencies and organizations in the region where they are meeting, either to play	WPALFs were initially established to advise on the programmatic direction of WPCs. They have developed into important peer networks for PA agency heads/CEOs. The objectives of the WPALF are to: 1. provide opportunities for heads of park & PA agencies to discuss items of mutual interest & share information; 2. identify emerging issues and trends in park & PA area management; 3. discuss the forward agenda for parks & PA agencies to contribute to the global conservation agenda; and 4. enhance and expand personal networks. (Shadie 2002). WPALF meetings have also produced joint	WPALF was an IUCN/WCPA Initiative of 1999 with the Inaugural Forum in 2000 being a joint effort of IUCN and the US National Park Service. The network operates at a reasonably informal and low key level so does not have a high political profile. Influence is exerted via IUCN.	IUCN's Global Programme on Protected Areas acts as the Secretariat. Relatively little governance surrounds the WPALF. Membership has been variable however, core PA agency membership has come from the USA, Canada, Australia, Mexico, Colombia, Finland, England, Scotland, Kenya, South Africa, New Zealand and R.O. Korea.	Secretariat support is provided by IUCN and absorbed within their operations. Activities revolve around annual meetings where participation is largely self-funded. Host country supports the costs of hosting the WPALF. Some sponsored support for developed country participation has been made available in the past.	WPALF is the world's only network for PA agency heads/CEOs. This group of executive PA leaders benefit from the peer collaboration of this global mechanism. Powerful influence on the global PA agenda especially through the WPC. Influential and wealthier PA agencies have the capacity to direct resources to the WPALF and resultant programmatic priorities such as WPC engagement.	Restricted to PA agency heads/CEOs therefore reflecting priorities at that level only. Has been criticized as an exclusive 'club' of leading global parks agencies hence northern focused. Confused role with WCPA which promotes itself as the world's leading body of PA expertise. Main activity has been forums/meetings and not action based programmes of support. That said the WPALF has influenced the agendas of key global events such as the WPC. Financial model dependent upon the ongoing generosity of host nations so a year to year prospect.

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	a role in the particular meeting or to maintain an ongoing involvement in the WPALF. Although participants are drawn from agencies, they are not officially representing their agencies in the deliberations of the forum. They engage as peers involved in similar work and who face similar challenges that would benefit from dialogue and exchange. (Shadie 2002) WPALF's have become an important networking opportunity for PA agency heads with annual meetings since 2000.	commitment toward PA action. For example the Jeju Declaration on National Parks & PAs, adopted by the WPALF co-organized by Korea National Park Service & IUCN in 2012, seeks to mobilize a global campaign to reconnect people & nature and so engage a new generation of park supporters. (Lopoukhine 2012).					
International Ranger Federation	The International Ranger Federation (IRF) is a non-profit organization established to raise awareness of and support the critical work that the world's park rangers do in conserving natural and cultural heritage. The IRF was founded in 1992 with a signed	The role of the IRF is to empower rangers by supporting their national or state ranger organizations, or assisting in the establishment of local ranger associations in countries where they do not currently exist. The goals are to provide a forum for rangers, from around the world,	IRF work to advocate the importance of rangers as a front line conservation force. They seek to build stronger political support for rangers & the critical work they do for conservation. IRF have actively engaged with the international conservation	60 associations from national, state and territorial entities have affiliated with the IRF, and rangers from other countries have applied for provisional membership with the IRF while they attempt to establish ranger associations in their countries. IRF operates through	Financial support comes from membership contributions, partners & individual donations and benefactions. Membership is open to all national, state or territorial ranger associations.	Grassroots network of those PA professionals on the coalface of conservation. The IRF is the voice of park rangers, in the international community, in calling for greater support for rangers in carrying out their vital role in the protection of our parks. IRF champion the	Has at times been perceived as an industry lobby group or industrial relations organization centred on the welfare & conditions of rangers rather than conservation issues per se. Members are other national level ranger associations so not individuals or sites.

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PA COLLABORATIVE NETWORK	History & motivation for establishment	Objectives, programmes & activities	Political support	Governance	Funding model & sustainability	Strengths	Weaknesses
	agreement between the Countryside Management Association, representing rangers in England and Wales, the Scottish Countryside Rangers Association and the U.S. Association of National Park Rangers. The IRF has a membership of 60 ranger associations from 46 countries, on six of the seven continents. (IRF 2013)	to share their successes and failures in protecting the world's heritage and to promote information and technology transfer from countries in which PA management enjoys broad public and government support, to countries in which PA management is less supported. Specifically the IRF exists to: 1. further the professional standards of rangers; 2. advance the aims of IUCN's World Conservation Strategy; 3. share knowledge and resources; 4. establish global communications with ranger organizations; 5. foster professional exchanges between rangers; 6. Arrange regular international meetings, including a. IRF World	community including through the execution of a number of MoUs.	an elected President and Executive Director. The IRF has established a number of formal working groups: 1. Rangers without Borders 2. Young Conservationist Award 3. Website 4. World Ranger Congress Organizing and Steering Committee 5. Marketing and communications		human face of PA conservation emphasizing the personal sacrifice many rangers have made for conservation (sometimes losing their lives). IRF provides training, capacity building and exchange programs to its members in order to ensure park rangers are well trained and properly equipped to manage the world's most precious wildernesses. The IRF also advocates for good governance and the enactment of enforceable laws that protect rangers from assaults while performing their duties. Regular IRF World Congresses are a rallying point for the IRF and its members.	Perceived narrow focus on ranger's interests.

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PA COLLABORATIVE NETWORK	History & motivation for establishment	Objectives, programmes & activities	Political support	Governance	Funding model & sustainability	Strengths	Weaknesses
		Congress every 3 years; 7. Undertake joint mutually reinforcing activities; 8. represent ranger's interests through close co-operation with other international organizations. IRF run a dependents fund to support the families of rangers injured or killed in the line of duty; a World Ranger Day and International Young conservationist Awards Capacity training is undertaken across thematic 8 areas. (IRF 2013)					
Parks Forum	Parks Forum was launched in 2004 by Sir Edmund Hillary and is the peak body for parks agencies across Australia and New Zealand. The Forum acts as a 'parks industry' association and represents parks and the community -	The Parks Forum mission is *"to unite and provide leadership for the parks industry, assisting the industry to take up its role as a significant contributor to the health of our society and environment, and also as an important sector in the economy."*	Principle support comes from PA agencies as members. This provides backing at agency head/CEO level. The Forum is well known to Ministers of Environment at National and State levels.	Parks Forum is a company limited by guarantee under Australian law. It operates under a Constitution which enshrines a Council of Trustees and an 8 member Board. The Forum also has a well-known Australian	Parks Forum is an independent not for profit entity operating as a company. Funding come primarily from PA agency contributions with Parks Victoria, an Australian state level PA agency providing much of the	Network has proven to be a sustainable mechanism supporting PA agencies across Australia- New Zealand and increasingly into other international regions. Biennial conferences provide a vehicle for the	Parks Forum was established in Australia/NZ so takes a very commercial/industry approach to the PA community. This approach is still not widely accepted within Australian & NZ PA agencies which are

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PA COLLABORATIVE NETWORK	History & motivation for establishment	Objectives, programmes & activities	Political support	Governance	Funding model & sustainability	Strengths	Weaknesses
	PAs, urban parks & gardens. (McCarthy, 2005) (Parks Forum, 2013) The network also provides an international avenue to exchange knowledge, transfer and share skills and build professional networks across the continuum of parks.	(Parks Forum, 2013) It works to *"develop strategic direction for the parks industry and to promote the value of parks to decision makers and the broader community."* (Parks Forum, 2013) The Forum promotes best practice and professional standards for PA management; acquisition & sharing of knowledge, innovation and new research; seeks strong partnerships with aligned organizations and other sectors; and promotes greater public awareness of the value of parks. Parks Forum works to develop products & services in three areas: 1. valuing parks 2. sharing knowledge 3. services to members Programme initiatives include for example: 1. an annual Parks Week to promote	Three categories of membership are available which accommodates a diversity of engagement.	businesswoman and philanthropist as its Patron. A small dispersed secretariat of 4 is headed by a CEO based in the state of Victoria.	funding support. The Forum is guided by a 5 year Strategic Plan.	PA community to share experience and innovate. Links with international organizations like IUCN & WCPA are a strength.	predominantly Government not private sector. Such an approach may also not resonate well across different cultures. Western parks/PA philosophy & culture predominate in the way in which the Forum operates. Although it is branching out into other countries it is still seen as an Australian-NZ PA collaborative network. Reliance on a single agency (Parks Victoria) for financial support.

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PA COLLABORATIVE NETWORK	History & motivation for establishment	Objectives, programmes & activities	Political support	Governance	Funding model & sustainability	Strengths	Weaknesses
		the value of parks 2. a smart phone app 3. a biennial Parks Management Conference 4. a Parks Awards scheme 5. international staff exchange programme. (Park Forum, 2013)					
WCPA Asia	WCPA globally was created in 1958 and is recognized as the world's leading body of PA expertise. WCPA in Asia has been relatively active compared with many other regions. This is due to the energy of committed individuals and/or a capacity to raise funding. WCPA has traditionally been structured around three sub-regions: South Asia, East Asia and Southeast Asia.	WCPA Asia sub-regions have prepared several Regional Action Plans to identify issues of concern & opportunities for PAs at a sub-regional scale. The most recent WCPA Strategy 2011-14 addressed pan-Asia issues as the Commission at that time had been condensed into on region. This strategy was kept deliberately simple and targeted regional support activities which would complement national action under the CBD PoWPA. The Strategy also aligns with IUCN's Intersessional Programme.	The IUCN mandate given to WCPA as one of six Commissions lends influence and reputational credibility to the WCPA network in Asia. WCPA Asia is linked into WCPA globally and the IUCN Global Programme on PAs. WCPA Asia is also a part of IUCN's One Programme approach which ensures a common set of programmatic directions. WCPA Asia actively participates in IUCN WCCs and RCFs as well as in planning & delivery of IUCN WPCs.	WCPA for the most part has been structured around three sub-regions. Regional and/or sub-regional Steering Committees direct the activities of WCPA. IUCN Asia provides limited secretariat support to the Commission including the identification of PA focal points. Strong links exist between WCPA and the CBD & the CBD PoWPA identifies WCPA as a source of international expertise and support.	IUCN through its Commission Operating Fund provide minimal annual support to travel and expenses for WCPA Regional Vice Chairs Sub-regional WCPA support has come from in some cases a single Government such as Japan in East Asia or from institutional support to Regional Vice Chairs. In other cases projects have been developed to support regional meetings and capacity development programmes. National and sub-national host governments have	Network of individuals who provide expertise and views free from institutional constraints. One of the oldest networks of PA collaboration within Asia. WCPA's international reputation in association with IUCN remains excellent. WCPA Asia has been one of the more active of the Commission's regions globally. Numerous regional workshops have been conducted and the region has mobilized well in preparation for ten yearly WPCs.	Small membership given the breadth of PA experience across Asia. Language barriers to building a broader membership Very limited resources have been available to support WCPA. IUCN Regional and Country Offices can only provide minimal secretariat support. Heavy dependence on either the institutional support and/or fundraising ability of Regional Vice Chairs. Changing regional structure - from 3 sub-regions to a pan-Asia Region then reverting back again to sub-regions.

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PA COLLABORATIVE NETWORK	History & motivation for establishment	Objectives, programmes & activities	Political support	Governance	Funding model & sustainability	Strengths	Weaknesses
		WCPA Strategy 2011-14 has four components addressing: 1. Constituency Support – actions to build regional membership and better support members. 2. Priority Geographies – actions to target PA capacity needs in strategically important countries or those most in need. 3. Priority Themes – actions responding to common issues for PAs across Asia. 4. Governance and Operations – actions to improve governance and operational aspects of WCPA Asia including the establishment of a WCPA Secretariat. (IUCN WCPA Asia, 2010).	WCPA members are individuals recognized for their personal expertise so the network lacks institutional support.		contributed funding to stage various WCPA Regional Workshops.		Operating at sub-regional level has some advantages in terms of cultural similarities, language & logistics, however, Asia wide perspectives have not been emphasized to date.

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Lessons for Asia

To recap, this discussion paper has outlined the context for improving Asia's collaboration on protected areas and amongst various management agencies. The paper reinforces the imperative to develop a more mature approach to natural resource management in light of Asia's projected growth trajectories in the 21st Century. This is backed by the call from the Asian Development Bank for strengthened regional cooperation to cope with the intense pressure on the natural resources and renewable energy that will be needed to feed Asia's rising living standards to 2050. The ADB advocate regional cooperation to cement gains; address global challenges; and defuse potential for conflict. For protected areas collaboration is the key to achieving the holistic approach to protected areas implicit in Aichi CBD Target 11.

Asia, with its wealth of biological, scenic and cultural diversity and its growing influence, is well placed to capitalize on the learning from regional protected area collaboration in other parts of the world. The analysis of protected area collaborative networks above is by no means exhaustive yet its scope is sufficient to draw some important lessons for Asia when thinking about what type of mechanisms would work best in the region. Europe has arguably the most developed regional protected area collaborative networks with numerous sub-regional networks operating. Latin America's Redparques system is also a well-developed and successful model. The ASEAN Heritage Parks system is, without much doubt, the best developed network within Asia. Based on the analysis several factors for success are outlined below (here 'networks' are taken to mean 'protected area collaborative networks'):

Embrace diversity

Asia is an incredibly diverse region, which whilst it shares many common protected area challenges, displays as many if not more differences in how these challenges are tackled. A successful network should embrace this diversity of approaches to share protected area innovation across the region. It would be naïve to try and shoehorn the region into a single top-down formal network. An Asian network should respect the sub-regional nature of Asia noting that South Asia, East Asia and Southeast Asia work as logical blocks because of the biophysical, cultural and political ties that bind them. There are good reasons to work across these sub-regional divisions but equally sound advantages to operating at sub-regional scale (costs/logistics, language, and more tangible common denominators). A successful Asian protected area network should formalise the sub-regions within its structure (as the Redparques network has). WCPA's Regional Vice Chairs would make logical sub regional coordinators within such a network.

Successful networks accommodate diverse membership that serves the different needs of institutions, sites and individuals. The network in Asia should work to this end even if initially a phased approach is taken to membership. It is recommended that initial membership come from Government protected area agencies at national level, however, over time membership should be expanded to accommodate sites, NGOs, international organisations and individuals. For example the Parks Forum has a three tiered membership structure and Europarc has a very open flexible membership structure. Diverse membership means the network offers more things to more people.

An Asian network should also accommodate existing protected area networks which operate at different scales. In this sense it should aim to be a 'network of networks' respecting and enhancing the value of current networks such as AHPs, WCPA, academic & training institutions etc. Europarc do this through a series of MoUs specifying reciprocal benefits.

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Ensure a site level focus

Experience shows that building a network around protected areas themselves has a galvanizing effect. Sites become emblematic symbols of the network and members of the network and other protected area stakeholders are reassured that network efforts are directed at conservation on the ground. Sites and site managers are therefore critical targets for network programmes. AHPs, Natura 2000 and of course sites created through the MEAs: World Heritage, Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks and Ramsar sites all demonstrate the power of a site driven network.

The existing set of protected areas shown in table 1 the 'Jewels of Asia' are a good starting point in identifying an initial pan-Asia set of protected areas. Modalities for the nomination and addition of sites to a pan-Asia list can be drawn from existing practices adapted from the examples above (for example ASEAN have a clear nomination procedure for AHPs).

To counter criticism that other sites get left behind it is important that active programmes are in place to showcase more broadly the learning from sites within the network. Capacity should be spread across all protected areas in the region.

Ensure a network adds value

Given the number of existing programmes and smaller networks and alliances within Asia it is important that a pan-Asian network functions at an appropriate scale that adds value to existing efforts. The network should do things that make sense at regional scale and not duplicate national actions, especially under the CBD framework. It is crucial that a pan-Asia network fills a gap and complements rather than competes with existing efforts.

The niche role of a pan-Asian network needs to be clearly articulated. It is suggested that this focus on a facilitation role rather than direct action. Facilitation functions might include:

1. Facilitating/brokering support
    - capacity development & training through others (e.g. protected area academic and training institutions, WCPA experts, best practice guidelines and tools etc)
    - technical advice
    - knowledge and information – provision and synthesis
    - project development support
    - fundraising support
2. Fostering innovation
3. Setting standards
4. Advocacy
    - Voice of regional protected areas
    - Policy
    - Public awareness

Experience elsewhere (clearly identified by the MedPAN network) shows that there is a dichotomy in network function between the technical support role and the advocacy role. The two roles cater to differ audiences and require different modes of delivery to be successful.

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Lastly is the importance of demonstrating the network's value-add through water-tight and defendable evidence. All the networks examined here note the need to respond to questions of what benefits accrue from taking part, especially so if membership fees are involved. Regular credible reporting on the return on investment is critical.

Build partnerships and alliances with care

All networks reinforce the importance of partnerships. It is however, important that partnerships are developed carefully and judiciously so as to benefit the network. It is recommended that a two level approach be taken for an Asian network: Only carefully selected organisations would be afforded 'partner' status based on the link providing an essential legitimacy to the network. 'Strategic alliances' would recognise critical relationships at a different level to partners.

The Asian network partners are suggested as:

- an established Asian regional UN or multilateral organisation such as ADB, UNEP or UNESCAP to provide the necessary legitimacy to the network and more importantly financial support (the network analyses confirm that alignment with an established regional UN agency structure builds institutional legitimacy);
- WCPA Asia to cement the links with IUCN and as a recognised body of expertise (it is constructive to have a pan Asian network reinforce a central, new and improved role for WCPA in the Region) and
- MEAs. Particularly the CBD given the framework of the PoWPA which drives national protected area action but also those MEAs such as World Heritage, Biosphere Reserves and Ramsar which have a site based dimension given proposals to create a pan-Asian site system.

An Asian network should also develop a number of strategic alliances particularly with the tourism sector given the importance of protected areas as the assets of a regional tourism industry. The best motivating political force is likely to come from those seeking economic benefits from enhanced tourism marketing at a regional scale. Linking the network to the strategic interest of tourism is a politically non-threatening alliance that would lead to other benefits for protected areas. As noted above PATA is one of the better developed tourism industry networks in Asia-Pacific and may be an appropriate body to approach.

The alliance of a protected area network with Asia's regional economic cooperative mechanisms is also vital. ASEAN and SAARC both recognise the importance of tourism to Asia's future prosperity. As far back as 1986 SAARC's Second Summit held at Bangalore underlined that concrete steps should be taken to facilitate tourism in the region. Tourism Technical Committees and Working Groups have been established and action plans prepared to promote regional cooperation in tourism, human resource development and the promotion of South Asia's identity through tourism, cultural and eco-tourism development. ASEAN has also called for strengthened joint tourism promotion across the ten Southeast Asian member states.

Nurture the glue that holds the network together

A focus on the needs of members above all else is a common trait with successful protected area networks. Network activities which facilitate exchange of knowledge and the sharing of solutions to common problems were the most highly valued among the networks analyzed. One can identify several aspects that act as network 'glue'. Of these regular conferences which convene the membership were seen to be of common benefit. Europarc's annual Conferences, Natura 2000 seminars, ASEAN's system of 3 yearly AHP Conferences,

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WCPA's regional workshops and other network events provide unique opportunities for the network to meet and develop one-on-one relationships. It is recommended that the Asian network is aligned to what is hoped will become regular APCs, held every 5 years as a form of Asian mid-term review for the WPC. This would embed the Asian network into the IUCN system of WPCs and allow it to umbrella other regional protected area workshops and conferences in a complementary manner.

Most successful networks have also established a web based knowledge system to support members, for example the ACB's Biodiversity Clearing House Mechanism or Natura 2000's GIS system. The power of interactive, member driven web sites or portals with quality databases is highly valued by protected area professionals. The increasing capacity of the internet to handle multilingual material and social media platforms make this an increasingly versatile and essential network support tool.

Having credible institutional membership is also seen as essential glue for successful networks. It is recommended that an Asian network start by recruiting a number of protected area agencies as members (over time a more diverse membership can be grown). The direct accountability of protected area agencies makes them obvious network supporters as they have the most to gain from an effective network. Most often Ministries of Environment provide the political oversight of the agencies and their support adds an appropriate level of legitimacy to the network. Most of the networks analyzed showed that MoE level support was the most effective political level of support.

Finally those networks that could foster innovation in protected areas were viewed as most effective. Helping the network to see beyond day to day problems and be exposed to creative approaches from elsewhere in the region and from around the world was seen as most valuable. Australia-NZ's Parks Forum is a good example of a network that exposes its members to other sectoral approaches and brings an industry style perspective to parks managers.

Create light effective governance

Successful networks have a governance structure that is responsive to the needs of the network without being overly complex and bureaucratic. This is quite a difficult challenge if one is to balance a broad based network spanning 24 countries with the necessary representativeness and political/institutional legitimacy against a relatively simple governance system and a light bureaucracy.

Successful networks have profited from one or two high profile champions as patrons or ambassadors and this would be particularly important for a region like Asia. It is suggested that a number of well-known Asian identities be approached to fulfil this role for the Asian network.

It is also very apparent that a dedicated secretariat is critical for networks that achieve longer term sustainability. Whilst some networks have been able to operate using a rotating secretariat from the host country of protected area agency this has proven to be risky as it depends on the stability and ongoing commitment of that agency. It is also not an inequitable arrangement as it focuses support just in one part of the network. Redparques have operated in this way, however, there seems to be an overreliance on Colombia's resourcing of the network. The model of AHPs or Europarc seems preferable as a dedicated and funded secretariat team has been established to support the network. Europarc's staff of 7-8 led by an experienced Director supports a network of 400 members across 35 countries which would seem to be a very efficient level of human resourcing for a network of similar scale to that envisaged for Asia.

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A final finding from the analysis of global networks is the capacity to raise and manage your own funds. Network structures which accommodate this have a greater chance of being independent and entrepreneurial in how they conduct their business. Conversely those which lack this capacity struggle to achieve true independence. Here Redparques suffers from an inability to self-manage its finances and so they are reliant on other member agencies to handle this.

Face up to the financial sustainability challenge

The analysis of global protected area collaborative networks is clear in finding that, no matter how old and well-established the network, securing financial sustainability remains an elusive challenge. That said the European and Latin American collaborative network models have managed a degree of long term sustainability through a combination of a single foundation donor and diverse business models which derive income from member fees, project portfolios, consulting arms and conferences. In these cases it is desirable to aim for 50% of the network operating expenses being derived from membership dues. For Asia it is suggested that an establishment phase would require a foundation donor to see the network created following which an operational phase would require a different sustainable business model. For the operational phase a degree of ongoing external support still appears necessary. Redparques despite being operational for 30 years still receives financial support from FAO. Europarc receives EC support and smaller networks based on agencies, such as Parks Forum receive central government support. It is evident that an Asian network would require some core of support from a foundation donor, institution or government. It is also clear that a membership fee providing a targeted 50% of operating expenses is desirable. Networks charging a voluntary membership contribution cannot rely upon this income and expend inordinate time chasing small sums of money.

Furthermore it is clear that a business model which accommodates diverse sources of income works best and such an approach is recommended for Asia. Europarc Federation draws income from member fees, a project portfolio, a commercial consulting arm and from scholarship funding. At this stage there is no regional economic cooperation mechanism in place across all of Asia so this model of funding support which prevails in the ASEAN system appears unlikely to be viable for an Asia wide network. Nevertheless strategic alliances with ASEAN and SAARC should also aim at securing a degree of financial support to protected area networks which can further their respective aims.

For the Asian network it is recommended to prepare a business case which would identify income and costs based on current and forecast operations as well as longer term aspirations to grow into new areas. Again achieving full financial self-sufficiency is not considered a realistic goal, however, a high degree of financial independence ought to be possible to achieve.

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A way forward

This analysis is preliminary and aimed at stimulating a healthy regional discussion in Asia. It is therefore premature to attempt to spell out in any detail the structures, governance, modalities and financial aspects of a collaborative network for Asia. What follows then are some suggestions as a roadmap for moving forward.

The framing of an Asian protected area collaborative network in relationship to the WPC is seen as a logical way forward. This would embed the initiative within IUCN's tried and tested ten yearly system of WPCs and see the network operate at an appropriate pan-Asia level sitting above existing sub-regional networks such as AHPs. Using 5-yearly APCs rotated from country to country would provide an ongoing context for the more day to day activities of the network. The APCs as Asian mid-term WPC reviews would provide a platform for a two-way flow of information: APCs feeding regional perspectives into the WPC process and the Asian network taking forward global directions emanating from WPCs having tailored them to regional needs. To this end a message to the WPC on regional collaboration will be generated out of the APC.

There is a need to re-test demand and refine the type of protected area collaborative network that is seen to be of most relevance to Asia. This should be mindful of the expectations of the next generation of protected area managers and professionals. A WCPA Asia survey of 2010 tested broad based support however, a refined survey needs to be conducted based on several more specific network options. Specific demand from the region's protected areas agencies should be assessed as this is the suggested starting point to build a network.

There will be an initial opportunity at the APC to test the interest in a pan Asian network using this discussion paper to stimulate the conversation. This paper will be presented in plenary on Day 2 of the APC and Working Group 5 on International Collaboration for Protected Areas will have a further opportunity to consider options in more detail. MoE-J as host of the APC has offered to convene a meeting of interested country participants during the APC to advance the idea.

Assuming interest and an appetite for the network it is proposed that after the APC a Pan Asia Protected Area Collaborative Working Group (PAPAC Working Group) be established under the leadership of MoE-J. This group would work on refining the proposals toward implementation with an initial milestone to launch the network at the 2014 WPC in Sydney. The PAPAC Working Group should also contain some invited experts from other regional networks around the world to draw upon that experience.

The PAPAC Working Group might pursue a work plan with the following elements (adapted from the framework of the MedPAN Strategy):

1. Scientific & pan Asian site strategy
2. Capacity building strategy
3. Communications & promotion strategy
4. Funding mechanisms strategy
5. Governance & consolidation of network strategy

These five areas in turn would lead to actions to:

- build a network for knowledge, information, anticipation & synthesis
- build a network for member inter-activity & capacity building
- strengthen the network itself: sustainability, prominence, governance, resources.

The roadmap for a pan Asia network should take into account key opportunities on the international calendar of protected area events over the next few years including:

- WPC, Sydney Australia, November, 2014.
- Upcoming AHP Conferences, next should be in 2016.
- Upcoming meetings of ASEAN & SAARC Ministers of Environment and/or Ministers for Tourism and/or ASOEN (ASEAN Senior Officers on Environment).
- Upcoming meetings of WCPA's Global Steering Committee, 2014.
- Upcoming meetings of the WPALF, 2014.
- Upcoming CBD meetings (SBSTTA will be held in June 2014; COP 12, Pyeongchang, R.O. Korea, October, 2014; future protected area meetings such as the Ad Hoc Open ended Working Group on Protected Areas).

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