

Annex 19:

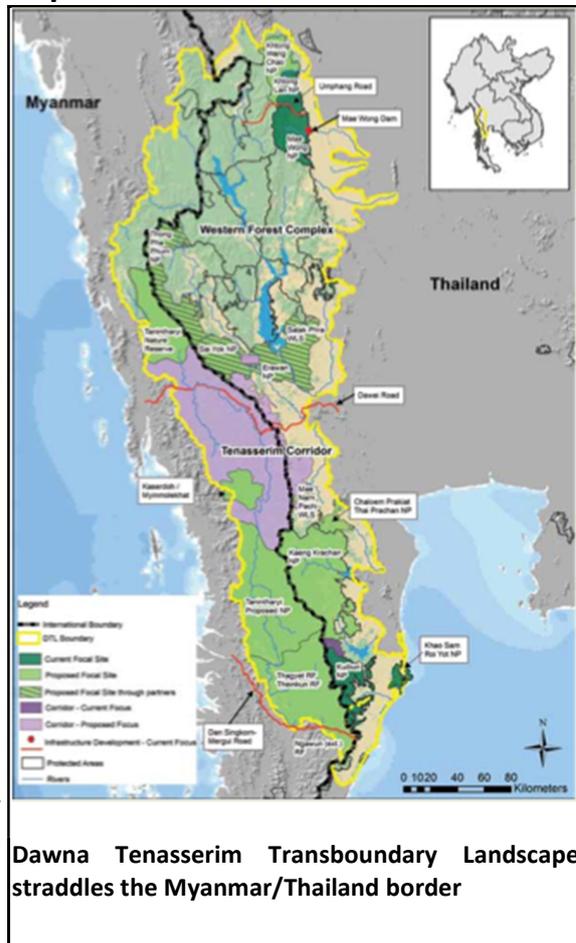
Dawna Tenasserim Landscape and Peace Parks

Transboundary Dawna Tenasserim Landscape and Peace Parks

WWF's advocacy for conserving the Dawna Tenasserim Landscape (see Partnerships section above) is a transboundary initiative that is defined by the Dawna and Tenasserim mountain ranges of Myanmar and Thailand, respectively, and embraces one of the largest PAs networks (30,539 km²) in Southeast Asia. This landscape comprises almost 50,000 km² of wilderness and supports over 150 species of mammals and nearly 570 bird species, including some 200 of the estimated 250 tigers remaining in the Greater Mekong Region and fewer than 1,600 elephants¹.

The Myanmar portion of this Landscape receives heavy rainfall and supports some of the largest areas of lowland evergreen forest remaining in the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot. The Thai side is dryer and covered by a mosaic of evergreen and deciduous forests. The protected area network includes the contiguous Western Forest Complex that is transborder with the Tanintharyi Nature Reserve in the north and the Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex in the south that is transborder with part of the R2R Ngawun Landscape.

Ancient human civilizations have risen and fallen in this landscape, and the area is home to diverse ethnic groups who have thrived there for centuries. Recent history has witnessed much internal ethnic conflict on the Myanmar side and cross-border wildlife and other trafficking. A ceasefire agreement was signed between the KNU and former military government in 2012, since when negotiations have been



ongoing to resolve areas of conflict. Among the significant issues is the resettlement of Karen people wishing to return to this Region, mostly from across the border in Thailand. KNU is understandably apprehensive about the implications of establishing protected areas in 'Karen' areas, a case in point being the proposed Tanintharyi National Park, which was included in the PIF. This has been substituted with the Ngawun, which includes the proposed Lenya National Park Extension and several forest reserves, as a gesture of reassurance.

The key point is that the landscape approach to conserving biodiversity and ecosystem offers more flexibility to design an appropriate regime for managing land (and marine) resources in sustainable ways that safeguard KBAs and HCV sites than more conventional approaches. Thus, the vision of a transboundary landscape with Thailand, within which core protected areas are buffered by surround areas of sustainably managed parts of the landscape is a particularly helpful model to envision over the longer term as the project is rolled out.

As trust builds between parties previously in conflict in Myanmar, management capacity develops and integrated approaches to land and seascape management area realised, so transboundary cooperation can be explored with Thailand to take develop the vision of a Dawna Tenasserim Landscape or something more appropriately aligned with the context at that time. There are also other potential opportunities to consider alongside this vision, for example the establishment of a 'Peace Park', an initiative that originated in Southern Africa in the early 1990s (www.peaceparks.org).

Peace parks are also known as transfrontier conservation areas (TFCAs), which are defined as "the area or component of a large ecological region that straddles the boundaries of two or more countries, encompassing one or more protected areas as well as multiple resource use areas" (Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement, 1999). In essence, TFCAs extend far beyond designated protected areas, and can incorporate such innovative approaches as biosphere reserves

¹ WWF, 2014. WWF-Greater Mekong: Dawna Tenasserim Landscape. Leaflet.

and a wide range of community-based natural resource management programmes (World Bank, 1996). The Protocol commits the SADC Member States to promote the conservation of shared wildlife resources through the establishment of transfrontier conservation areas. There are current 10 peace parks and a further eight in the making.

The initiative was championed by President Mandela, a founding patron of the Peace Parks Foundation:

"I know of no political movement, no philosophy, no ideology, which does not agree with the peace parks concept as we see it going into fruition today. It is a concept that can be embraced by all. In a world beset by conflicts and division, peace is one of the cornerstones of the future. Peace parks are a building block in this process, not only in our region, but potentially in the entire world."