



Conservation Crossroads

Addressing emerging
conservation challenges



Conservation rarely involves straightforward choices

Communities living and working alongside wildlife face encounters, trade-offs and pressures that sit on a continuum from coexistence to conflict. Flagship species can pose real risks to lives and livelihoods. Conservation decisions carry consequences within the environment sector and beyond, intersecting with the social and economic realities of coasts, islands and other natural spaces. Single-sector responses are rarely enough.

Conservation CrossRoads brings together research and on-the-ground interventions to identify pathways for conflict resolution, support conservation innovation and improve decision-making in complex conservation contexts.



A cross-cutting, discipline- agnostic programme

Our work focuses on four steps to navigate complex conservation contexts:

Understand complex conservation challenges

Study human-wildlife encounters as a spectrum of interactions, from coexistence to conflict, while examining the ecological, social and institutional factors that shape these relationships.

Analyse

Use decision-support and analytical tools to work with uncertainty, complexity and trade-offs in conservation planning.

Develop locally relevant solutions

Support on-ground interventions that connect conservation enterprise, innovation, coexistence, and the wellbeing of local communities and traditional societies living and working in natural spaces.

Promote contextualised conservation solutions

Develop outreach, safety and learning materials that support safer interactions with wildlife and locally acceptable solutions for dealing with potentially dangerous species.



Three interconnected areas of work

● Conflict and coexistence

We work on human-wildlife interactions involving species such as saltwater crocodiles, wild boar and other large vertebrates involved in conflict. This work looks at how encounters between people and wildlife are shaped by ecological change, risk, fear, livelihoods and the unintended consequences of conservation success.

● Conservation enterprise and innovation

We support on-ground interventions that link conservation goals with practical models for coexistence and community wellbeing. This includes exploring enterprise-based and innovative approaches, such as sustainable use models that can also create livelihood avenues for local communities.

● Efficient conservation

We support decision-making in uncertain and complex conservation contexts, especially where conflict is an embedded element of "wicked" or messy problems. This includes the use of decision-support tools, modelling approaches, risk analytics and policy discovery tools.

● WHERE WE WORK

Across India, with field sites in two geographies

Kerala

Andaman &
Nicobar Islands

● KEY INITIATIVES

Research and intervention in practice

Human-crocodile conflict in the Andaman Islands

In South Andaman, Dakshin addresses human-saltwater crocodile conflict as a systems challenge linked to waste management, local livelihoods, tourism development, outreach and conservation planning. The team conducts baseline assessments across high-conflict villages to document incidents of conflict, human use of crocodile habitats including livelihood activities, waste generation and disposal practices.

Current interventions focus on improving poultry, abattoir and fish waste management, improving safety and building conservation literacy, and enabling dialogue around compensation and livelihood strategies including sustainable use. Dakshin uses different modeling tools such as agent-based modelling and qualitative probabilistic models to support the eventual development of Intelligent Decision Support Systems and policy discovery in the context of wicked problems and uncertain systems.



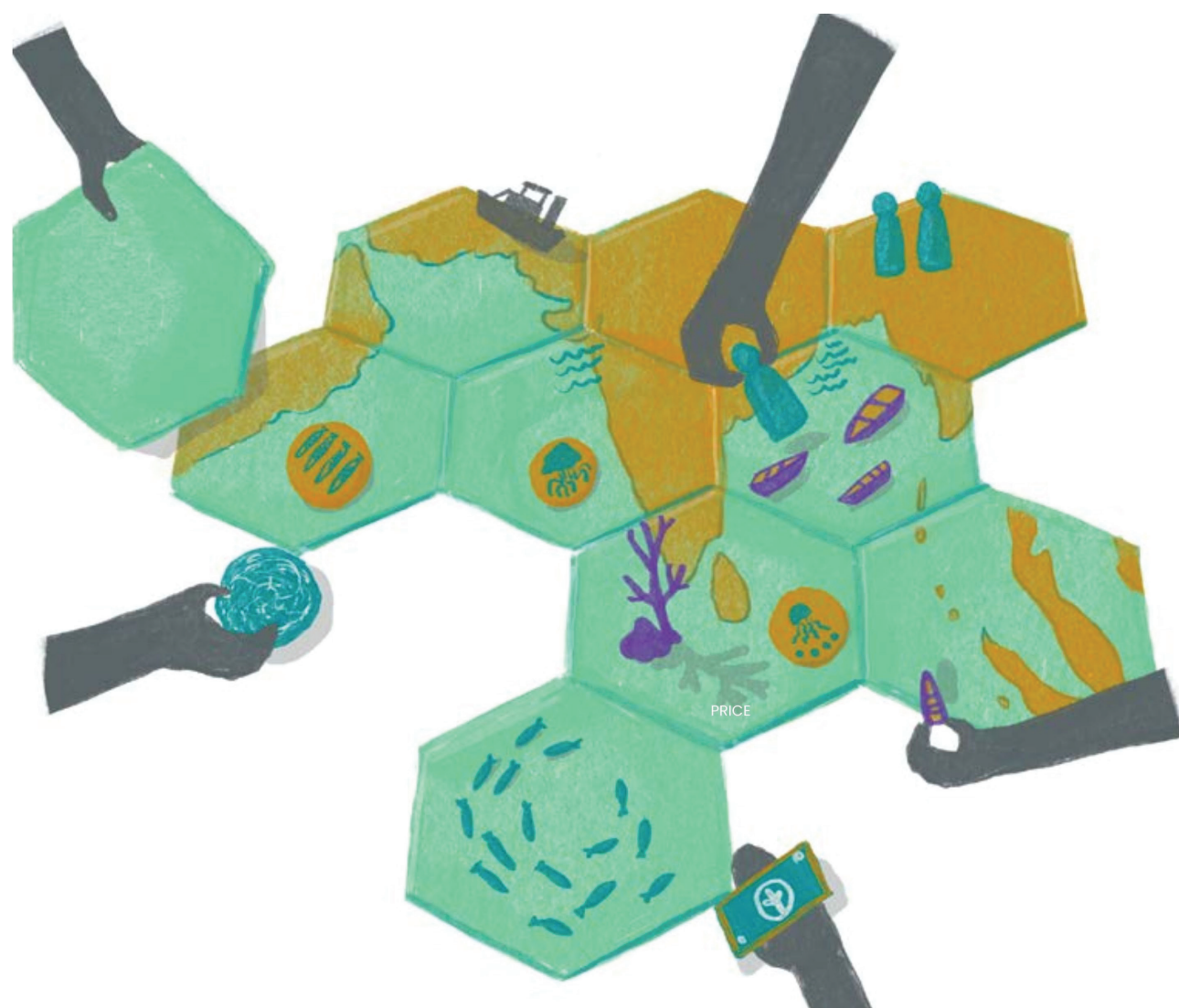
Artwork credits: Karunya Baskar and Current Conservation

Understanding the dynamics of conflict along Kerala's forest fringe

In the Western Ghats of Kerala, agrarian landscapes along the forest fringe are sites of increasing conflict. This particularly relates to the loss of agricultural revenue and local livelihoods as a result of crop-raiding by wildlife, especially elephants and wild boar. Since 2011, Dakshin has been working in this landscape to understand the evolution and dynamics of conflict from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Enabling enterprise development in the Andaman Islands

Despite improvements in education, unemployment remains a major challenge in the ecologically fragile islands. The lack of a strong support system integrating mentorship and guidance, limited access to capital and local market opportunities, and competition from mainland players hinders the growth of local entrepreneurship and limits the potential for sustainable businesses. The project aims to create a supportive ecosystem that empowers local entrepreneurs in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, fostering small scale businesses rooted in sustainable use of resources by coastal communities. The specific objectives of this project include conducting in-depth analyses of the local socio-economic and entrepreneurial landscape, designing targeted interventions aimed at digital skilling and enterprise development among youth and women, and the initiation of locally relevant career guidance modules in schools, colleges and other platforms.



Artwork credits: Ipsa Jain and Current Conservation

Primary institutional donors



Key thematic donors

- Dasra USA
- SBI Foundation



Partner with Dakshin

Dakshin Foundation seeks to work with governments, research institutions, civil society organisations, philanthropic partners and practitioners who share a commitment to advancing coexistence, supporting conservation innovation and improving decision-making in complex conservation contexts.

To explore opportunities for collaboration, write to info@dakshin.org.

Artwork credits: Smitha Shivaswamy and Current Conservation