

# GRID-Arendal Impact Report 2023-2024



# GRID-Arendal

GRID-Arendal is committed to driving transformative change, recognising that a healthy and equitable planet can only be achieved through collaboration, innovation, and the courage to challenge existing paradigms. By embracing co-creation, fostering shared learning, and taking impactful action, we aspire to shape a future where both people and nature thrive in harmony.

This report highlights the impact our work during the period 2023-2024. Our activities are delivered in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and a range of regional and national partners. We are generously supported by the Norwegian Government and other donors who make the implementation of our work programme possible.





# Our Vision, Mission and Approach

## Our Vision

A healthy and equitable planet where people respect each other and live in harmony with nature.

## Our Mission

Transforming science into compelling stories, providing knowledge and building capacity to reduce the risks posed by the triple planetary crisis, and increase the resilience of people and ecosystems.

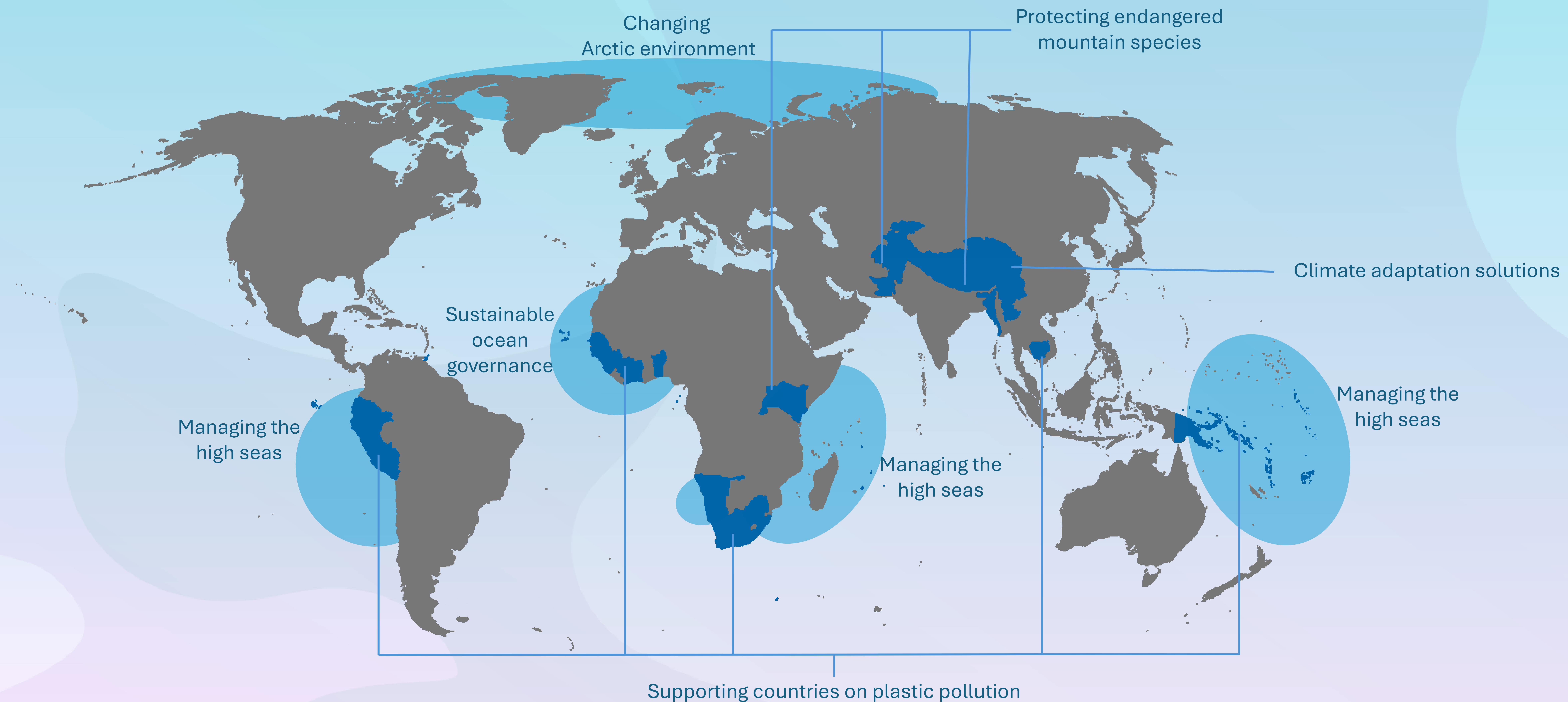
## Our Approach

The urgency of today's challenges demands that we go beyond conventional approaches. To generate equitable and enduring change at the rate, scale, and speed necessary to ensure flourishing biodiversity and thriving people, we are adopting a transformative approach as the basis of all our work.





# Where we work





# Climate Action

Climate change is one of the major challenges facing our planet and is a core component of the triple planetary crisis. Its impacts are disproportionately felt in developing countries, with many regions, particularly high mountain areas, experiencing rapid climatic shifts, significant warming, glacial melting and other severe consequences.

Our work on climate action focuses on increasing climate resilience in high mountain communities whilst mitigating the effects of climate change on biodiversity. In partnership with UNEP, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Nepal, and national governments, we identify and scale up climate-smart and nature-positive solutions that strengthen resilience for both people and ecosystems.







# Protecting Endangered Mountain Species

*Target results: Number of mountain countries taking action to address the climate impacts on key mountain species and communities*

The Vanishing Treasures project, implemented with UNEP and in-country partners, seeks to improve protection of endangered species such as snow leopards, Royal Bengal tigers, and mountain gorillas, while supporting the mountain communities that share their habitats.

The project has led to reduced human-wildlife conflict and strengthened conservation efforts. Through pilot projects, capacity-building initiatives, and policy development, it transformed relationships from conflict to coexistence.

<https://vanishingtreasures.org/>



Countries supported



Strategic plans influenced or drafted



Hectares restored or under improved management



People trained



# Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change and Pollution in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya

*Target results: Number of mountain countries supported in the uptake of nature-based and climate smart solutions and improved waste management*

For over a decade, GRID-Arendal has collaborated with partners in the Hindu-Kush Himalaya region to address climate change and pollution. Climate impacts, such as erratic weather patterns, rising temperatures, and shifting monsoons, are jeopardizing food security and agricultural livelihoods.

In partnership with ICIMOD, GRID-Arendal translated successful pilot solutions into accessible resources for scaling up sustainable livelihoods and climate-smart agriculture.

In the Kathmandu Valley, we have successfully established two waste collection hubs employing nine staff. These hubs have diverted over 200 000 kilogrammes of waste from nature to recycling.



Countries supported



Nature-based and climate smart solutions



Waste collection hubs established



Kilogrammes of waste collected







# Impact of Thawing Arctic Permafrost

*Target result: Emerging topics put on global environmental agenda*

The [Arctic Permafrost Atlas](#) provides insights into the effects of permafrost thaw on people, ecosystems, and the global climate. It integrates knowledge from scientists, Indigenous Peoples, northern residents, and local practitioners to provide a holistic view of permafrost-related changes and challenges. Through its over 150 pages of text, maps graphics, stories and art, the atlas is an attempt at consolidating and translating state-of-the-art knowledge on permafrost to a broader audience. It has been featured at several Arctic and European fora and received favourable media coverage.

“Take, for instance, the EU-funded NUNATARYUK project. Just last month, it unveiled the **Arctic Permafrost Atlas**, offering unprecedented insight into how the thawing of permafrost affects human communities in the Arctic.” *Iliana Ivanova - European commissioner for Innovation and Research.*



Report  
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# Nature Action

Biodiversity is under accelerating threat due to human pressures and climate change. Ocean ecosystems, in particular, face challenges from warming, overfishing, pollution, and habitat destruction. For developing coastal and small island states, healthy oceans are critical for food security, coastal protection, and cultural heritage.

Our work on nature action focuses on strengthening integrated ocean governance in these states. In partnership with UNEP and the Regional Seas Programmes, we support the development of sound, science-based policy for ocean management.

Following the adoption of the High Seas Treaty in 2023, we are also working closely with the Regional Seas Programmes to support countries with ratification and implementation.





# Supporting Sustainable Ocean Governance in West Africa

*Target result: Number of countries with improved integrated ocean governance*

Strengthening ocean governance is key to achieving SDG 14: Life below Water. GRID-Arendal supports the Abidjan Convention and its member countries in enhancing national policy and capacity for integrated ocean governance, tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and empowering local communities and stakeholders.

Key achievements include:

- Development of the first Regional Integrated Ocean Governance Policy
- National governance processes initiated in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, and Togo
- Support to marine protected area governance in Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, and Namibia
- Fisheries law reforms and innovative monitoring in Guinea (Conakry)

8

Countries supported

4

Integrated ocean governance processes supported

13,525

Square kilometres of marine protected areas with strengthened governance





# Managing the High Seas

*Target result: Number of Regional Seas Programmes and countries supported in high seas management*

For over 20 years, GRID-Arendal's Shelf Programme has supported 64 developing coastal states and small island developing states in securing their national maritime jurisdictions. We currently assist seven West African states, from Siera Leone to Mauritania, in securing their extended continental shelf claims.

In support of the new High Seas Treaty, GRID-Arendal is working with UNEP and the Regional Seas Programmes to assess the capacity needs of countries in the ratification and implementation of this agreement. The high seas, also referred to as areas beyond national jurisdiction, covers approximately 64% of the ocean surface. These remote and deep waters are important for global biodiversity and connectivity for many species.

4

**Regional Seas Programmes  
supported on High Seas**

64

**Coastal states  
supported on extended  
continental shelf**





# Pollution Action

Pollution significantly impacts human health, ecosystems, and food security. Our focus over the past decade has been land-based pollution entering marine environments, including plastics, nutrients, and wastewater. We also support implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals.

Our reports, [Marine Litter Vital Graphics](#) (2016) and [Drowning in Plastics: Marine Litter and Plastic Waste Vital Graphics](#) (2021), catalysed action and visibility at UNEA 4 and 5.2, contributing to momentum for a new global agreement on plastic pollution.

In addition to plastics, we support UNEP on awareness raising and policy action on nutrient pollution, wastewater, and other sources of pollution.





# Supporting the Development of a Global Plastic Agreement

*Target result: Number of countries supported in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee process for a new agreement on plastic pollution*

The countries of the world are working towards a new agreement on plastic pollution through the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) process. GRID-Arendal is working hard supporting these efforts. In partnership with UNEP and IUCN, GRID-Arendal has supported 23 countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and South America. Support includes national policy landscape readiness assessments; plastic trade data and source inventories; material flow analyses; and negotiation capacity building.

A media support initiative has engaged 350 journalists via webinars, travel grants, and a toolkit to enhance reporting on the INC process.

23

Countries supported in preparations for INC negotiations

31

Policy, information briefs and fact sheets

350+

Journalists supported to report on INC process





# Setting the Agenda: Linking Plastics and Climate Change

*Target result: Number of emerging topics put on global environmental agenda*

Since its establishment 36 years ago, GRID-Arendal has been instrumental in bringing critical environmental and sustainability issues to the forefront of the international agenda. At UNEA 6, we launched the report [Climate Impacts of Plastics: Global Action to Stem Climate Change and End Plastic Pollution](#), linking plastic production with its climate footprint. This landmark report emphasised the climate dimensions of plastic pollution.

In addition, we have worked to raise awareness on the following emerging issues:

- [Plastic and biodiversity in Sri Lanka](#)
- [Climate interventions in the Arctic and northern regions](#)
- [Arctic permafrost](#)
- [High-integrity blue carbon markets](#)
- [Informal waste workers and a just transition](#)
- [Forever chemicals \(PFAS\)](#)
- [Tyre wear particles](#)

## CLIMATE IMPACTS OF PLASTICS

**GLOBAL ACTIONS TO STEM CLIMATE CHANGE  
AND END PLASTIC POLLUTION**







# More Information

## Key Partners

UNEP, ICIMOD, Regional Seas Programmes, working groups of the Arctic Council, national governments, plus many in-country partners,

## Our work is funded by

Government of Norway, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Government of Luxembourg, International Climate Initiative (IKI), Oceans 5, Blue Action Fund, Horizon Europe, ICIMOD, UNEP, plus many more

## Image credits

Rob Barnes (mangroves, fishing vessel, NIMPA mural), Yannick Beaudoin (elephants), Lawrence Hislop (mountain), Peter Prokosch (gorilla), Tina Schoolmeester (mountain waste), Elena Van Doorn (waste tap), Heidi Pearson (albatross), GRID-Arendal (climate solutions, permafrost map, plastics report cover)

[www.grida.no](http://www.grida.no)