



From SEPLS to OECMs The Enabling Conditions in Taiwan



Challenges Beyond National Forest Areas

Distributed in low-elevation mountain and plain areas below 1,000 meters above sea level.

Red List Plant Species

64%

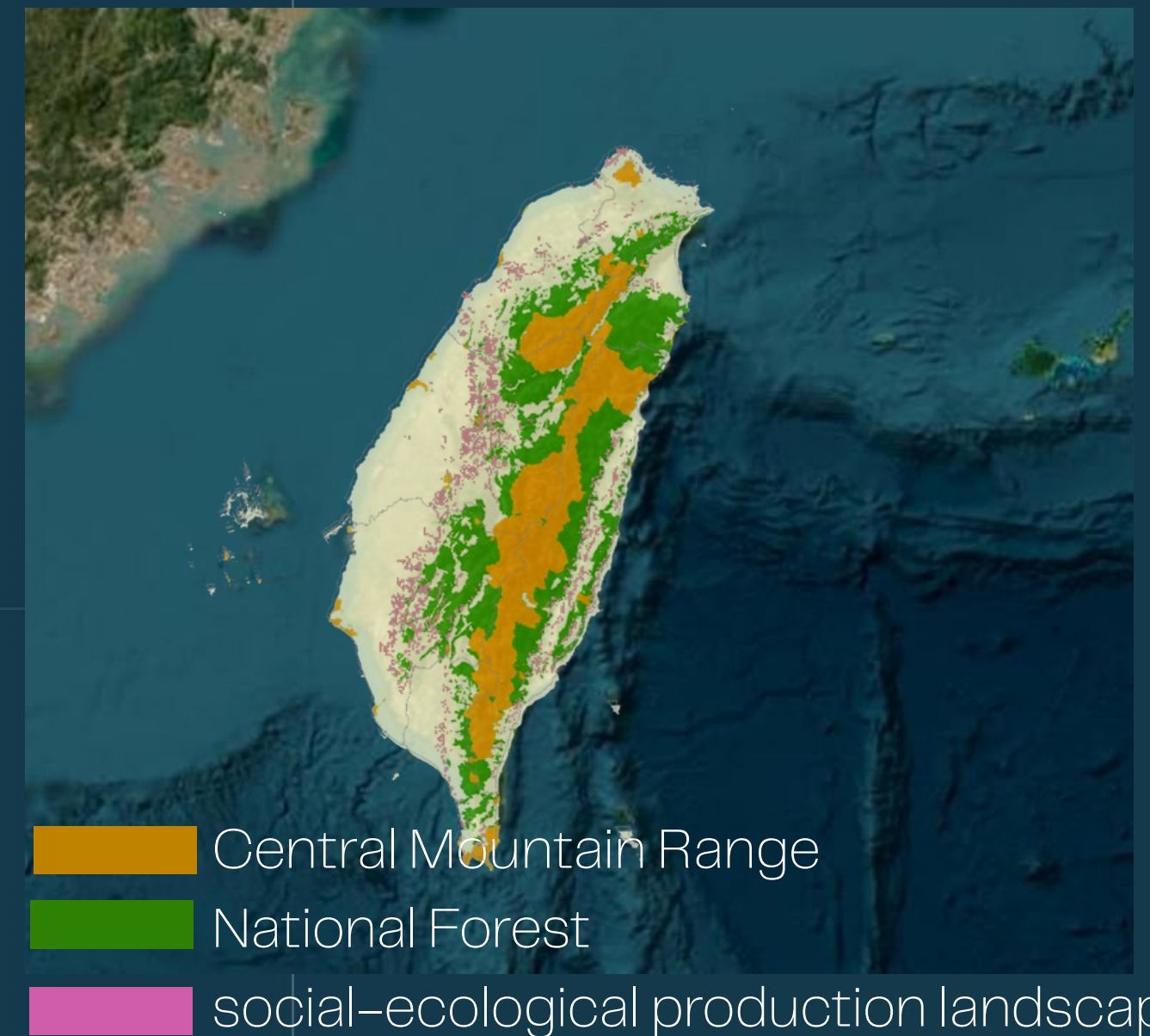
Protected Wildlife Species

55%

National forest areas have become isolated islands, leaving critical habitats in low-elevation mountains and plains unable to connect and sustain ecological functions.

Taiwan's Protected Areas

- Central Mountain Range Conservation Corridor 17.5% (Core Area)
- National Forest Working Circles 42.5% (Buffer Zone)





里海 | 鹽田 | 嘉義布袋
Satoumi | Salt Pans | Budai, Chiayi



credit: 新北市觀光局
里山 | 水庫 | 新北石碇
Satoyama | Reservoir | Shiding, New Taipei



奧山 | 部落 | 苗栗南庄
Okuyama (Deep Mountain) | Indigenous Community | Nanzhuang, Miaoli



credit: 人禾環境倫理發展基金會
里山 | 水梯田 | 新北貢寮
Satoyama | Terraced Paddy Fields | Gongliao, New Taipei



里山 | 部落 | 花蓮南安部落
Satoyama | Indigenous Community | Nanan Community, Hualien



里山 | 茶園 | 嘉義梅山鄉
Satoyama | Tea Plantations | Meishan Township, Chiayi

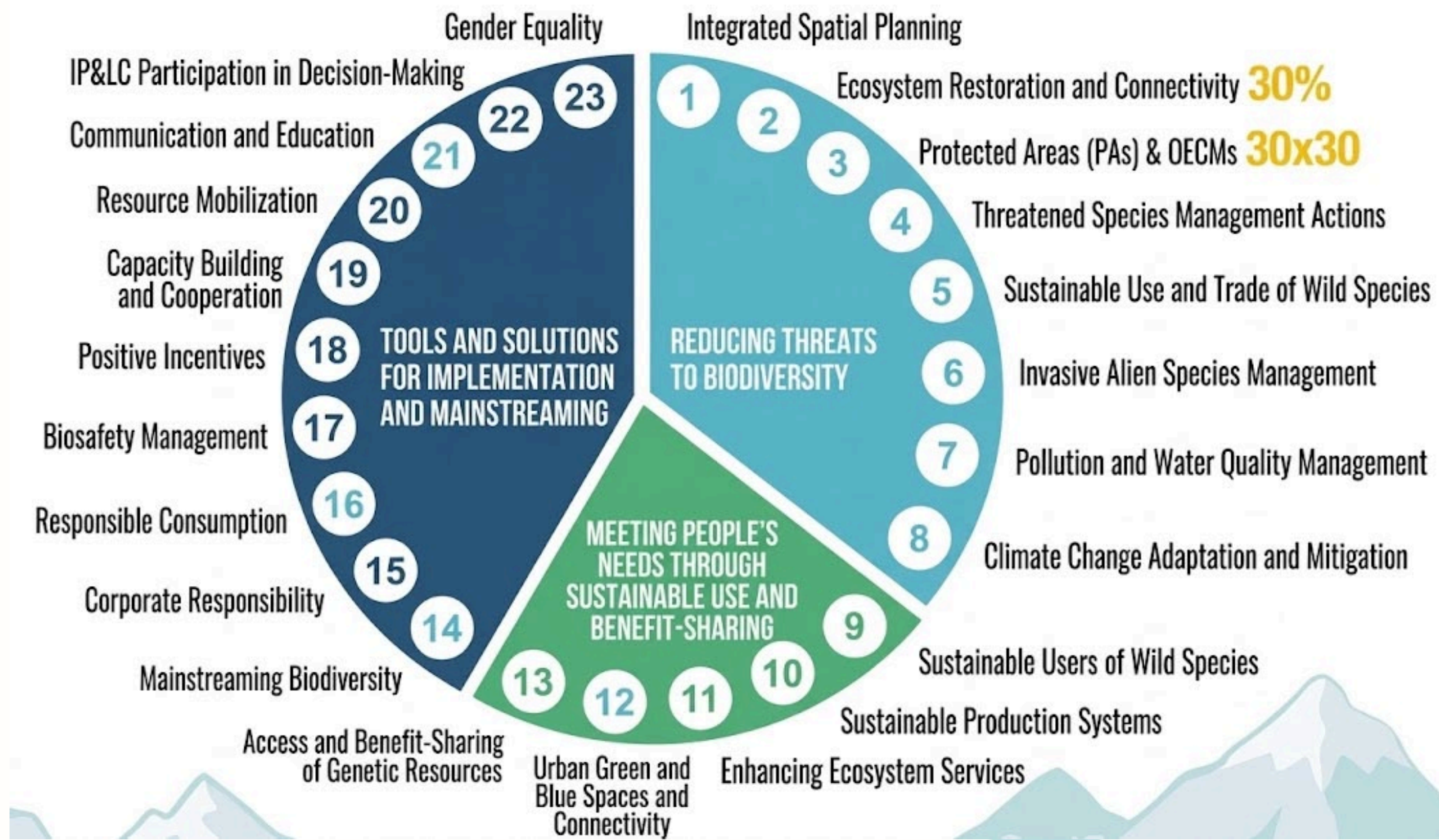


里山 | 湖泊 | 高雄美濃
Satoyama | Lakes | Meinong, Kaohsiung

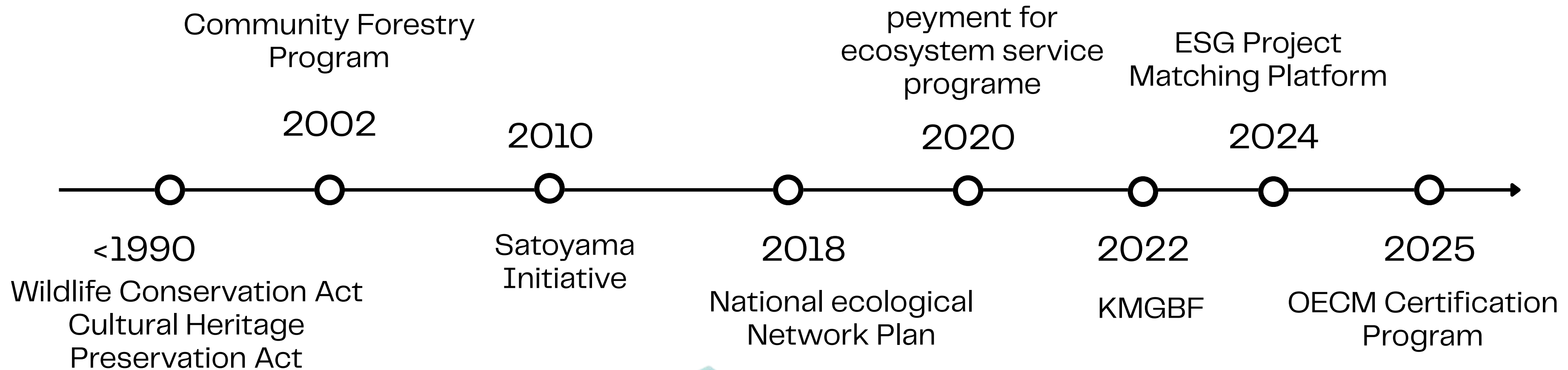


里山里海 | 都歷部落
Satoyama & Satoumi | Torik Community

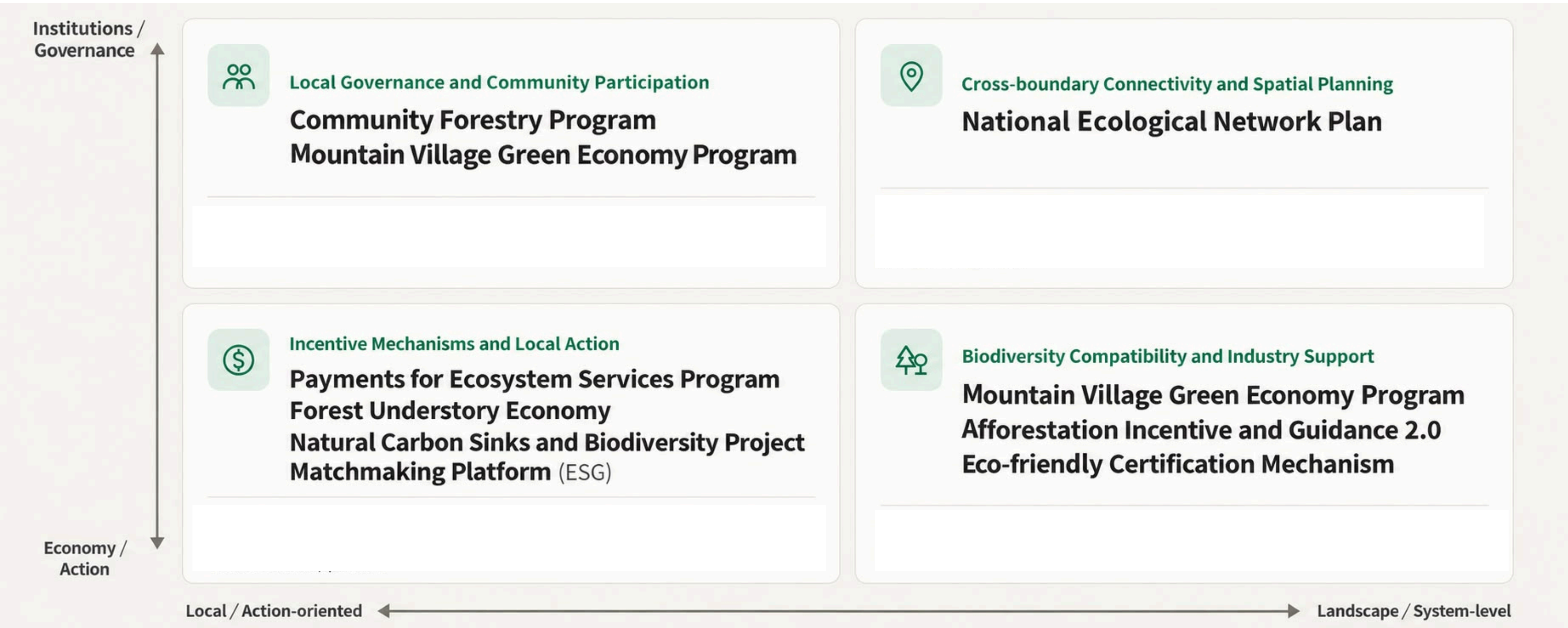
Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) are pivotal actors in practicing biodiversity conservation.



Taiwan's Community Conservation Policy

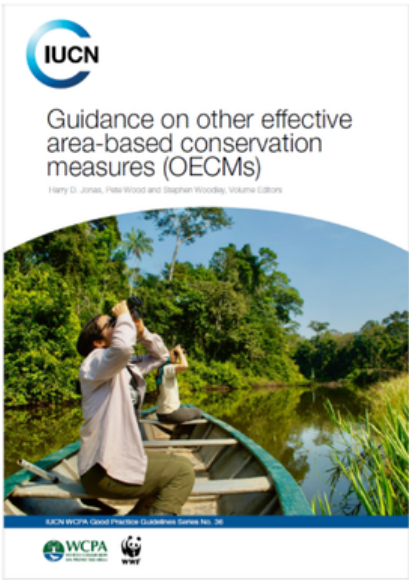


Taiwan's Multi-Policy Support Framework for OECMs



2025 Taiwan Terrestrial OECMs Certification Programme

2023 - 2024



Drawing reference from international guidelines , and Japan's 「自然共生サイト」

2023-2025

Inventory of potential sites,



2023-2025

Trial assessments, and expert consultations



2025
Taiwan Terrestrial
OECMs Certification
Programme

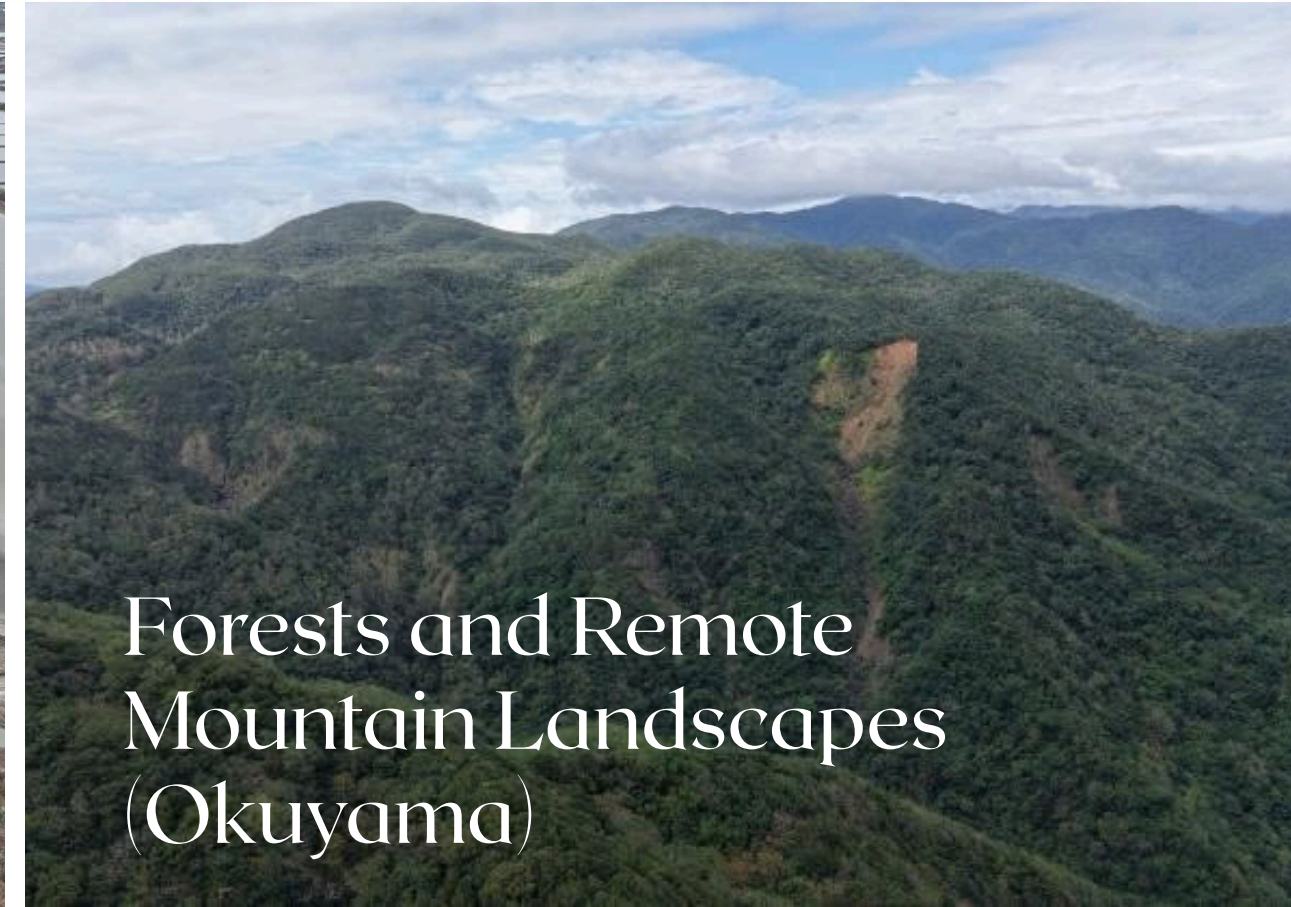
Potential Terrestrial OECM Types in Taiwan



Social-Ecological-production
Landscapes (SEPLS)



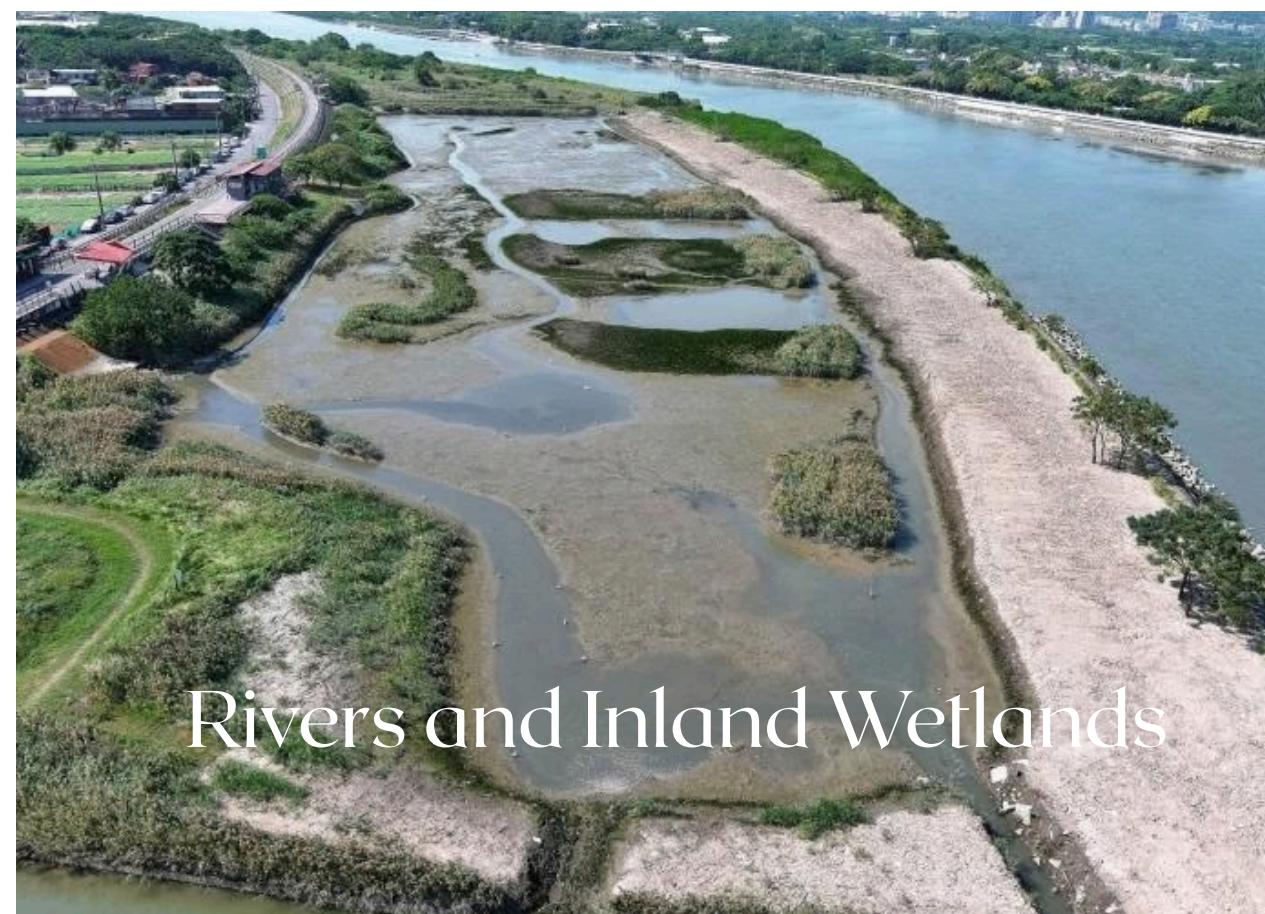
Salt Pan and Coastal Wetlands



Forests and Remote
Mountain Landscapes
(Okuyama)



Industrial and
Infrastructure Sites



Rivers and Inland Wetlands



Urban or Campus Green
Spaces

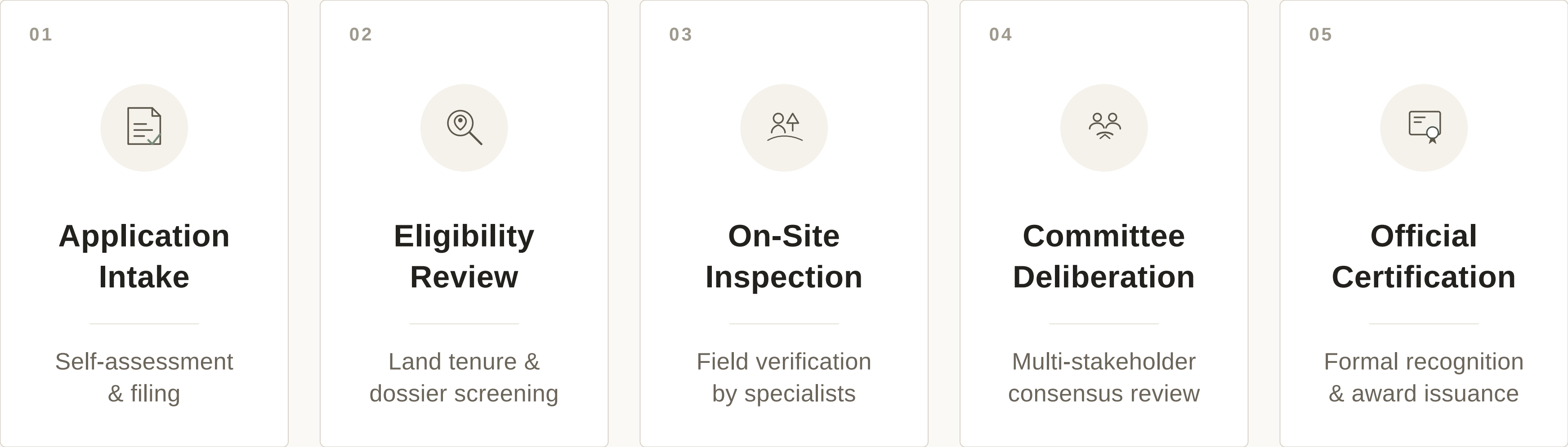
Certification Criteria for Taiwan Terrestrial OECMs

OECM CRITERIA	IUCN CRITERIA	CONTENT & GUIDANCE
1. Not a Protected Area	1 3	① A geographically defined area ② Not located within a protected area
2. Supporting Biodiversity Values	2 4 6 7	① Supports at least 1 of the 6 biodiversity values ② Confirmed by academic literature, survey data, or reports
3. Long-Term Management Mechanisms	5 6 7	① Management plan & proof of legal ownership or management ② At least 5 years of management strategy, including monitoring, human resources, and financial resources
4. Stakeholder Informed Consent (FPIC)	8	A letter of consent has been obtained from the primary stakeholders, or an information session has been held and there is no objection from the stakeholders.

List of Biodiversity Values for Terrestrial OECMs

01	Habitats of endangered species or areas for their restoration
02	Habitats of range-restricted species or species dependent on specific environments
03	Key habitats for the life cycle of certain species (migration, feeding, breeding areas, etc.)
04	Distinctive or intact natural habitats or ecosystems
05	Areas that contribute to ecological connectivity, or areas that serve as a buffer for PAs and OECMs
06	Areas where Indigenous and local knowledge and practices lead to positive biodiversity conservation outcomes (e.g., SEPLS)

Recognition & Certification Assessment Process



► An expert review committee of **23 multidisciplinary specialists** in ecology, sociology, and culture evaluates each candidate site.

How does SEPLS facilitate the expansion of both the number and typology of Taiwan's OECMs?

SEPLS serves as a turnkey candidate pool endowed with "pre-existing governance, established datasets, and active communities." The greatest cost of an OECM is not delineating boundaries, but demonstrating sustained conservation outcomes and legitimate governance—practices SEPLS has long had in place.

3

Maintains biodiversity.

4

Sustainable livelihoods and wellbeing are supported by nature.

5

Cultural knowledge and embeddedness.

Source: Ulrika Åberg (IUCN), 2026 International Satoyama Forum, Taipei.

An aerial photograph of a mountainous landscape. In the foreground, there are green, terraced agricultural fields and a small river or stream. The middle ground shows more fields and a larger body of water, possibly a reservoir or a lake. The background consists of rolling hills and mountains under a hazy sky. The overall tone is natural and serene.

Why are communities and private landholders willing to become or join OECMs?

In SEPLS, OECMs can emerge naturally when local governance sustains both biodiversity and production over the long term. The key is to develop that locally grounded governance model.

Good governance is the bridge: five pillars that carry SEPLS to OECM recognition

Taiwan's SEPLS experience points to five features of good governance. Each one answers a criterion in Taiwan's OECM certification.

FIVE PILLARS OF GOOD SEPLS GOVERNANCE		CRITERION 1 Not a protected area A defined area outside protected areas	CRITERION 2 Important biodiversity values At least one of seven values, with evidence	CRITERION 3 Long-term management 5-year plan with monitoring and funding	CRITERION 4 Informed consent Stakeholders consent, or raise no objection
	Large landscape, definable core The landscape can be large; the certified area must be bounded and verifiable Torik: a 1,200 ha territory supports a 49.56 ha certified core				
	Effectiveness, not identity Being a SEPLS is not a pass; each site is judged on its biodiversity outcomes Gongliao: records of 1,018 species compiled to document its values				
	Adaptive co-management A resilience assessment (RAWs) starts a cycle: assess, act, monitor, review, adjust Torik: its 2020–21 assessment set priorities on water, native species and tourism				
	Incentives and value chains Payments, brands and cooperatives turn conservation into local income Meinong: ecosystem payments plus a jacana-friendly brand in 66 supermarkets				
	Equity and consent: local people govern Community authority, traditional knowledge and benefit sharing are respected Nan'an: 15 local farmers are co-applicants with a bank and a foundation				

 Certified Area: 0.8 hectares

Production-oriented Agricultural Landscape: Coexistence of Pheasant-tailed Jacanas & Water Lotus in Meinong

Meinong links jacanas, water lotus, farmers' income, and consumer choice, turning a production wetland into a supportable and replicable conservation coexistence model.



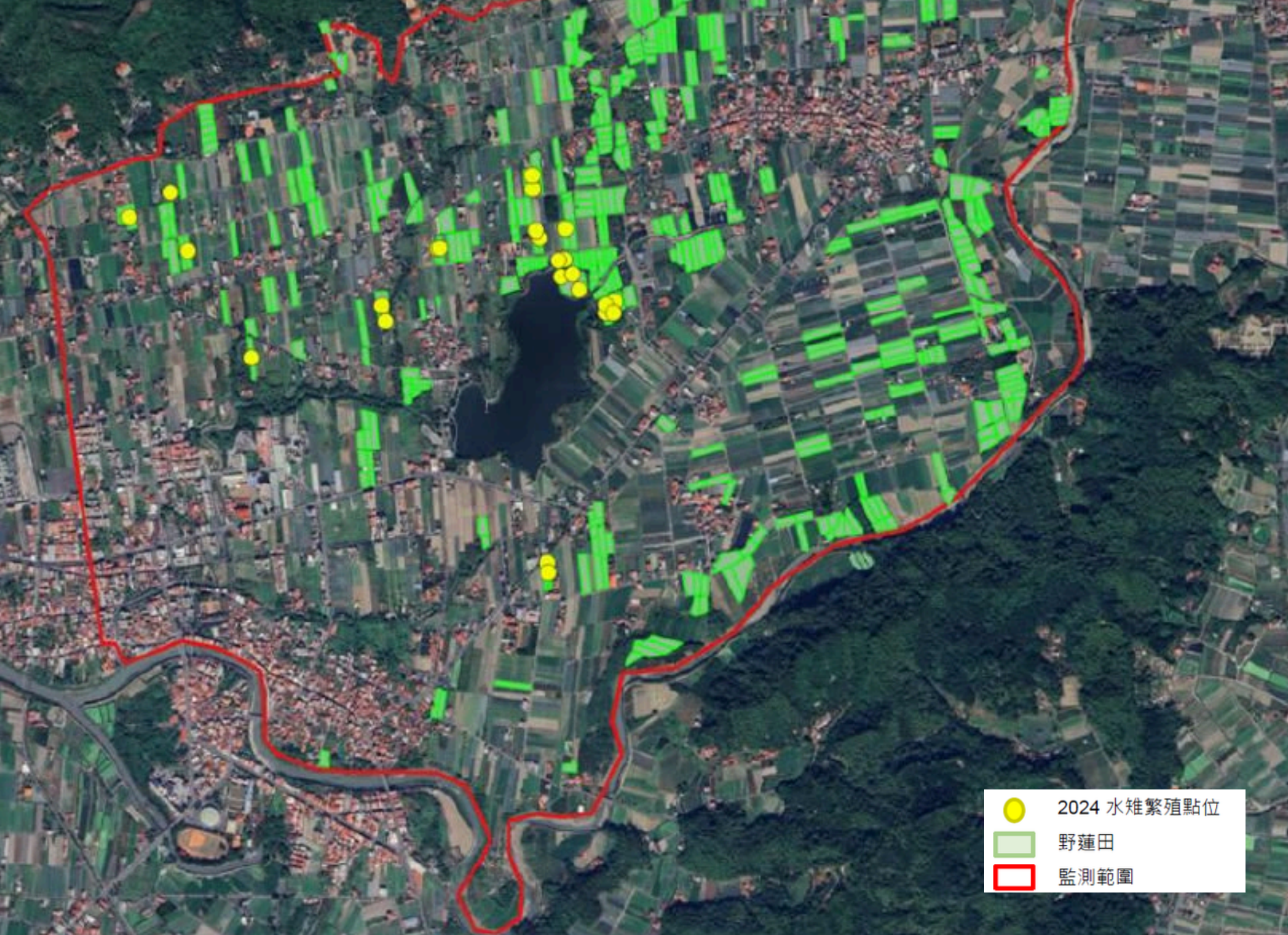
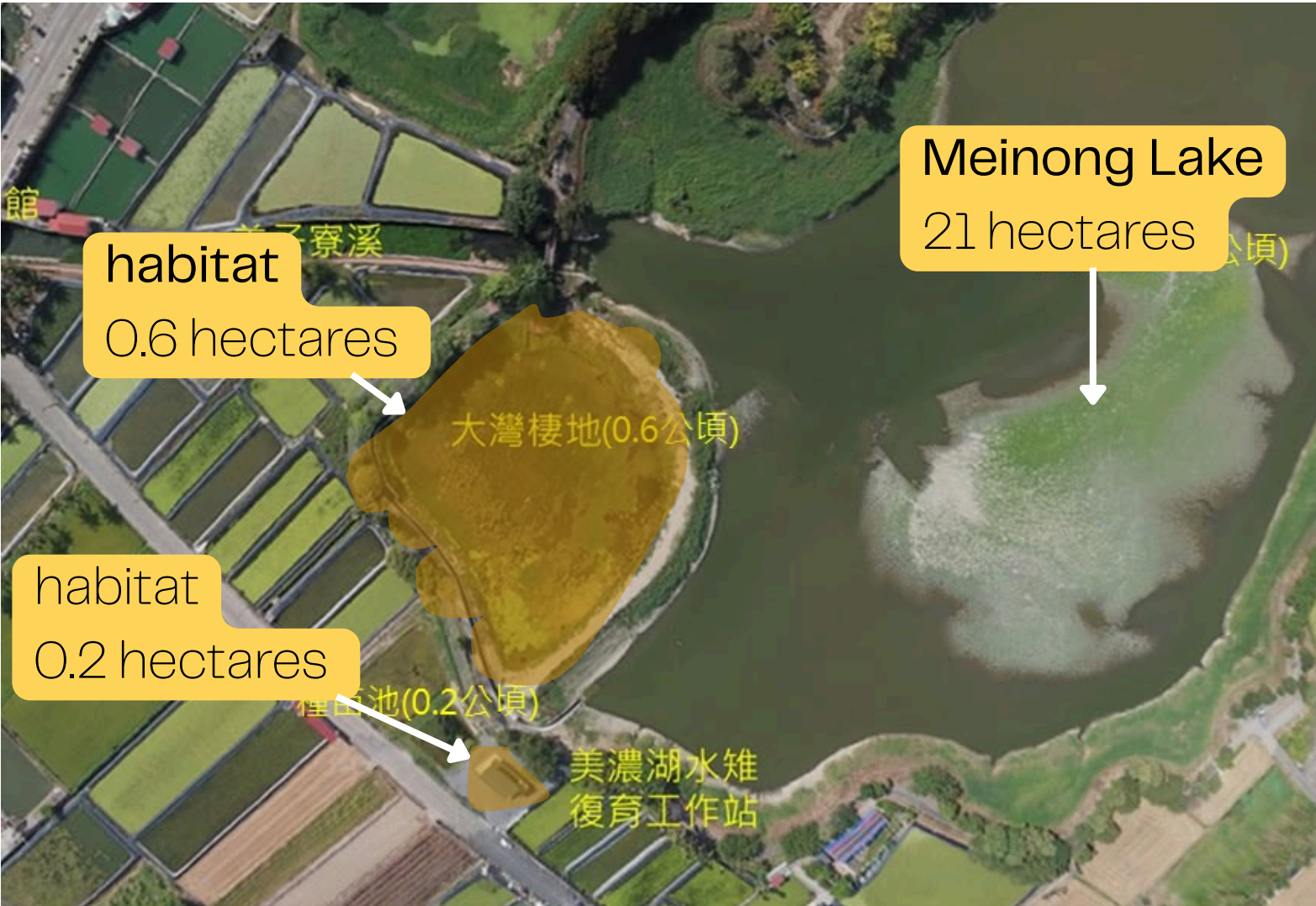
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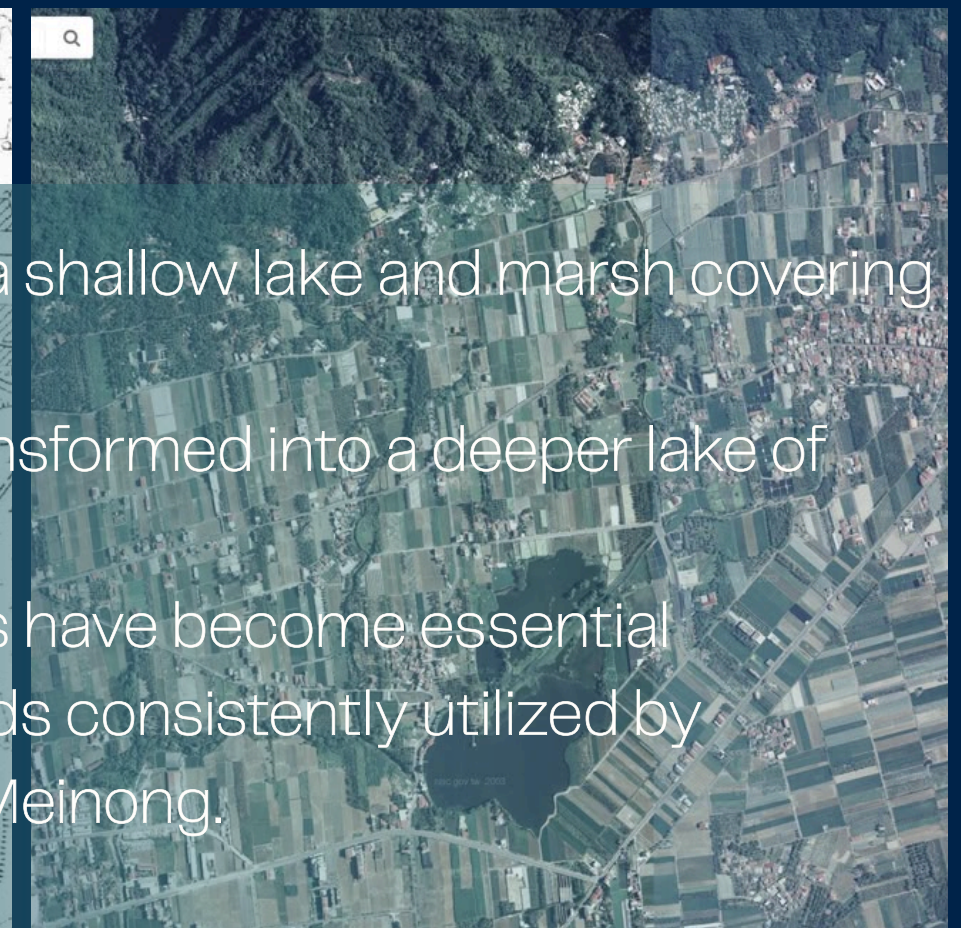
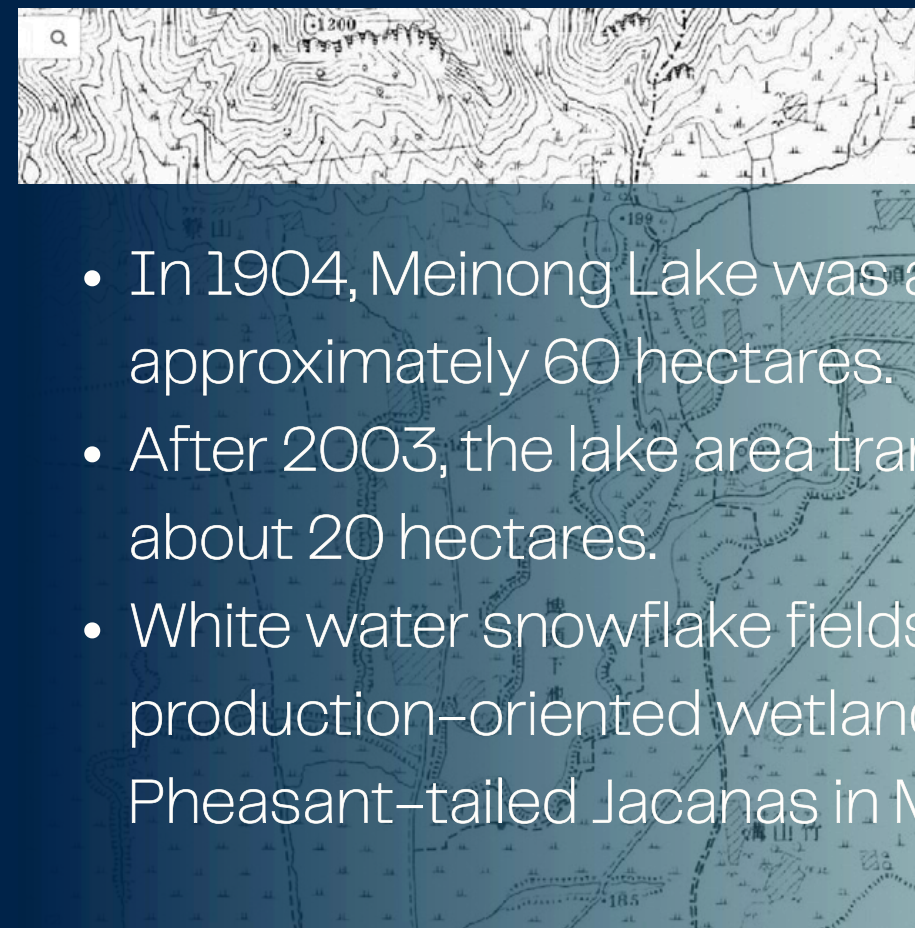
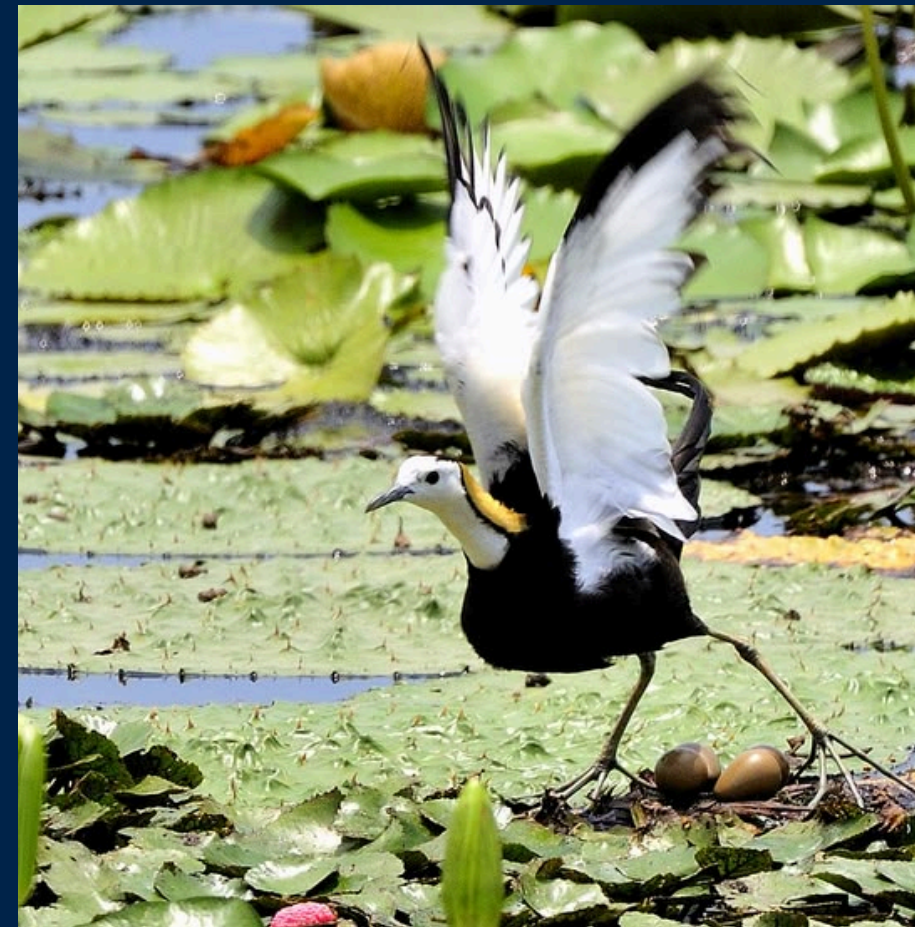
- Core Habitat: Approximately 0.8 hectares
- Surrounding White Water Snowflake Fields: Nearly 100 hectares in scale
- Pheasant-tailed Jacana

Meinong Lake Pheasant-tailed Jacana Restoration Habitat is only about 0.8 hectares, but it is embedded in an agricultural wetland made up of Meinong Lake, surrounding farmland, and water lotus fields.



Pheasant-tailed Jacanas and Water Lotus Turn Production Landscapes Back into Wetlands

The Meinong story is not about conflict, but about adapting agriculture into habitat. As floating-leaf plants, wild lotuses provide essential foraging, nesting, and chick-rearing spaces for jacanas.



- In 1904, Meinong Lake was a shallow lake and marsh covering approximately 60 hectares.
- After 2003, the lake area transformed into a deeper lake of about 20 hectares.
- White water snowflake fields have become essential production-oriented wetlands consistently utilized by Pheasant-tailed Jacanas in Meinong.



Turning conservation into an everyday choice supported by conscious consumerism.

Farmers' delayed harvesting, bird-society monitoring, government payments for ecosystem services, corporate channels, and consumer choice are connected into a governance chain. Buying jacana-friendly water lotus supports harvest coordination during breeding season, wetland maintenance, and farmers' income.



保育共生地 OECM

Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures



Lin Wen-Cui, Tang Ruo-Chi, Su
Shu-Jun, Lin Jin-Ru, Lin Ting-An, Lin
Zi-Xiang



Gongliao District, New Taipei City

☑ Certified Area: 1.36 hectares

Cultural Production Landscape: Gongliao Hehe Water Terraces

Located in Taiwan's northeastern stream conservation corridor, the Gongliao Hehe Water Terraces weave together paddies, ponds, and secondary forests. Here, agriculture is a daily management practice maintaining wetlands rather than a pressure on biodiversity. Long-term water retention allows these terraces to interface and connect streams, rural communities, and wetland species.



場域照片



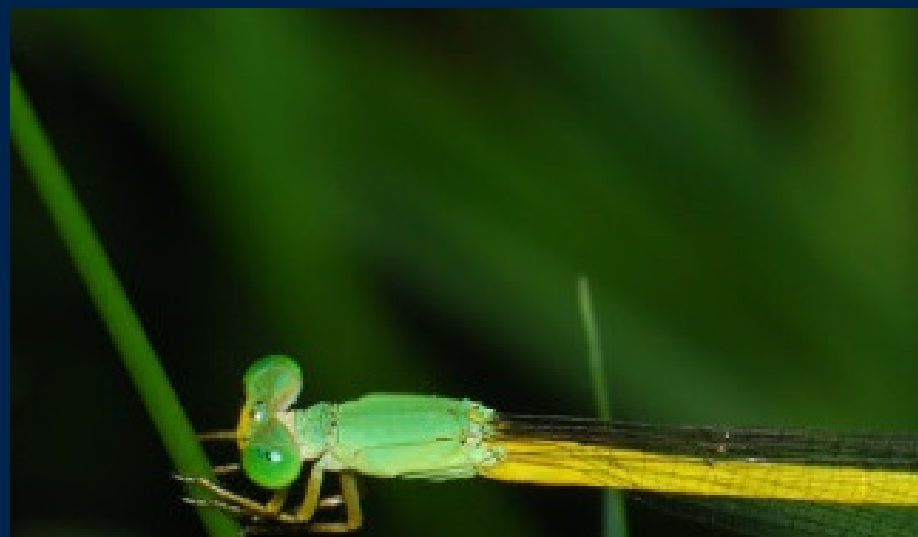


- SEPLS landscape area: about 380 hectares
- OECM candidate core area: about 8 hectares
- Location: Northeastern Coast Stream Conservation Corridor of the Taiwan Ecological Network (TEN)



Maintaining Year-round Water Retention so Farmland Can Preserve Aquatic Species' Life Cycles

Gongliao's conservation core is maintaining habitats for aquatic and stream species through field restoration, water retention, and eco-friendly farming. These outcomes derive from continuous farmland water management, not from excluding people.



- Recorded Species: Approximately 1,018 species
- Red List Threatened Plants: 8 species
- Protected Animals: 13 species

Empowering farmers, youth, and cooperatives to sustain the rice terraces together.

- Recultivating abandoned fields to restore wetland functions
- Supporting farmers' livelihoods through cooperatives and local products
- Replenishing long-term management manpower through returning youth and community engagement





保育共生地 OECM

Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures



Taitung Branch, Forestry and
Nature Conservation Agency; Wu
Long-Xing, Wu Lan-Ying, Ruan
Wen-Bin, Lang Hui-Di



Chenggong Township, Taitung County

☑ Certified Area: 49.56 hectares

Cultural Ecological Landscape: Taitung Torik Tribe (Ridge-to-reef)

Torik Tribe is located in Chenggong Township, Taitung. The OECM core area is about 50 hectares, but it is embedded within approximately 1,200 hectares of Amis traditional living territory and SEPLS landscape.

The site extends from the Coastal Mountain Range, protection forests, eco-friendly farming areas, spring wetlands, and streams to intertidal zones and marine areas, forming a continuous mountain-to-sea biocultural landscape.



From a Single Farm to a Continuous Mountain-to-sea Landscape

Torik's SEPLS is a cultural, agricultural-forestry, and ecological complex: the Tafa River of Life, terraced fields, ponds, Cifanawway spring wetland, No. 2514 Coastal Protection Forest, intertidal zones, and traditional coral reef waters.



- OECM Core Area: Approximately 50 hectares
- Torik SEPLS / Traditional Territory: Approximately 1,200 hectares Landscape
- Types: Protection forests, farmlands, streams, wetlands, coastlines, and intertidal zones





A Landscape of Two Thousand Species.

- Species Records: 490 plant species, 113 bird species, 16 mammal species, 99 butterfly species, 136 intertidal invertebrate species, 30 intertidal microalgae species...
- Threatened and Protected Species: 3 vulnerable plant species (Red List), 16 protected wildlife species

Community-led Adaptive Co-management

- Established the Torik Agroforestry Production Cooperative in 2025 as the community governance core.
- Safeguarding Traditional Ecological Knowledge
- Empowering the Local Bio-Economy

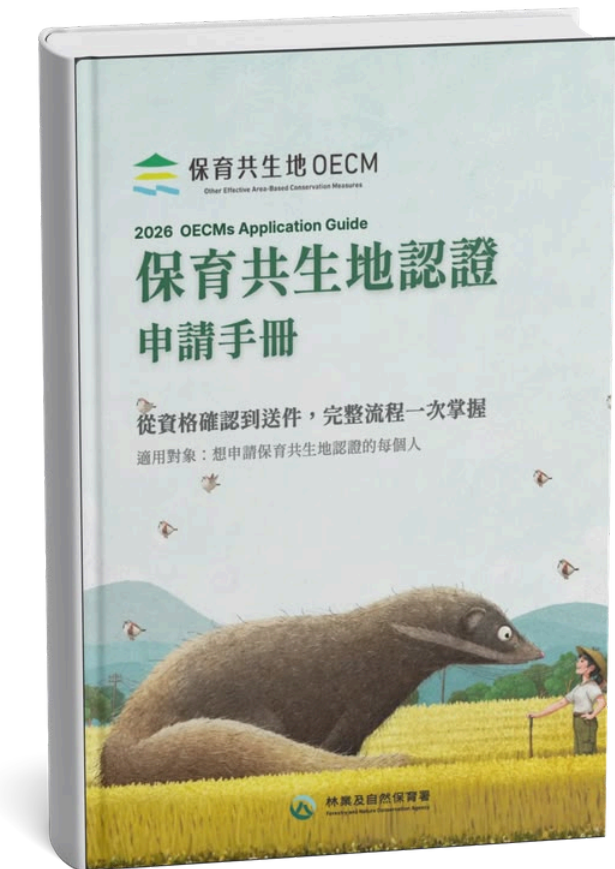


Challenges / Prospects

Conceptual Ambiguity

The public frequently mistakes OECMs for newly designated statutory protected areas.

- Summary Infographic
- At-a-Glance Guide
- Practitioner Application Manual
- Satoyama Community Outreach and Empowerment



▲ At-a-Glance Guide & Practitioner Application Manual



▲ Platform Leveraging: Promoting OECMs via the Taiwan Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (TPSI)

Challenges / Prospects

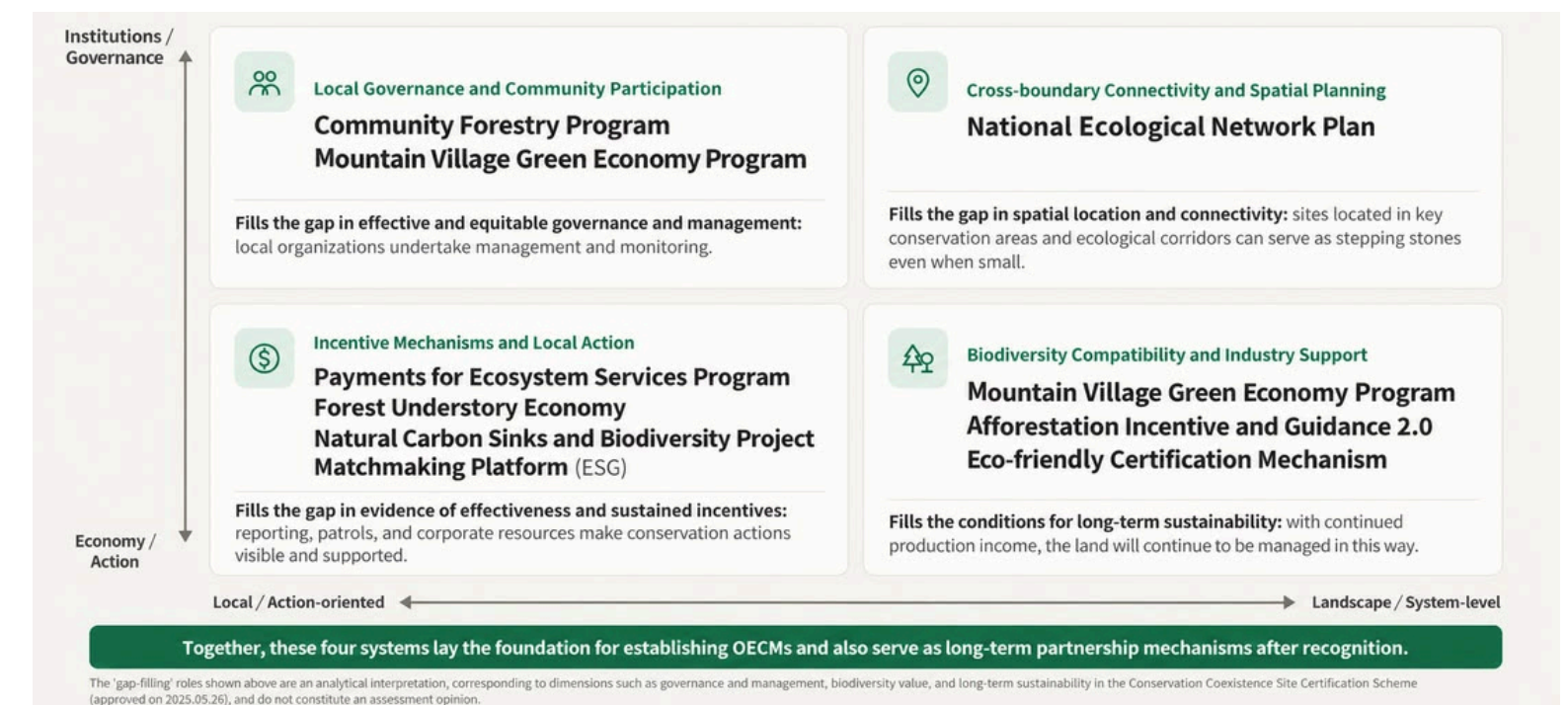
Insufficient Incentives

how to systematically aggregate fragmented private lands into contiguous, large-scale extents

- CFP → SYI (SEPLS) → OECM → TEN
- At-a-Glance Guide
- Collaborative Models – Corporate Resources (ESG-OECM)
- Support Certificates, Corporate support



- ▲ ESG Matchmaking Platform: Channeling corporate funding to civil society initiatives



- ▲ Targeted Policy Instruments: Delivering tailored subsidies and policy tools based on specific sectoral roles

Challenges / Prospects

Procedural FPIC:

Core Governance Challenges in Complex Tenures

- Tribal Assembly Deficits

Traditional/statutory assemblies often fail to convene due to depopulation, sub-threshold quorum, or miniature village size.

- Ambiguous Stakeholder Boundaries

Lacking direct restrictions on private property rights, procedures default strictly to titled landowners, leaving the wider pool of legitimate customary stakeholders undefined.

