

INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE

STRIDE WITH PRIDE





Cover photos:

Tiger, Lion, Puma, Cheetah photos by **Shivang Mehta**

Leopard & Snow Leopard photos by **Nirmalya Chakraborty**

Jaguar photo by: **Southwild Pantanal**



INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE

S T R I D E W I T H P R I D E



Lion, Tiger, Cheetah, Puma & Snow Leopard Photos by **Shivang Mehta**

Leopard Photo by **Tapan Seth**


Jaguar photo by **Lucas Bustamanteld**



WHY TO SAVE BIG CATS

 Shivang Mehta



 Madhya Pradesh Forest Department

Since time immemorial, Big Cats have been central to human imagination, influencing cultures and defining civilizations as icons of power, courage and majesty. Big Cats are crucial for maintaining the balance of ecosystems. As apex predators, they regulate prey populations, which helps to maintain the health of the landscapes and prevents overgrazing that can lead to ecological calamities like wildfires and disease. Protecting Big Cats also safeguards the habitats they roam, which are home to many other species, including some that are critically endangered and endemic, and repository for rich biodiversity. For instance, Asian elephant populations, Sumatran rhinos, and Sumatran orangutans all share landscapes with tigers. Moreover, these Big Cat habitats often ensure regional water security for humankind; for example, the rivers flowing from snow leopard territories are essential for over 300 million of humans in Asia. Besides conserving wilderness, these Big Cat habitats also provide a range of associated economic, social, cultural and spiritual services. Preserving these habitats not only safeguards these ecosystem services but also helps mitigating natural disasters, conserving soil, control pandemics, supports climate adaptation and contribute to climate change mitigation by storing and sequestering carbon. Big Cat conservation is also interwoven with local livelihood economy emanating from various income generation activities including sustainable wildlife tourism. Thus, saving Big Cats is not just about preserving a single species; it's about protecting entire ecosystem, countless other species and associated biodiversity, and vital resources for human populations.



EMERGENCE OF INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE (IBCA)

 Shivang Mehta

Management challenges and ecological requirements for Big Cats are unique and novel from other species. This necessitates a specialised targeted conservation efforts for securing the future of Big Cats globally. No international body is, at present, exclusively addressing the conservation challenges of Big Cats across their range.

India has a long-standing experience on tiger agenda and exemplary conservation models for Big Cats like lion, snow leopard and leopard. Recent intercontinental translocation and successful implementation of Project Cheetah in India reaffirms country's leading role in Big Cat conservation. Acknowledging this, in the mega international event held at Mysuru, Karnataka on April 09, 2023 to commemorate 50 years of India's Project Tiger; the Honourable Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi launched the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) for conservation of seven Big Cats namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma at global level. The Cabinet approved the establishment of IBCA, with its headquarters in India, on February 29, 2024.

The IBCA has been envisioned as a multi-country, multi-agency coalition, comprising of 95 Big Cat range countries, non-range countries with an interest in Big Cat conservation, conservation partners, scientific



organizations as well as business groups and corporates committed to supporting Big Cat conservation efforts. The primary objective of IBCA is to facilitate collaboration and synergy among stakeholders, consolidating successful conservation practices and expertise and replicating them in range countries. This unified approach, bolstered by financial support, aims to strengthen the conservation agenda and halt the decline in Big Cat populations. IBCA seeks to lead by example, bringing together range countries and other stakeholders on a common platform to champion the cause of Big Cat conservation on a global scale.


A photograph of a leopard and a black panther sitting on a large, grey rock in a lush green forest. The leopard is lying down, looking towards the camera, while the black panther is sitting upright, also looking towards the camera. The background is a dense, out-of-focus green forest.


VISION

To secure the long-term conservation of the world's seven Big Cat species through advocacy, collaborative action and knowledge sharing so as to permit these majestic creatures to perform their ecological role.

OBJECTIVES

- Foster international cooperation and advocacy for conservation of major seven Big Cat species, their landscapes and biodiversity for a livable planet.
- Enhance knowledge exchange on Big Cat threats and solutions.
- Build capacity of range countries for effective Big Cat management.
- Raise global awareness and promote outreach activities about the importance of seven big cat conservation.
- Mobilize resources and explore synergy with International Bodies associated with conservation.

 Tapan Seth

 Rathika Ramasamy



KEY FOCUS AREAS

- Synergy through a collaborative platform for dissemination of best practices of Big Cat conservation
- Provide access to a central common repository of technical know-how and capacity building
- Strengthen the existing species-specific intergovernmental platforms, networks and transnational initiatives on conservation and protection
- Secure planet's ecological future and mitigate adverse effects of climate change for a livable planet.



ACTION PORTFOLIOS

There is a gap at present in the availability of resources, optimum utilization of available practices and processes which are based on robust science and converged with field craft in many big cat range countries. This gap stems primarily from the need to strengthen systematic and institutionalized delivery of capacity building and implementation measures and a shortage of suitable financing arrangements to apply fundamental tenets of Big Cat conservation on ground besides execution of innovative and novel technologies. These entail advocacy, engagement of international species experts and subject matter specialists, on-ground management interventions, extensive outreach and dissemination of knowledge products which would support and further strengthen the framework envisaged under IBCA at global scale.

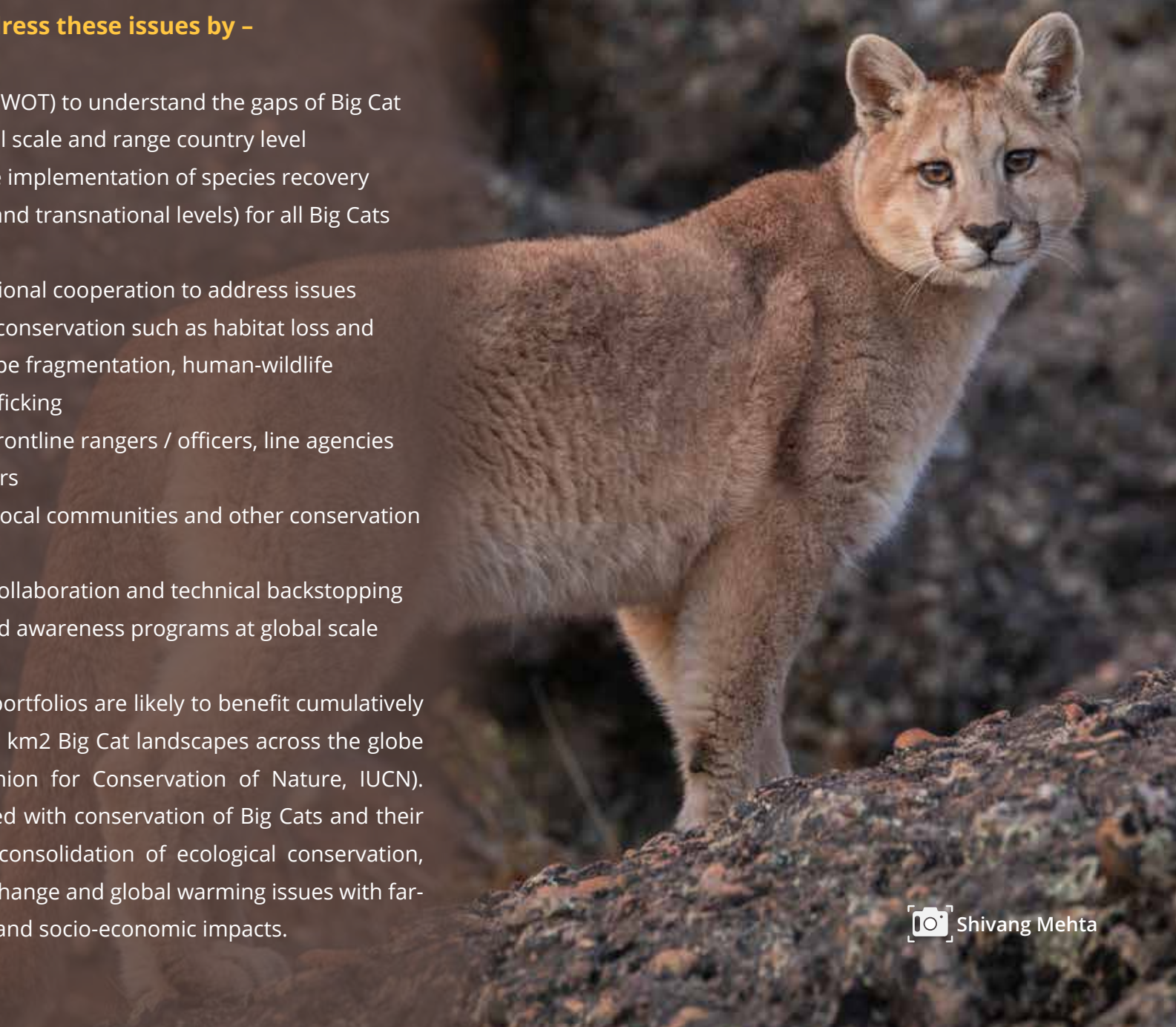
IBCA envisages to address this for all Big Cat range countries, majority of whom face similar challenges such as habitat loss, habitat degradation, landscape fragmentation, illegal wildlife trade, poaching and human-wildlife conflict resulting in decline in Big Cat numbers besides poor status of prey and their habitat.




IBCA envisions to address these issues by –

1. Situational analysis (SWOT) to understand the gaps of Big Cat conservation at global scale and range country level
2. Develop and facilitate implementation of species recovery plans (both national and transnational levels) for all Big Cats across their range
3. Advocate for international cooperation to address issues pertaining to Big Cat conservation such as habitat loss and degradation, landscape fragmentation, human-wildlife interface, wildlife trafficking
4. Capacity building of frontline rangers / officers, line agencies and other stakeholders
5. Skill development of local communities and other conservation agencies
6. Knowledge sharing, collaboration and technical backstopping
7. Intensify outreach and awareness programs at global scale

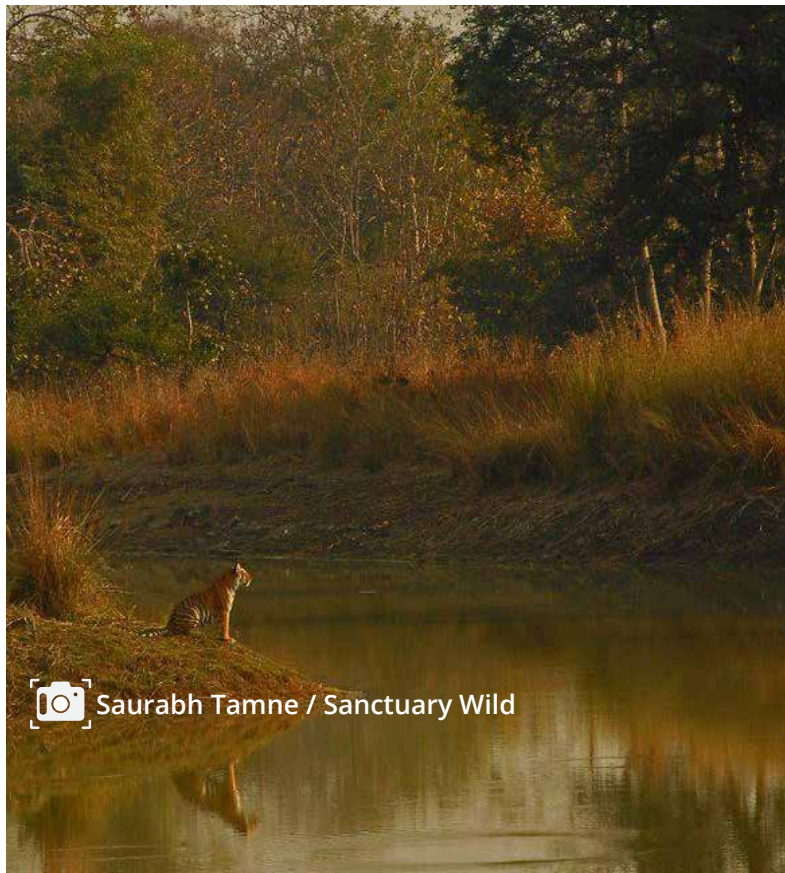
These envisaged action portfolios are likely to benefit cumulatively approximately 54 million km² Big Cat landscapes across the globe (as per International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN). These activities associated with conservation of Big Cats and their habitats would lead to consolidation of ecological conservation, amelioration of climate change and global warming issues with far-reaching environmental and socio-economic impacts.





IBCA

IN BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION



Saurabh Tamne / Sanctuary Wild

- **Shared responsibility:** Multi-stakeholder approach, collective efforts
- **Diverse expertise:** Broad perspectives and resources, comprehensive problem solving
- **Resource mobilization:** Funding from donors, public sector and business group support
- **Capacity building:** Knowledge and skill exchange, inclusion of traditional knowledge, centre of excellence and training programs
- **Scientific contributions:** Evidence based strategies, global scientific partnership
- **Policy advocacy:** Conservation policies and legal frameworks, decadal Action Plans for big cats
- **Community engagement:** Engage communities in conservation with cultural alignments and shared benefits
- **Gender mainstreaming:** Identifying the influence of gender roles and relations on the use, management and conservation of biodiversity
- **Private sector engagement:** Sustainable practices, corporate responsibilities
- **Transboundary collaboration:** Endorsement and support, strengthening protection, Species Recovery Plans
- **Monitoring & evaluation:** Robust progress tracking, adaptation of strategies
- **Sustainability integration:** Biodiversity in Development Plans, long-term focus
- **Global framework integration:** Aichi biodiversity targets and Kunming-Montreal global framework for biodiversity conservation and climate adaptation and well-being

IBCA GOVERNANCE

The formal structure of IBCA comprises of Assembly, Standing Committee and Secretariat headed by the Director General. The Assembly of the IBCA is the apex decision-making body which comprises of representatives from each Member Country. The Assembly at the Ministerial level is chaired by the Honourable Minister, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Republic of India in the capacity as President of the Assembly.

Each Member Country designates a National Focal Point for the IBCA in their country, which constitutes a permanent network of IBCA correspondents between the Parties. They interact with one another as well as key stakeholders to identify areas of mutual interest, design programme proposals, and make recommendations to the Secretariat regarding the implementation of the IBCA's objectives.



 Shivang Mehta

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- Government of India's initial support of Indian Rs. 150 crores (approximately 18 million US\$) for 5 years (2023-24 to 2027-28)
- Contributions from bilateral and multilateral agencies; other appropriate institutions
- Mobilizing financial support from public sector organizations, national and international financial institutions and donor agencies



LIST OF BIG CAT RANGE COUNTRIES



S. No.	Range Country
1	Afghanistan
2	Algeria
3	Angola
4	Argentina
5	Armenia
6	Azerbaijan
7	Bangladesh
8	Belize
9	Benin
10	Bhutan
11	Bolivia
12	Botswana
13	Brazil
14	Burkina Faso
15	Burundi
16	Cambodia
17	Cameron
18	Canada
19	Central African Republic

S. No.	Range Country
20	Chad
21	Chile
22	China
23	Colombia
24	Congo
25	Costa Rica
26	Côte d'Ivoire
27	Democratic Republic of the Congo
28	Djibouti
29	Ecuador
30	Egypt
31	El Salvador
32	Equatorial Guinea
33	Eritrea
34	Eswatini
35	Ethiopia
36	French Guiana
37	Gabon

S. No.	Range Country
38	Ghana
39	Guatemala
40	Guinea
41	Guinea-Bissau
42	Guyana
43	Honduras
44	India
45	Indonesia
46	Iran
47	Iraq
48	Kazakhstan
49	Kenya
50	Kyrgyz Republic
51	Lao PDR
52	Liberia
53	Libya
54	Malawi
55	Malaysia
56	Mali
57	Mexico

S. No.	Range Country
58	Mongolia
59	Mozambique
60	Myanmar
61	Namibia
62	Nepal
63	Nicaragua
64	Niger
65	Nigeria
66	Oman
67	Pakistan
68	Panama
69	Paraguay
70	Peru
71	Russia
72	Rwanda
73	Saudi Arabia
74	Senegal
75	Sierra Leone
76	Somalia
77	South Africa

MAP SHOWING 95 BIG CAT RANGE COUNTRIES

S. No.	Range Country
78	South Sudan
79	Sri Lanka
80	Sudan
81	Suriname
82	Tajikistan
83	Tanzania
84	Thailand
85	Turkey
86	Turkmenistan
87	Uganda
88	United State of America
89	Uruguay
90	Uzbekistan
91	Venezuela
92	Vietnam
93	Yemen
94	Zambia
95	Zimbabwe



BENEFITS TO RANGE COUNTRIES FOR BECOMING MEMBER OF IBCA



- By joining the IBCA, member countries can benefit from a repository of benchmarking Big Cat conservation best practices and technical know-how, which can be instrumental in enhancing their own conservation strategies.
- The alliance also envisages a mechanism for resource mobilization from various donors, which will be crucial for supporting initiatives aimed at protecting and conserving Big Cats and their habitats.
- The IBCA would strengthen existing species-specific intergovernmental platforms, networks, and transnational initiatives, fostering greater collaboration and knowledge sharing among member countries.
- Member countries also stand to benefit from capacity building and training for frontline staff, which is essential for effective on-ground conservation efforts. This includes eliciting local support for conservation initiatives, which is key to ensuring the long-term success of these efforts.
- The Alliance's emphasis on Big Cats as mascots for sustainable development and livelihood security aligns conservation efforts with broader global economic and development policies.
- IBCA with the support of existing inter-governmental agencies will serve as a platform for member countries and organizations to work together for policy advocacy, scientific and sustainable management of Big Cat's ecosystems, implement species recovery plans, develop conflict mitigation strategies, planning and capacity building of front-line staff, securing livelihood economy for local communities, scientific collaborations, private sector participation and technology aided conservation.
- With the conservation of Big Cats and their ecosystems, the IBCA will support achieving the range countries' ambitious targets towards climate mitigation and adaptation, ensure water and food security and livelihood and well-being of millions who depend on these Big Cat habitats and eventually meeting the goals and targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF IBCA

All the UN member countries can become member of IBCA. Once the Framework agreement is signed and conveyed through a *Note Verbale*, the country becomes a member of the IBCA. There is no joining fee or membership fee to become a member of IBCA.



PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Partner Organization status may be granted by the Assembly to organizations that have the potential to help the IBCA to achieve its objectives, including regional inter-governmental economic integration organizations constituted by sovereign States and at least one of which is a member of IBCA.

The United Nations including its organs/agencies will be the Strategic Partner of the IBCA.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)



1. Question: What is the status of International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)?

IBCA is a Treaty Based Inter-Governmental Organisation with headquarters in India.

2. Question: What is the Mission and Vision of IBCA?

IBCA is established with a Mission and Vision to provide platform for partnership and cooperation among big cat range countries so as to ensure a viable population of seven big cats of the world, viz Lion, Tiger, Leopard, Snow-Leopard, Jaguar, Puma and Cheetah in their habitat.

3. Question: What is the Objective of IBCA?

The primary objective of IBCA is to facilitate collaboration and synergy among stakeholders, consolidating successful conservation practices and expertise to achieve a common goal of conservation of big cats at global level. This unified approach, bolstered by financial support, aims to bolster the conservation agenda, halt the decline in big cat populations, and biodiversity conservation for a liveable planet.

4. Question: Is there any fee for joining/becoming member of IBCA?

There is no membership fee for joining / becoming member of the IBCA.

5. Question: How to formally apply for becoming member of IBCA?

The Countries can express their willingness to join IBCA through *Note Verbale*. Such Countries will become the member of IBCA by signing and depositing the Framework Agreement with Ministry of External Affairs, Republic of India.

6. Question: What is the Framework Agreement?

The Framework Agreement is an intent of the country to become member of IBCA.

7. Question: As of now, how many countries have signed the Framework Agreement?

As on 20th September 2024 four countries namely, Nicaragua, Eswatini, Somalia and India have signed Framework Agreement and become member of the IBCA

8. Question: Whether Framework Agreement is open for signature?

It is open for signature to countries as no last date has been prescribed for signing the Framework Agreement for becoming member of IBCA.

9. Question: How long will the Framework Agreement be open for signature?

No deadline has been given for signature; therefore, it is open for signature of the countries.

10. Question: When will the Framework Agreement come into Force?

As provided under Article XVIII of Framework Agreement, it will enter into force on the fifteenth(15th) day after the date of deposit of the fifth(5th) instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval including that of the Republic of India.

11. Question: Whether the Framework Agreement has come into Force?

As on date 20th September 2024, the Framework Agreement has not yet come into force as till now only four countries have signed and deposited the agreement with Ministry of External Affairs, Republic of India, who is the depository for Framework Agreement.

12. Question: Question: As on date, how many countries have consented to join IBCA?

As on date 20th September 2024, 25 countries have consented to be member of the International Big Cat Alliance. They are: Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Egypt, Mongolia, Brazil, Suriname, Ecuador, Peru, Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Guatemala, Guinea, Nicaragua, Eswatini, Liberia, Tajikistan, El-Salvador and Rwanda.

13. Question: What is the difference between being a Member State and Signatory State?

Once the agreement is signed with ratification, acceptance or approval and is conveyed through a *Note Verbale*, the country becomes a member of IBCA. Till such time, the country is treated as signatory country.

14. Question: Who are the range countries?

Range Countries are the countries that have the natural habitat of big cats harbouring their population in the wild.

15. Question: Who are eligible to become a member of IBCA?

All the UN member countries are eligible to become the member of IBCA.

16. Question: Who are the partner organisations of IBCA?

Organisations that help IBCA to achieve its objectives and role can become partner organizations. As of now, the following organizations have consented to be partner with IBCA:

- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Gland, Switzerland
- Science and Conservation, International Snow Leopard Trust, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
- Global Tiger Forum, New Delhi, India
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome, Italy
- UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), Madrid, Spain
- Amur Tiger Centre, Vladivostok, Russia
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF) – International, Gland, Switzerland
- World Customs Organization (WCO), Brussels, Belgium
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York, USA

17. Question: How International NGOs; Inter-government Organisations can become a Partner Organisation?

Any organisation which expresses its intent to join, must submit a written request to IBCA, which will be placed before the Assembly for approval. Once the Assembly approves, the organisation would be granted the status Partner Organisation of IBCA.

United Nations including its organs/agencies are strategic partners of IBCA. The Partner Organisations can participate in the Assembly with no voting rights.

18. Question: Who are Observer parties?

Signatory countries who have not deposited instruments of ratification, acceptance of approval. Other countries which have submitted an application to be an observer and International Organisations and non-governmental organisations acting in the field of conservation.

19. Question: What is the frequency of holding the Assembly?

The meeting of Assembly of IBCA will be held at least once in two years.

20. Question: How frequent is the meeting of Focal Points held

The meeting of the Focal Points can be held as per the requirement of IBCA.

21. Question: How will the countries benefit from joining IBCA?

IBCA is a potent tool for cooperation among countries for mutual benefit in furthering the conservation agenda of big cats. The IBCA has a multipronged approach in broad basing and establishing linkages in several areas and help in knowledge sharing, capacity building, networking, advocacy, finance and resources support, research and technical support, education and awareness.

22. Question: What is the Budget Management Plan of IBCA?

The Government of Republic of India has committed Rs.150 crore (USD 18 Million) to IBCA for five years from 2023-24 to 2027-28. The IBCA will augment its Corpus by taking financial support from the public sector, private sector, bilateral and multilateral organisations, non-profit organisations and national and international financial institutions to make the organisation self-sustainable.



WAY FORWARD

By focusing on Big Cat conservation, the IBCA has the potential to create a ripple effect that benefits a wider range of species and ecosystems. Healthy Big Cat populations can contribute to maintaining the delicate balance of nature, which is crucial for mitigating climate change and promoting overall biodiversity conservation. For achieving these, IBCA in collaboration with IUCN would establish a Centre of Excellence for Big Cat Standards, which will be a pivotal step towards harmonizing conservation efforts. This center, in partnership with the IUCN-ARO, will serve as a Sub-Regional CBD Technical and Scientific Committee (TSC) Centre, focusing on the dissemination of best practices for big cat conservation.

Overall, the IBCA has the potential to be a powerful force in addressing the twin challenges of climate change and ensuring the long-term survival of Big Cats through its focus on advocacy, international collaboration, knowledge sharing, and community-centred conservation approaches. Let the Big Cats be mascots of sustainability!





 Shivang Mehta





 Shivang Mehta



Lion, Tiger, Cheetah, Puma & Snow Leopard Photos by **Shivang Mehta**
Leopard Photo by **Tapan Seth**
Jaguar photo by **_Lucas Bustamante**



JOIN HANDS  JOIN ALLIANCE

INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE (IBCA)
118, First Floor, Jor Bagh, New Delhi 110003, India

Landline +91 11 450633497 | Mobile no +91 88003 04857

Email: secretariat@ibca.world
https://twitter.com/IBCA_official

www.ibca.world