



ASSOCIATION FOR TROPICAL BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION

ATBC Strategic Plan 2025 – 2030

FOSTERING THE SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING AND
CONSERVATION OF TROPICAL ENVIRONMENTS

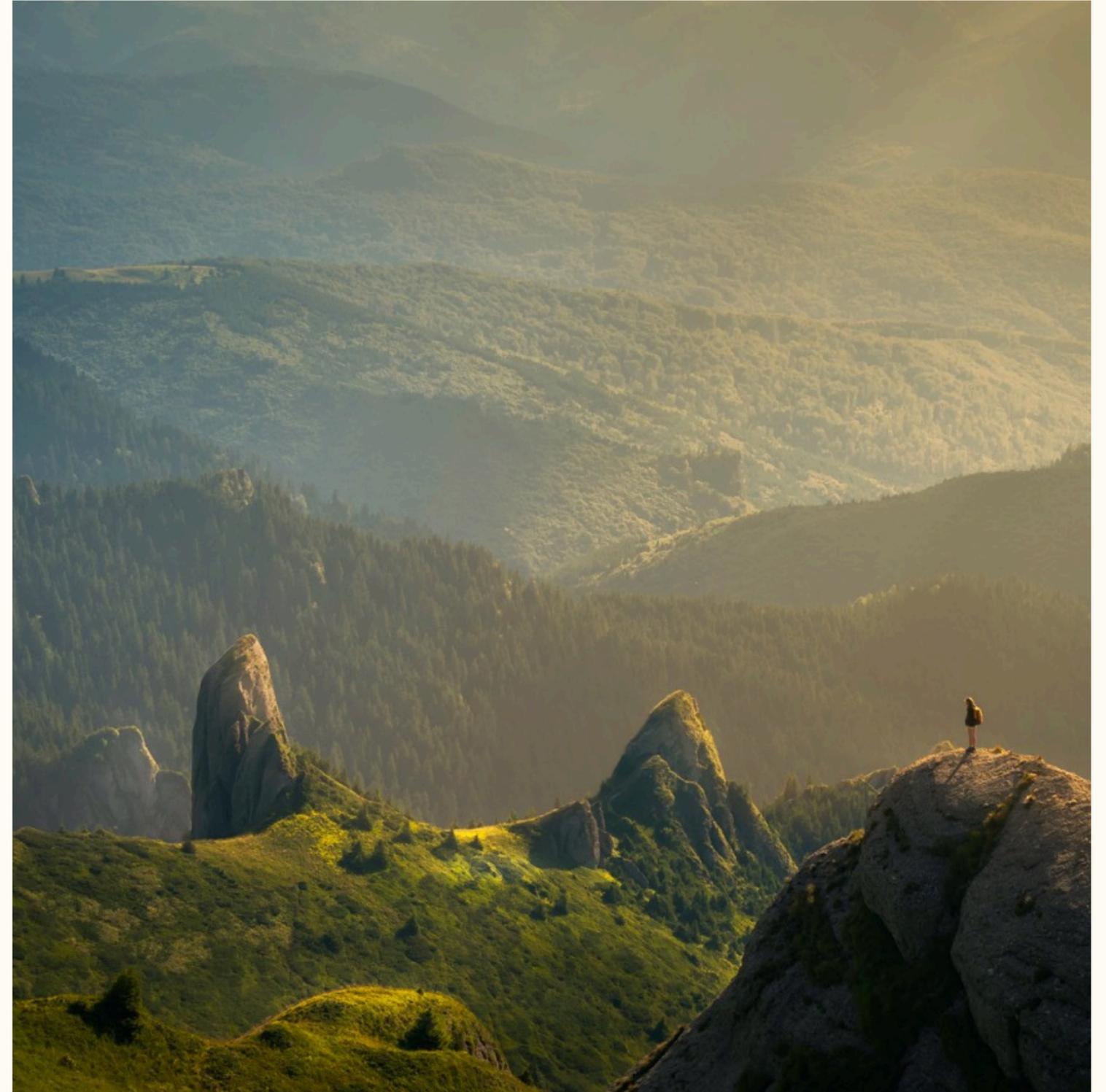
September 1st, 2025

WELCOME

This Strategic Plan prioritizes the activities and operations of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC) for 2025-2030. The Strategic Plan was formally adopted at the ATBC General Annual Meeting in Oaxaca, Mexico in July 2025.

What is ATBC?

The Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC) is a scientific professional society formed in 1963 as the Association for Tropical Biology. In 2003 the society changed its name to the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation. The ATBC is global in scope, membership, and objectives, functioning as an international body to promote research, education, conservation, and communication of tropical biology. We are students, researchers, educators, and conservation practitioners concerned with issues of science, conservation, development, and environmental policy in the tropics. We have over 1000 members from 70 countries. The society holds annual meetings around the world, publishes the scientific journal *Biotropica*, and is increasingly engaged in conservation and capacity building activities internationally.

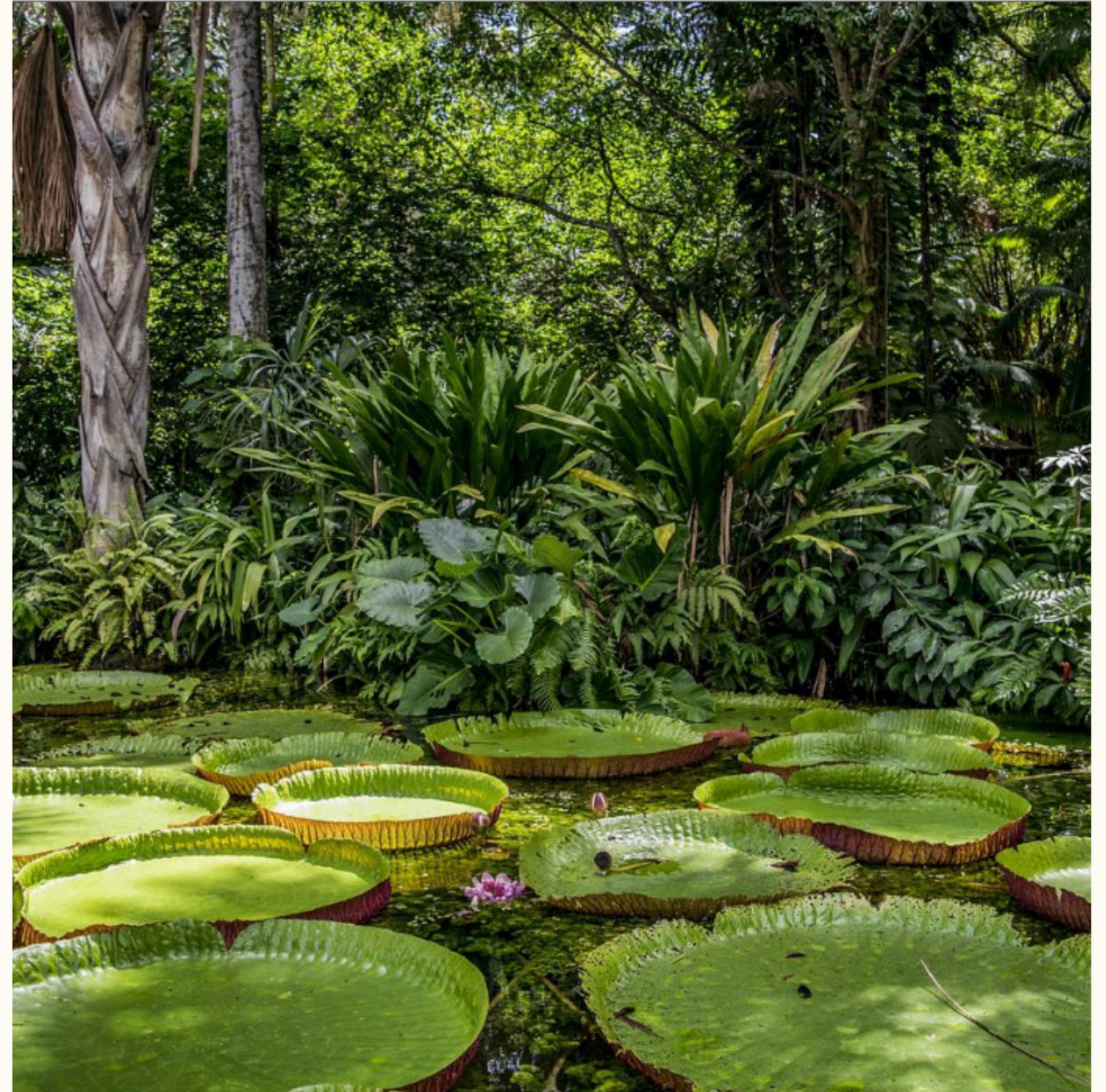


Career Development

The ATBC supports biology and conservation scientists working in the tropics. The development of skills and knowledge among scientists is essential for robust tropical biology and conservation science. The ATBC Career Development Program provides opportunities for gaining new experiences, knowledge, and skills through Skills Training Workshops, the Mentoring Program, Early Career Activities, and Communications and Advocacy Training Sessions.

Conservation committee

The Conservation Committee was formed in 2004. Its seeks to foster an understanding of current key conservation issues and conflicts, and proposes feasible ways of addressing them. It supports local, regional, national, and global initiatives that address current and potential threats to biodiversity, ecosystems, and linked human livelihoods. The Conservation Committee initiates and supports outreach and capacity building activities to develop and strengthen expertise in conservation-related scientific activities.



ATBC Chapters

Three ATBC Regional Chapters were launched to promote tropical biology and conservation in the Tropics and encourage the involvement and representation of members of all three Tropical regions in the world. The ATBC Asia-Pacific Chapter was launched in 2006, the Africa Chapter was launched in 2016, and the ATBC Neotropical Chapter was launched in 2018.

Publication

Biotropica is the ATBC's scientific journal, and the world's leading tropical biology journal. First published in 1969, Biotropica is now available to around 4,300 institutions worldwide. Over 100 peer-reviewed articles are published in six issues annually.

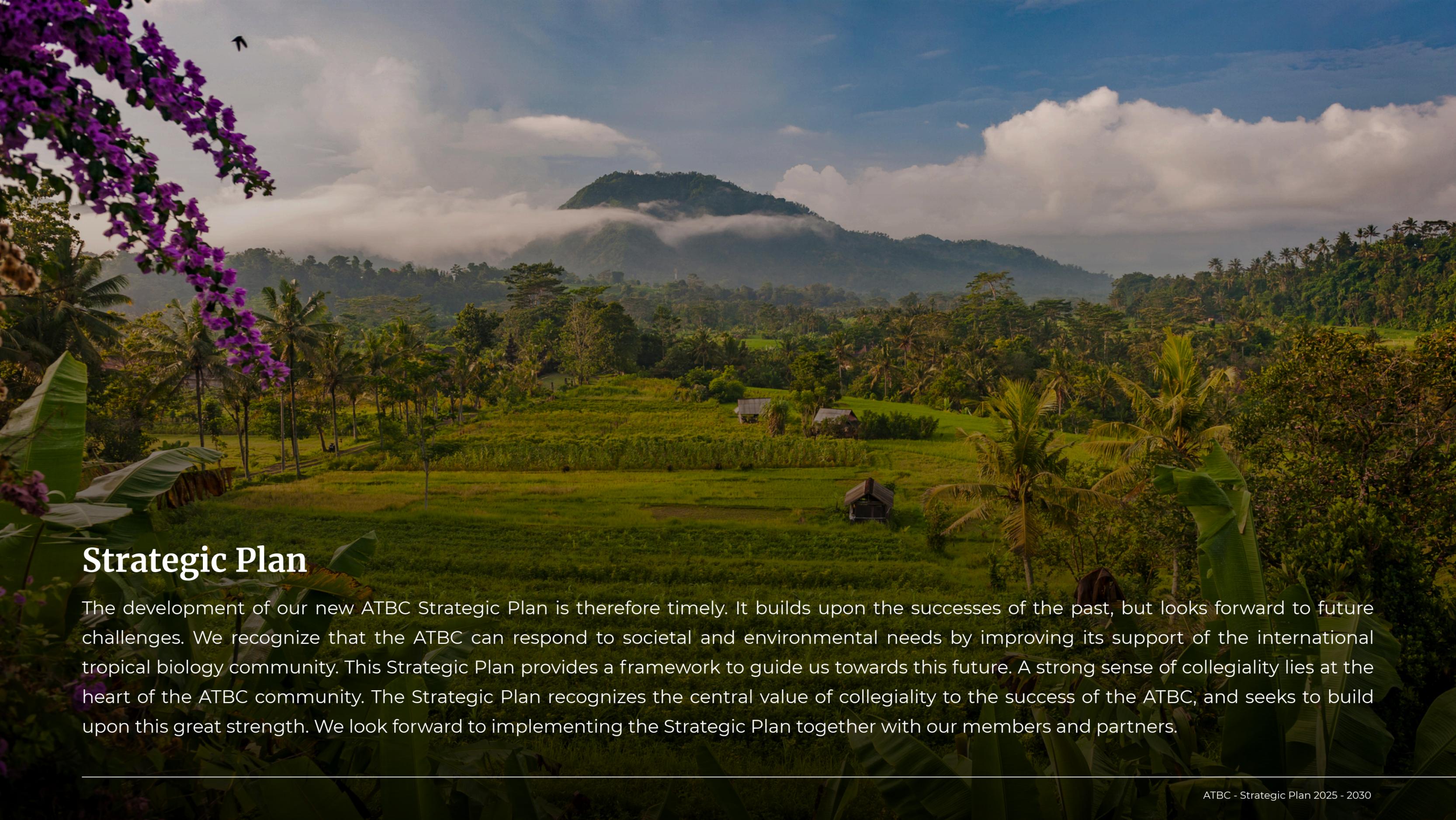
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Introduction

The ATBC has a history spanning more than 50 years since its creation in 1963. Over this time we have grown and evolved from a relatively small society with a neotropical focus, to one that is global in its membership and influence. In recognition of the alarming environmental crises that our planet faces, many of which are primarily tropical in nature, the ATBC's remit has expanded to encompass conservation, while not losing sight of its original and central purpose of tropical biology. The ATBC's primary purpose is to support the scientific community in tropical biology. The 21st century has brought new challenges to both science and conservation practice. It has also provided new opportunities through technological and conceptual developments. Both challenges and opportunities have generated a new purpose for the ATBC that is driven and informed by a new generation of scientists and conservation practitioners.

A tropical landscape featuring a mountain peak shrouded in mist, palm trees, and a small hut in a field. The scene is captured from an elevated perspective, looking down onto a lush green valley. In the foreground, there are large green leaves and purple flowers. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. A small bird is visible in the upper left corner of the sky.

Strategic Plan

The development of our new ATBC Strategic Plan is therefore timely. It builds upon the successes of the past, but looks forward to future challenges. We recognize that the ATBC can respond to societal and environmental needs by improving its support of the international tropical biology community. This Strategic Plan provides a framework to guide us towards this future. A strong sense of collegiality lies at the heart of the ATBC community. The Strategic Plan recognizes the central value of collegiality to the success of the ATBC, and seeks to build upon this great strength. We look forward to implementing the Strategic Plan together with our members and partners.

Mission

To foster scientific understanding and conservation of tropical ecosystems by supporting research, collaboration, capacity building, and communication among tropical biologists and conservationists.

Purpose

The ATBC fosters collaboration and information sharing across a broad community of tropical biology professionals. The society provides outlets for research dissemination, and educational and funding opportunities, particularly for early career scientists working across the tropics. As a diverse community of science professionals, the ATBC provides a credible, collective, and authoritative vision of tropical biology and conservation issues that underpin public policy and management action.

Principles

The ATBC promotes inclusiveness and collaboration, in order to create a sense of collegiality that is built on five principles:

Natural systems and the biodiversity they contain have both intrinsic and utilitarian values;

Evidence-based science is critical for understanding how tropical ecosystems function, and how humans affect them;

Sustainable development depends on effective stewardship of ecosystems and their component species;

Biological sciences and related disciplines are essential foundations for effective decision making, and must inform environmental policy in the tropics;

Communicating tropical biological science to the global public is vital for enhancing the understanding of environmental and conservation values.



Values

Supportive

A society that fosters mutual support, mentoring and guidance across its membership;

Inclusive

A diverse membership, inclusive of age groups, genders, cultures, professional positions, and geographical locations, benefits and advances the society;

Participatory

A membership that is informed and engaged in the activities of the society;

Transparent

An open society in where decision-making processes are clear and participatory;

Multidisciplinary

A society that encompasses scientific breadth across all relevant disciplines.

Our Five Focus Areas

In responding to our mission and purpose, and taking account of our values and principles, five core issues form the strategic foci for 2025-2030:

1

Career Development

Increase capacity development and networking in tropical biology and conservation and related interdisciplinary approaches.

2

Grants & Awards

Recognize exceptional achievements and support science capacity in tropical biology and conservation worldwide.

3

Conferences

Provide inclusive settings for a diverse international community of scientists, conservationists, and stakeholders.

4

Scientific Publications

Communicate world-leading tropical biological science and conservation across the global community.

5

Conservation & Policy

Foster the application of science in conservation, policy, and management action.

1 Career Development

Increase education opportunities and networking in tropical biology, conservation, and related interdisciplinary approaches.

OBJECTIVES

Provide diverse mentorship opportunities to early career researchers and conservationists.

Ensure accessibility to online training opportunities in scientific, professional, and leadership skills to diverse audiences, especially underrepresented groups.

Ensure accessibility to in-person and hands-on training workshops and field courses on key thematic areas in tropical biology, conservation, and human dimensions of biodiversity.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Online Training

Develop workshops in scientific skills (experimental design, statistics, R programming), writing skills (abstracts, grants, manuscripts), presentation skills, and leadership skills.

Field Courses

Develop in-person field courses focusing on diverse research topics in tropical biology, conservation advocacy/policy, and human dimensions of biodiversity.

Mentoring Circles

Establish year-round mentoring circles focused on professional skills, diverse science topics, human dimensions of biodiversity, and DEI issues in different languages.

2 Grants & Awards

Recognize exceptional achievements and support science capacity in tropical biology and conservation worldwide.

OBJECTIVES

Recognize the exceptional research and conservation contributions of students and early career professionals by providing awards for outstanding presentations during ATBC Annual Meetings.

Enhance science capacity by providing grants to graduate students and early career professionals addressing tropical biology and conservation.

Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in tropical biology and conservation.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Recognize contributions to Tropical Biology and Conservation

Increase the visibility and elevate the profile of emerging leaders and established experts in the field.

Showcase role models

Inspire the next generation of scientists, conservationists, and community leaders by showcasing role models in the field.

Celebrate a diverse pool of stakeholders

Ensure that diverse pools of stakeholders are recognized and celebrated through various ATBC awards.

Advance scientific knowledge

Support innovative research that expands our understanding of tropical ecosystems through interdisciplinary approaches that combine knowledge from biology, earth, and social sciences.

3 Conferences

Provide inclusive settings for a diverse international community of scientists, conservationists, and stakeholders.

OBJECTIVES

Enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and networking opportunities for tropical biologists, conservationists, and various stakeholders.

Foster opportunities to promote collaboration and knowledge exchange between ATBC members, indigenous peoples & local communities (IPLCs), early-career scientists, and underrepresented groups.

Expand conference activities and exchanges in the social sciences, humanities, and arts relevant to tropical biology and conservation.

Strengthen activities aiming to address social and environmental challenges.

3 Conferences

Provide inclusive settings for a diverse international community of scientists, conservationists, and stakeholders.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Networking & Collaboration

- Host regular ATBC conferences in different parts of the World
- Host formal and informal networking sessions
- Host special sessions for communication between local peoples, stakeholders, and conservationists
- Offer virtual platforms for communication among attendees
- Host thematic sessions focused on scientific collaboration

Knowledge Exchange & Arts

- Host sessions led by IPLCs, early-career scientists, and underrepresented groups
- Establish partnerships with local artists and cultural organizations
- Offer educational activities that foster the relationship between arts, science, and conservation
- Organize outreach activities for local communities
- Establish art and science partnerships with local organizations

Inclusion & Accessibility

- Promote diversity and inclusion during all conference activities
- Enhance representation from local conservation and management stakeholders
- Promote ATBC Chapter events during conferences
- Increase accessibility options for members to attend ATBC meetings remotely

4 Scientific Publications (Biotropica)

Communicate world-leading tropical biological science across the globe

OBJECTIVES

- Constantly improve the quality, reach, and recognition of the journal.
- Ensure that authors can publish in Biotropica, regardless of financial status.
- Develop new paper categories that are responsive to ATBC's goals.
- Ensure that the journal meets the Association's goals in perpetuity.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Monitor & Improve

Monitor metrics of journal impact; invite review papers from leading scientists; organize special issues; disseminate content more broadly through press releases.

Ensure Diversity

Develop an open call for editorial service to recruit a diverse Editorial Board; expand the expertise of subject editors; ensure all authors can publish regardless of fees.

Innovate & Adapt

Implement new paper categories; conduct studies on special sections for human dimensions; develop long-term publication strategy; allow translated manuscripts in preprint servers.

5 Conservation & Policy

Foster the application of science in conservation, policy, and management action.

OBJECTIVES

Facilitate communication and collaboration with managers, policymakers, and communities on issues important to tropical biology and conservation.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Webinars & Workshops

Develop and implement webinars and workshops to improve the capacity of ATBC members to communicate effectively with managers and policymakers.

Policy Pronouncements

Write and promote periodic pronouncements on topical issues of global concern in tropical biology and conservation.

Outreach Committee

Develop and implement an ATBC Outreach Committee inclusive of a host country liaison as appropriate for Annual Meetings.

Transversal Themes

ATBC's transversal themes cut across all focus areas, ensuring consistency, inclusion, and sustainability. They highlight communication, equity, and financial health as essential foundations for the organization's long-term impact.

1 Science Communication

2 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

3 Finances and Advancement





Science Communication

Raise awareness of urgent conservation issues in tropical biology and conservation.

OBJECTIVES

Establish a Communications Strategy for ATBC-Global and ATBC-Chapters and committees.

Improve the accessibility of scientific outputs through the use of diverse media outlets.

Provide networking opportunities amongst tropical biologists and conservationists.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Establish an ATBC communications committee
- Formalize ATBC communication processes
- Communicate findings from tropical biology and conservation through diverse approaches
- Provide workshops on media communication
- Identify key languages for ATBC communications
- Develop a searchable membership database
- Create a job board with opportunities in tropical biology and conservation

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Promote a vibrant and healthy ATBC community by ensuring that all actions of the association work to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Geographic Diversity

Ensure diverse geographical representation in all ATBC meetings, activities, and publications; develop special sections focused on underrepresented regions.

Language Accessibility

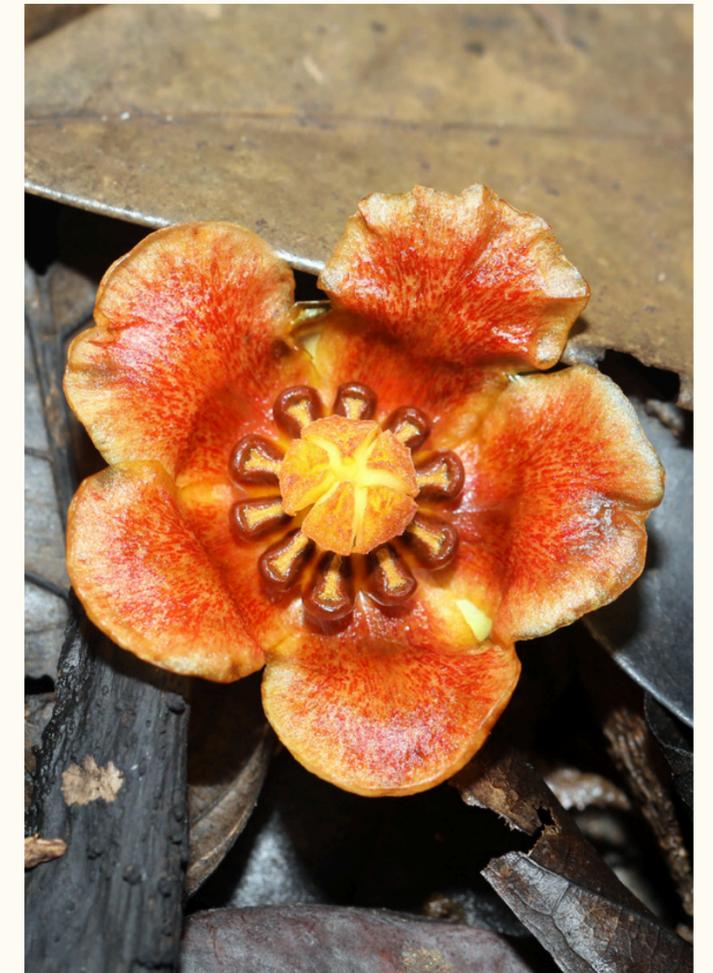
Support ATBC communications in multiple languages; publish in formats readable by translation services; evaluate mechanisms for multilingual Biotropica abstracts.

Career Support

Provide support for researchers, practitioners, and conservationists at all career stages; develop affordable fee structures for students and early career scientists.

Conferences

Ensure that the DEI Committee is involved in the organization of all ATBC events and activities



Finances & Advancement

Build financial stability to support the diverse activities of ATBC.

OBJECTIVES

- Promote financial clarity and transparency in ATBC's financial processes and decisions.
- Develop long-term and annual budgets to support the foci and objectives of the ATBC Strategic Plan.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Develop a plan to increase revenue acquisition to support the activities of the ATBC.
- Develop annual budgets to support the foci and objectives of the ATBC Strategic Plan.
- Develop long-term budgets to support the foci and objectives of the ATBC Strategic Plan.
- Develop processes and mechanisms to ensure that ATBC conference fees are affordable, particularly for students, early career scientists, and participants from low-income countries.





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Photos by Rhett Butler