

## **Notes**

There are no right answers to this exercise, but some notes are provided here to give some points for discussion.

### **Question 1 and 2**

There are evidently large areas of Myanmar missing from the protected area estate of Myanmar. The whole eastern and far western sides of the country are missing protected areas. This means that Irrawaddy dry forests, Chin Hills Arakan Yom montane forests, Kayah-Karen montane rainforests and especially the Northern Indochina subtropical forests are largely unprotected. Although these areas do not contain many KBAs.

The central North-South belt of the country is also unprotected, likely to be because it is dominated by agriculture. Irrawaddy forests are again going unprotected.

Particularly important to not is the lack of protected areas in the mangrove forests and coastal rainforests. Mangroves are not only incredibly biodiverse but also vital for ecosystem services such as protection from extreme weather and coastal erosion. These, especially in the far south of the country, contain high priority KBAs.

What protected areas do exist are relatively close together, and relatively large, which is generally positive. The protected areas in the far north of the country are also worth discussing. This is a whole protected landscape and contains one of the last examples of contiguous and relatively pristine forest that is vital for south-east Asian rainforest species such as tigers.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-70917-y>

The indigenous communities of this area also make it an interesting and complicated area to conduct conservation. As does the fact that it lies on a national border.

<https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/communities-clash-conservation-efforts-northern-myanmars-hkakaborazi-region>

### **Question 3**

Economic activity is concentrated in the centre of the country. There is an argument that you could place protected areas here to exclude some of this and protect these ecosystems from damage, or even restore them, however it is very unlikely to be feasible or it would be impossibly expensive.

An obvious answer, which may also be the best, is to place one or several protected areas in the far south of the country covering coastal and shallow marine ecosystems. This area is vital for biodiversity and also far from many economic activities. Other coastal areas could be targeted as well but they are closer to economic activities.

You could extend the protected areas in the far north of the country. This area is very important so more protection can't hurt but you are not then covering new ecosystems and areas that are currently unprotected.

The east of the country, the Northern Indochina subtropical forest, is not well protected and is far from economic activities. It would therefore be easy to justify protected areas in these areas. This could spark a discussion about whether this is just being done because it is easy. All ecosystems are unique and could be worthy of protection, but it could be worth discussing if other areas, particularly rainforests and mangroves, contain greater biodiversity, so placing a protected area in

the east of the country is a bit of a path of least resistance that isn't optimal for biodiversity conservation.

Again, there are no right answers and conservation has so many potential aims, restrictions and trade-offs that this discussion could go on forever. As long as participants get an idea of the opportunities and costs of protected areas, this activity can be a success!