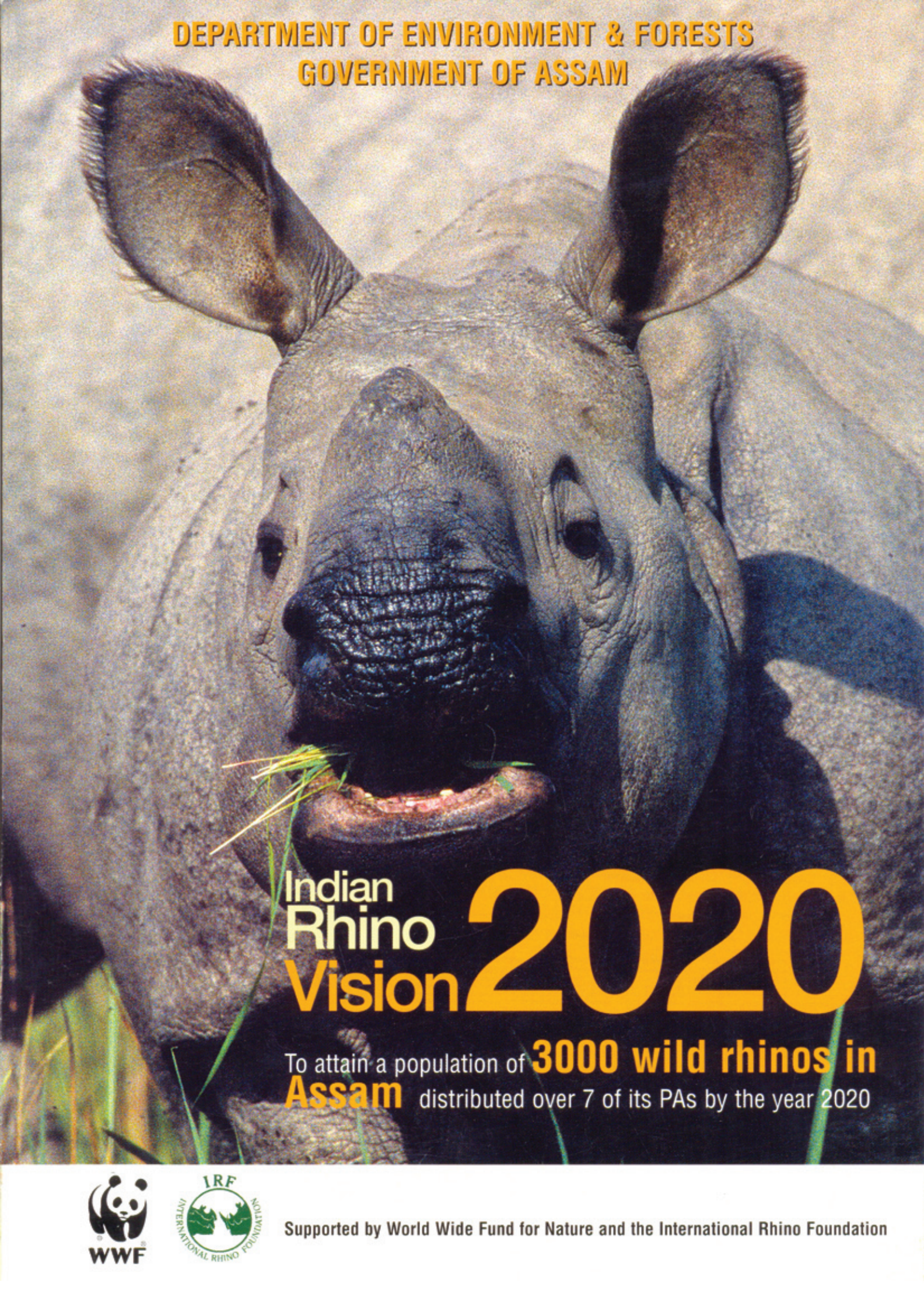


DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS
GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM



Indian
Rhino
Vision **2020**

To attain a population of **3000 wild rhinos in Assam** distributed over 7 of its PAs by the year 2020



Supported by World Wide Fund for Nature and the International Rhino Foundation

INDIAN RHINO VISION 2020 (IRV2020)

The Vision : Attain a population of 3000 wild rhinos in Assam distributed over seven of its PAs by the year 2020

- The Project
- Aims And Objective

IRV 2020 : The Project

The conservation of Indian one-horned rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) in Assam and India has been a great success. In 1905, numbers of the species in Assam had declined to 10-20 rhinos in Kaziranga National Park. Through strict protection, this population has recovered to over 1700 individuals. A smaller (about 100) but still secure and growing population of rhinos also occurs in Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary.

However, the conservation of rhinos in Assam has also had major problems and setbacks. Restriction of 85% of the rhinos to a single Protected Area in Kaziranga exposes the species to stochastic risks. The population in Pabitora has already exceeded carrying capacity and the population needs to be reduced both to protect the habitat and to mitigate the increasing rhino-human conflicts occurring as animals move into agricultural areas. Moreover, a significant population of rhinos was exterminated in Manas National Park during the 1990s in the wake of a poor law-and-order situation and ethnic conflicts. Likewise, poaching has eliminated the species from Laokhowa, which once contained 50+ rhino. Moreover, the population in Orang has been reduced to fewer than 40 with the threat still looming large

Hence, there is a need:

- (1) To improve security in all rhino areas in Assam
- (2) To expand the distribution of rhinos to reduce the risks of stochastic catastrophes
- (3) Reduce the population in Pabitora so that it is within the ecological and sociological carrying capacity of the Reserve. The sociological carrying capacity is the number of rhino that a protected area can sustain without significant human-rhino conflict

IRV 2020 : Objectives

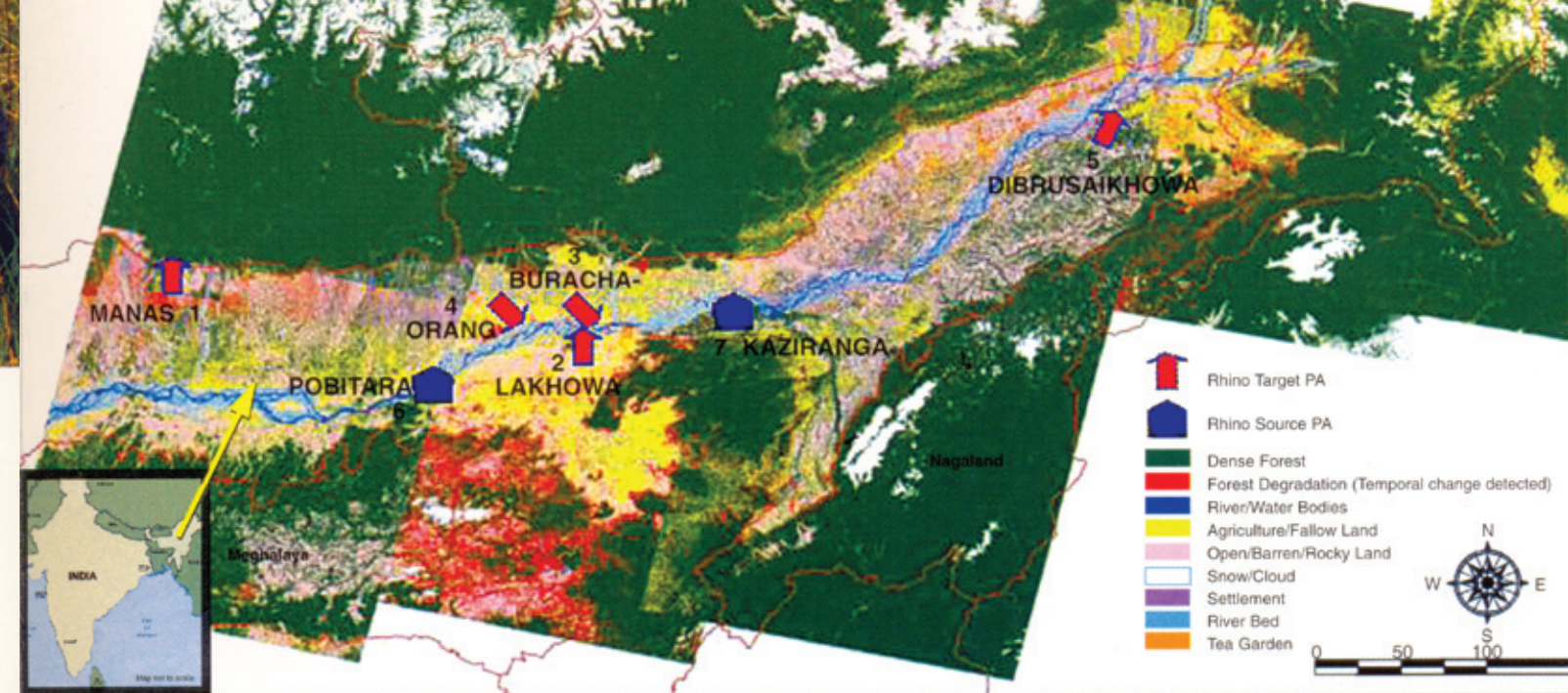
The Vision of the program is to increase the total rhino population in Assam from about 2000 to 3000 by the Year 2020 and just as significantly ensure that these rhinos are distributed over at least 7 Protected Areas (PAs) to provide long term viability of an Assam metapopulation of rhino.

The overall vision of the programme and the above three needs can be achieved by implementing the following objectives:

- Improving protection of rhinos in all the rhino areas.
- Translocating rhinos from two source populations (Kaziranga and Pabitora) into 3 or 4 target Protected Areas (Manas, Laokhowa - Buracharpori - Kochmora, Dibrusaikhowa, and possibly Orang). (Orang still has a nucleus of 20-40 rhinos and may be able to achieve its target population of 100 through improved protection).

The first phase of the programme involving both the above objectives will require three years (July 2005 to June 2008) of intensive field work and will entail :

- Improvement of rhino protection in all source and target protected areas
- Translocation of 20-30 rhino from Pabitora and Kaziranga to Manas National Park where they will be protected and monitored.



SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES FOR INDIAN RHINO VISION 2020

ACTIVITY	TIME	COMMENTS
Formation of Task Force on Rhino Translocations within Assam	30 June 2005	
1 st Meeting of the Task Force	8 July 2005	Delineate Overall Plan for the Program
Assessment by Security Expert Group	July August Sept 2005	
Submission of Report of Expert Group Security	31 October 2005	
2 nd Task Force Meeting (Participation by USFWS observer)	Second Week Nov 2005	Review security assessments. Plan implementation of the report.
Implementing the Recommendations of Security Expert Group Report	Nov, Dec 2005, 2006 and Jan, Feb 2007	Reinforcement of security and other management structures. Development of infrastructure.
Monitoring of rhinos in Pabitora	Nov 2005 – March 2006	Provide a basis to identify rhinos to be translocated.
Work on Locating Suitable Grassland Sites in Manas	Sept 2005 – May 2006	Provide as a basis for identifying rhino translocation sites
Baseline Data on Rhino Habitat Preference and Home Ranges in Orang	Sept 2005 – Jan 2007	Develop baseline Data on rhino habitat/home Ranges in Orang
Assessment by Expert Group on Rapid Habitat Assessments	31 January 2006	
Submission of Report on Rapid Habitat Assessments	31 January 2006	
3 rd Task Force Meeting	1 March 2006	Review report of Rapid Habitat Assessment and work on Rhinos creating a core translocation team and finalizing plans for the Pabitora Training Workshop
Identifying a Translocation Core Team	1 March 2006	
Permissions for Tranquilising and collaring	Initiate Sept 2005 and complete before March 2006	
The Translocation Training Workshop	First week November 2006	
4 th Meeting of the Task Force	Nov 2006	Reviewing security status and the translocation training workshop. Reviewing monitoring in Orang, Manas and Pabitora.
5 th Meeting of the Task Force	January 2007	Final review of security implementation and go ahead for the translocation
Actual Translocations of Rhino	Feb - March 2007	
Monitoring of Translocated Rhino	March 2007 onward.	



IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES:

The Indian Rhino Vision 2020 will be implemented by the Department of Environment and Forests of the Government of Assam. The Bodo Autonomous Council will be an active partner in the programme. The programme will be supported by WWF - India, WWF AREAS (Asian Rhino and Elephants Action Strategy) Programme, The International Rhino Foundation (IRF), Save the Rhinos Campaign of Zoological Institutions worldwide and a number of local NGOs.

THE TASK FORCE FOR TRANSLOCATION OF RHINOS WITHIN ASSAM DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS, GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM, DISPUR, GUWAHATI - 781006

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| 1. Sri M.C. Malakar | Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam (Chairman) |
| 2. Min. of Env. & Forests, GOI | A representative from MoEF |
| 3. Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhury | Member, State Board for Wildlife |
| 4. Dr. A.K. Goswami, Chairman | WWF-India Assam-Arunachal Office |
| 5. Dr. Bibhab Talukar | Aaranyak |
| 6. Dr. Padmeswar Gogoi | Deptt. of Botany, D.R. College, Golaghat |
| 7. Sri K.C. Pator | Retd. Conservator of Forests, Assam |
| 8. Sri B.S. Bonal | CCF, Forest Department, Assam |
| 9. The Forest Officers in charge of
the Protected Areas bearing Rhino
in the past or present | |
| 10. DIG police, Assam | Deputed by DGP, Assam |
| 11. Wildlife Trust of India | A representative from WTI |
| 12. Wildlife Institute of India,
DehraDun | A representative from WII |
| 13. Mr. Tariq Aziz | AREAS, WWF-India (Member Secretary) |

“To attain a population of 3000 wild rhinos in Assam distributed over 6 of its PAs by the year 2020” . Pradyut Bordoloi, Forest Minister, Assam.