



for a living planet[®]

WWF Standards of Conservation Project and Programme Management (PPMS)

Version: 19 October 2012

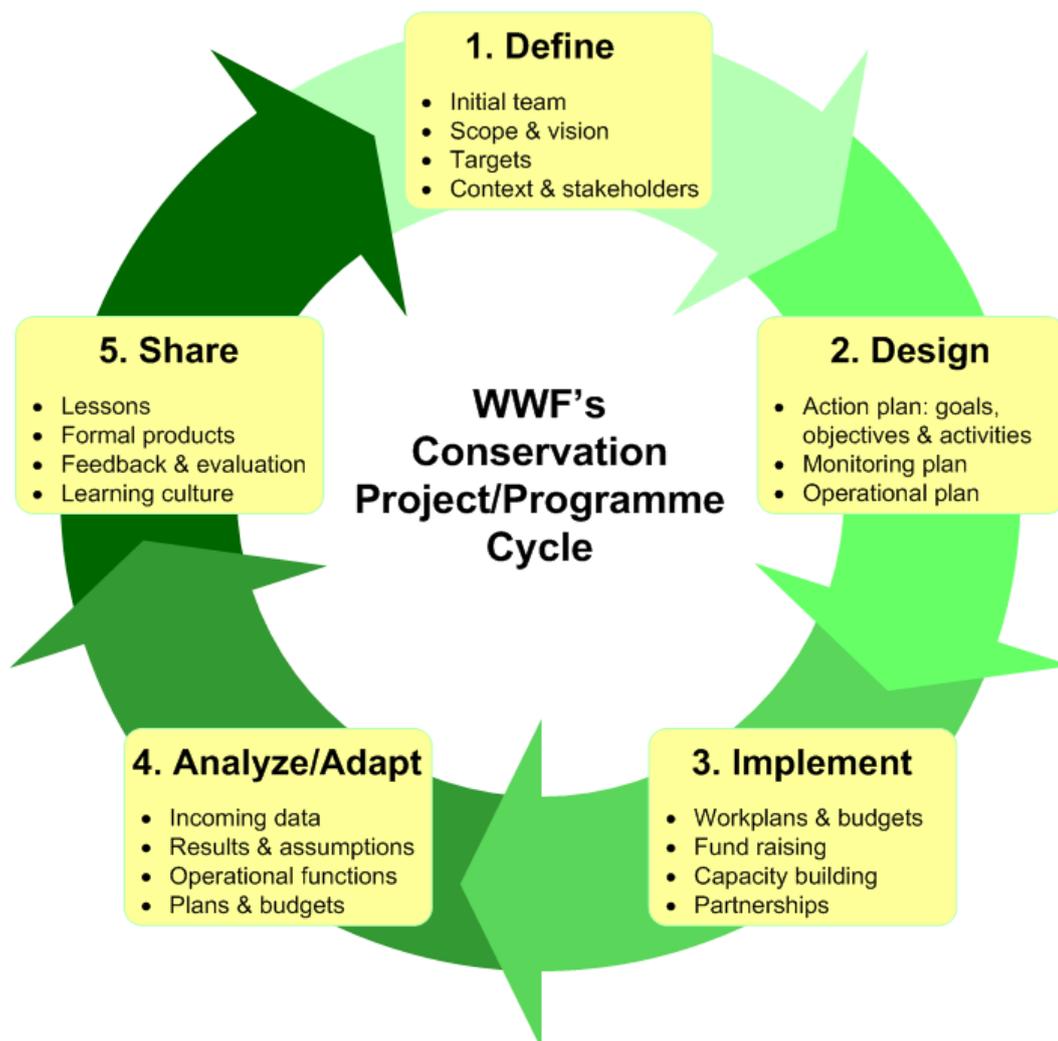


Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Overarching Guidance	4
Essential Elements and ‘Compulsory Outputs’	6
What is compulsory? Expectations of Different Sized Projects.....	8
General Practices	9
0.1 Engage Stakeholders.....	9
0.2 Embrace Learning.....	9
0.3 Consider Climate Change	9
Box1: People and Conservation - WWF Social Principles and Policies.....	11
1. Define	12
1.1 Initial Team Composition and Operations.....	13
1.2 Scope and Vision	13
1.3 Targets	15
Box 3. Clarifying socially beneficial results and human wellbeing targets	18
1.4 Context (Threats and Drivers) and Stakeholders	19
2. Design	22
2.1 Action Plan: Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Assumptions.....	22
2.2 Monitoring Plan.....	26
2.3 Operational Plan.....	30
3. Implement	33
3.1 Workplans and Budgets	33
3.2 Fund Raising	34
3.3 Capacity Building	35
3.4 Partnerships	36
4. Analyze & Adapt	38
4.1 Manage Incoming Data on an Ongoing Basis	38
4.2 Analyze Project Results and Assumptions	39
4.3 Analyze Operational and Financial Functions/Performance.....	40
4.4 Adapt Your Plans and Budgets.....	40
5. Share	42
5.1 Lessons.....	42
5.2 Formal Communication Products.....	42
5.3 Feedback, Evaluations and Audits.....	44
5.4 Performance and Learning Culture.....	45
Iterate Through the Cycle	46
Acronyms Used in this Document	47
References for Additional Material and Guidance	47
Glossary	49
Criteria for Key Terms	53
Annex 1. Summary of Standards of Practice and Outputs	55

This document contains an overview of the *WWF Network’s Standards of Conservation Project and Programme Management (PPMS)*. These standards are the product of many inputs, field tests, discussions, debates and subsequent revisions.

This document has been approved by the WWF Results Based Management Group on behalf of Conservation Committee. It will continue to be revised and improved over time. Click here to download the latest version of this document [from OneWWF, the WWF Intranet](#) or here to download it [from the WWF website](#). Please address any comments to Will Beale (wbeale@wwf.org.uk).

Introduction

What are the WWF Standards and what is Results Based Management?

The full set of [WWF Network Standards](#) materials consists of the Programme Standards, Operations Standards, and GAA (Government and Aid Agency) Standards. These standards have all been in place since 2005 and they are updated periodically.

This document provides an overview of the Project and Programme Management Standards (also known as the PPMS, the Programme Standards, or simply WWF Standards) - the standards of practice for designing, implementing and monitoring conservation projects and programmes in the WWF Network.* In an increasingly complex and changing environment, these good practices are meant to help conservation projects analyse their context, describe their long-term vision and key assumptions, develop effective activities, measure their success, and then to adapt, share, and learn over time. That is, they are to help projects practice adaptive management in order to make them more **effective** and **efficient**.

More broadly, from an organizational perspective these standards are a key foundation to support ‘results-based management’ (RBM)¹ within WWF. Efforts towards RBM provide a framework for WWF Network (and partner) collaboration in project design, the tracking of programme delivery and impact, and the development of a performance and learning culture. Three key foundations of RBM are defined as the WWF Programme Standards (PPMS), the GPF (Global Programme Framework) Monitoring and Reporting system, and Insight (a knowledge and information management system that will also automate much of the data collection and analysis required by the network for monitoring and reporting). The processes, systems, skills and culture in each WWF office should be developed to support sound results-based management (link to WWF-UK Programme Management Manual as an example).

Where do the Programme Standards come from?

These standards are rooted in a long history of project and programme planning and management in WWF, across other conservation organizations, and in other disciplines. They are not meant to be a rigid set of standards that every project must blindly follow, but rather a set of good practices that conservation practitioners can use. The CMP (Conservation Measures Partnership) ‘Open Standards’ provided an important foundation for the WWF Programme Standards.

Purpose of this Overview document

The purpose of this overview is to provide a comprehensive yet succinct introduction to the fundamental steps and practices embodied in the WWF Standards. It has been written to be accessible to a broad audience of different kinds of conservation practitioners. This overview is explicitly not meant to be a detailed how-to guide for implementing these standards;

* Projects are the basic units of conservation work. A programme (as distinct from a portfolio of projects) is a group of jointly-managed, interdependent projects which together aim to achieve a common vision. In the interest of simplicity, this document uses the term “project” to represent both projects and programmes since these standards of practice are designed to apply equally well to both. ‘Conservation’ in WWF means all forms of programmatic work, so these standards should be applied by all projects, programmes, Global Initiatives, policy work and campaigns that are managed by Conservation/ Programmes departments.

¹ Results-Based Management (RBM) is a management strategy or approach by which an organization ensures that its processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of clearly stated results. Results-based management provides a coherent framework for strategic planning and management by improving learning and accountability.

comprehensive guidelines in the form of companion documents are also available (see below).

This document outlines these standards of practice in a series of five steps (see Figure 1):

1. **Define** who will be involved on the project team in the early stages, your project's geographic or thematic scope, your vision of what you hope to achieve, and the context in which you intend to work including threats and opportunities and who the key stakeholders are.
2. **Design** your action plan (including goals, objectives, and activities), monitoring plan, and operational plan.
3. **Implement** your workplans while ensuring sufficient funding, capacity, and partners.
4. **Analyze** your data, results and assumptions, and operational and financial performance **& Adapt** your workplans as necessary based on your findings.
5. **Share** lessons, formal communication products, feedback and evaluations, and a performance and learning culture with key external and internal audiences.

For each step, the document provides a brief description of the standards of practice (sub-steps) and the expected outputs for each practice (see Annex 2). Numbers denote steps and sub-steps, and diamond bullets (◆) denote outputs. Of course, not all standards or outputs are appropriate under all conditions and for all projects, so you should adapt as necessary. Furthermore, some types of initiatives such as Global Initiatives, Species Action Plans (SAPs) and Ecoregion Action Programmes (EAPs) have unique characteristics that merit additional or more specific standards and guidance that nest within these general ones. All technical terms are underlined the first time(s) they are used and then defined in the glossary. Hot links to extensive additional guidance materials for steps and for key tools are provided throughout the document; end notes contain the web reference as well. This body of guidance material will continue to grow and evolve over time.

What other Standards materials, tools, and support are available?

The Programme Standards materials include:

- This overview document.
- More detailed guidance, tools, additional reference materials, and examples of application for each sub step.
- Templates for key process outputs such as (Internal) project proposals, budgeting, technical reports and evaluations.

In addition, a bespoke software tool (Miradi) is available that has been designed for use by WWF and other conservation organizations. Miradi walks you through the steps of the WWF Programme Standards and can help you to produce key outputs such as conceptual models, results chains, action plans, monitoring plans etc. – all the elements of a strategic plan. WWF has a license for all staff to use Miradi. – click here for [Miradi download instructions and access code](#).

Capacity support for implementation of the WWF Programme Standards and Results Based Management more broadly is coordinated by CSPU at WWF International. The PPMS capacity building site has details. In addition, each WWF office should have a Programme Standards 'champion' and a number of trained 'coaches' who can provide an introduction to

the WWF Programme Standards, and Miradi, and help teams to use them. An experienced PPMS coach can help you navigate the methods and design a tailored process that is appropriate for your project or programme.

Finally the [Insight CPM \(Conservation Project Management\)](#) database provides a platform via which project teams can share their work and learn from each other.

What if primary donors require other standards/ tools to be followed?

Some primary donors (external funding sources) such as GAAs and some foundations have their own standards. The differences compared to the WWF Standards may be small (for example, differences in terminology or in format of templates) but sometimes they are more significant (for example, different conceptual expectations in terms of design and monitoring). WWF policy is to encourage primary donors to accept the WWF Standards approaches and formats as far as possible, and as a result of efforts by WWF and CMP, many donors are familiar with the WWF Standards and the CMP Open Standards.

Where the WWF Standards are not acceptable to the primary donor you should respond to the primary donor's standards, but be aware of any differences, whether improvements, alternatives or gaps when compared to the WWF Standards. Note these and address gaps wherever possible. For example, try to monitor outcomes and impacts even if this is not expected by the donor.

Figure 1. WWF's Conservation Project/Programme Cycle



Overarching Guidance

As you read through this document, keep in mind the following guidelines and tips:

- ***Work with key organizational directives (e.g. Global Programme Framework)***–Global priority-setting is an essential precursor to these standards and should be completed before they are used. In the case of WWF, the Global Programme Framework (GPF) provides an overall WWF Network context for much of WWF’s Network efforts. The GPF has been developed through a priority setting process and comprises a set of Global Initiatives, priority places (Ecoregion Action Programmes (EAPs)), priority species, footprint areas and global priority drivers (click here for [GPF](#) and a [list of WWF Priority Programmes](#)).
- ***This process often takes place within a broader context*** – WWF projects almost always involve collaboration with combinations of multiple partners and associates, including governments, inter-governmental agencies, NGOs, civil society, corporate partners, and other WWF projects. You should know about and take into account other appropriate planning, implementation and monitoring work that could affect your project. You should check from time to time throughout the life of your project on the links to, relation with, and effects on/from these other key entities.
- ***These standards are useful to both new and existing projects*** – The standard practices outlined in this document are set out as they might be applied to a new project (i.e. through the steps in the project cycle). You can nonetheless apply the processes to an existing project, addressing any identified gaps by introducing the relevant practices. This too is a form of adaptive management, and would demonstrate learning. In short, you can start anywhere in the project cycle that is appropriate to the status of your project.
- ***These standards are meant to be used iteratively*** – Your project team is not expected to produce perfect outputs the first time you go through each step in the project cycle. Indeed, project teams that try to achieve perfection are likely to get stuck in “planning paralysis.” Instead, the idea is to go quickly and efficiently through the steps, using your own best judgment, develop draft outputs such as a ‘credible first iteration’ of your design, and then refine your work over time as you go through successive iterations and are better able to draw on inputs from other stakeholders.
- ***Application of the standards is not intended to be a strongly linear process*** – Although the project cycle presents these standards in a linear, numbered sequence, most project teams will not go through this process in a step-by-step fashion. Instead, you should feel comfortable changing the order of the steps, hopping around from step to step, combining steps, and revisiting earlier steps at any time in the process.
- ***These standards are not scale or site-specific*** – These standards are intended to apply to projects and programmes of all spatial and temporal scales ranging from small short-lived projects to large programmes that may stretch across ecoregions, landscapes, or even globally over decades. In addition, these standards are meant to apply to both site-based projects focusing on a specific geographical area as well as thematic projects focusing on a species or threat such as climate change. Click here for [guidance and examples of how to use the standards for different types of projects](#).

- ***These standards represent an “ideal”*** - A quick read of the standards may prove overwhelming at first – with a seemingly vast number of issues to consider and things to do. But these standards are meant to provide a comprehensive view of what good looks like in project design, management, monitoring and learning, as applied to a diversity of approaches and interventions. While all projects should aim to meet (or surpass) these standards, it is important to acknowledge that it may not always be feasible – for a variety of reasons – to address each and every component of the standards.
- ***These standards must be tailored for each project*** – These standards are not meant to be “one-size-fits-all,” but instead are written in fairly general terms in order to accommodate different approaches and provide project teams with the flexibility they need to adapt and modify the standards to their particular conditions. In particular, the level of detail that a project team goes into in each step of these standards will vary depending on the scope and complexity of their project. A small project with a EUR 5000 annual budget might go through the first iteration of the design step of these standards in a few hours (perhaps even combining some steps) whereas a large project with a EUR 3 million budget might take a few days or even months to complete their first iteration (see Table 1 for more details on what is recommended and what is compulsory for different types of project).
- ***These standards will change over time*** – The current version of these standards are not meant to be the last word in how to do effective conservation. Instead, they are meant to capture the prevailing wisdom on what it takes to do conservation well under a variety of conditions. Your experiences and feedback will help improve these standards over time. Please also click here to download the [latest version of this document](#).
- ***Aim for both sustainability and magnification of results*** – Most conservation projects and certainly any larger conservation programme should be designed with the aim of achieving lasting and *sustainable* results. Our uppermost goal should be, for example, to reverse threats or achieve a sustainable population level of a key species and then move on to other issues and needs – in effect, to exit that particular project or programme either because it is successful or because we have enlisted one or more strategic partners who will carry that project forward. To that end, these standards aim to promote and help develop strategies that will support more lasting interventions (e.g. through engaging strategic partners, developing sources of sustainable financing). Similarly, these standards are also designed to help promote *magnification* of the project’s impacts across a larger landscape by improving cross-project learning and enabling project teams to leverage wider, even global, institutional change.
- ***Terminology should be consistent, but focus on concepts*** – The technical terms in this document were carefully selected, underlined when first used, consistently used thereafter, and defined in the glossary at the end. Click here for the full [Network Standard terminology](#) document. The selection of specific terms for a given concept and the definitions for these terms are based on current usage of words by the WWF Network, other conservation organizations, and planners in other disciplines. However, different donors, offices, projects, and even individuals often have their own preferred set of terms. Whilst it is preferable to use the standard terms to the extent possible, it is even more important that you are clear about the concepts under discussion, and that the members of your project team, and the people with whom you work, have a clear and common definition of whatever terms you choose to use.

Essential Elements and ‘Compulsory Outputs’

The way you apply each step, including which tools you decide to apply, will vary between projects, but practitioners often need a short description of the ‘essential elements’ (i.e. what does good look like?) and a summary of the key outputs that they are expected to produce. This table briefly explains the elements that should be present in a project that is applying good practices as defined in the WWF Standards. Click here for a more detailed [good practice self assessment tool](#) that can be used to support an assessment or audit of the quality of practice.

Table 1. Essential Elements of PPMS

ELEMENT (Step in PPMS)	Brief description of strong application of the PPMS. The project team (has)....
SCOPE and VISION (1.2)	A clearly articulated scope (geographic and thematic). Partners share a vision of the desired outcome
TARGETS (1.3)	A clear justification of what they want to conserve (biodiversity targets), or the footprint element/ threat they wish to reduce and how that relates to biodiversity. And if appropriate how this would impact human wellbeing positively (human wellbeing targets identified).
CONTEXT ANALYSIS (1.4)	A clear and comprehensive understanding of the context (including the political, social, economic, climate, environmental and institutional systems) affecting its targets. The project has prioritised the most important threats/ factors to address. Stakeholders have been identified in relation to context.
STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS AND ENGAGEMENT (1.4)	A clear and comprehensive understanding of stakeholders affecting, or affected by, the project. Project has either defined, or is taking, strategic steps to engage them
BENEFICIARIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE (1.4)	Within the broader ‘stakeholder’ group, given special attention as necessary to key intended beneficiaries or the ‘target population/group’ as well as indigenous people.
THEORY OF CHANGE (2.1)	A clear and sound framework for how strategies will lead to desired results, specifying all key assumptions and relationships of cause and effect (Results Chains are a key supporting tool). Project activities are necessary and sufficient to deliver project Objectives and Goals.
OPTIMAL STRATEGIES (2.1)	Prioritised the selected strategies that are optimal in terms of economic/ technical feasibility, affordability, WWF niche, likely impact on biodiversity, livelihoods or footprint, etc
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (2.1)	Articulated SMART goals and objectives that describe the desired long-term impacts and outcomes (both short and long-term) of the project.
MONITORING & EVALUATION (2.2, 5.3)	An M&E plan with indicators for all goals and objectives that are linked to the sequence of results determined by the project logic;
DATA ANALYSIS AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT (4)	Collects data against indicators defined in monitoring plan; regularly reviews progress in relation to goals and objectives, checks key assumptions, captures lessons, and adapts actions where necessary
LEARNING & SHARING (5)	Formally reflects and identifies learning and lessons from planning and implementation with stakeholders. Learning is communicated with key internal and external audiences; projects carries out periodic independent evaluations and review exercises and has a culture that encourages good learning and adaptive management practices
RISK MANAGEMENT (2.3)	Fully assessed the risks to achieving its objectives and goals, and is taking measures to mitigate them. (To address this, some projects also consider 'key external assumptions' that need to hold true).
SUSTAINABILITY AND EXIT	A strategy to support both sustainability of project results and an eventual exit by WWF from some or all activities.

STRATEGY (2.3)	
HUMAN RESOURCES/ CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (2.3, 3.3)	The human resources (staff and skills), support systems (HR, finance, IT, etc), and governance structures needed for the successful implementation of all activities; capacity gaps are filled in a timely manner including those of the project stakeholders
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS (3.4)	Influences and collaborates with key strategic partners (government, public institution, private sector etc.) to obtain and deliver commitments and actions that are aligned with the project. WWF and partner/s are able to have open and regular dialogue on progress.
WORKPLANS AND BUDGETS (3.1)	Detailed workplans specific tasks linked to project goals, objectives and strategies/ activities. A clear budget identifying the financial resources over the lifetime of the project necessary to implement all activities; budget includes necessary provisions for salaries, coordination, training, and M&E costs. M&E costs of a project should normally range from 5-10% (up to 30% for pilot projects)
FUNDING and SUPPORT (3.3)	Secured funding for the project that is consistent with the scale of ambition identified in the project budget. Levels of support are adequate for the project to accomplish its aims.

What is compulsory? Expectations of Different Sized Projects

Projects vary enormously in their size, scope and complexity. While all projects should apply the WWF Standards, and the essential elements shown above should be present in any project, what those practices ‘look like’ will vary. As such it is useful to define the outputs that should normally be expected in relation to the financial value of the project. Note in particular that certain templates are available (via the hyperlinks) and should be used to capture the essence of your project design, plans, and reports. The components of a Strategic Plan or ‘proposal’ can be summarized as being the products from Steps 1 and 2 of the project cycle below. For a systematic listing of PPMS outputs, see Annex 1.

Components of a Strategic Plan: products from Steps 1 and 2

- Scope, Vision, Targets
- Analysis of Context and Stakeholders (typically including conceptual model and prioritized threats)
- Action Plan (goals, objectives, strategies and theory of change/ results chains)
- Monitoring Plan
- Operational Plan

Table 2 Expected core outputs and formats

Type/ Output	Strategic Plans	Reports	Evaluations	Notes
Priority Programme	WWF Concept (recommended as a first stage plan) WWF Proposal/ Strategic Plan	Technical Report (TPR) Quarterly Financial Report (R3) and Notes Forward financial plan	Periodic independent Evaluation (approx. every 2-3 years)	Programmes should be able to show evidence that they are applying each PPMS step and producing the expected outputs in all cases.
Other large Project or Programme (>€250k p.a.)	WWF Concept (recommended as a first stage plan) WWF Proposal/ Strategic Plan	Technical Report (TPR) Quarterly Financial Report (R3) and Notes	Periodic independent Evaluation (approx. every 2-3 years)	Where compulsory GAA (or other donor) formats are required, apply the relevant GAA standards. In such cases, the PPMS formats are not expected, but try to address any gaps compared to the PPMS e.g. include results chains, and monitor outcomes and impacts even if this is not expected by the donor.
Project (€100-250k p.a.)	Proposal (simple – 15 pages)	Technical Report (TPR) Quarterly Financial Report (R3) and Notes	Periodic evaluation, usually internal	
Small Project (<€100k p.a.)	Simple Concept , Workplan and Budget (B3)	Technical Report (TPR) Quarterly Financial Report (R3) and Notes	Not required	
Campaign Strategy	Communications Strategy		As above, defined by investment	Click here for further guidance
Office (NO or PO)	Office strategic plans			

Notes:

- Offices typically define Concept/ Proposal review processes and individual sign-off limits in relation to these limits. Click here for examples of [concept and proposal review checklists](#). Click here for the [Cradle to Grave process](#) used by WWF-Int POs.
- For a very small one-off project, say less than €40,000 in value, a simple listing of tasks required and outputs expected may be more appropriate than a Concept. Alternatively the Concept note can still be applied but the content could be simplified.
- Some variation in the budget thresholds will be appropriate - to keep communication simple

General Practices

There are three main overarching practices that apply to most or all of the steps in these standards. Instead of listing them for each step, they are described here. Where they especially need to be addressed during a specific step, they are also included as specific standards in that step.

0.1 Engage Stakeholders

In conducting your project, it is important at every step to make sure you identify, and as appropriate, engage key stakeholders, and understand the social context. You will need to identify stakeholders independently, determine with them what roles they might play in both planning and implementation, and develop a strategy to ensure their participation.

Implementing this strategy effectively will help ensure that these stakeholders both respond positively to the project's activities and help in the implementation of the project over the short-term, and ultimately, after the initial project ends (click here for basic guidance on stakeholder analysis).

You should pay particular attention to indigenous and/or marginalized people who might be significantly affected by the project but often have little voice, and conversely to powerful individuals and organizations, who irrespective of being affected are by definition influential. Specifically, WWF has agreed social policies on poverty and conservation, indigenous peoples (link), human rights and gender. You should ensure that both you and your team are familiar with these policies, and the implications they may have for the project, and convey the general implications of these policies to all partners and primary stakeholders. Ensuring that your project adheres to these policies (see Box 1 below) will help WWF avoid engaging in unethical activities.

0.2 Embrace Learning

At both project and organizational levels, it is important to develop an environment that is curious, questioning, and encourages suitable risk-taking. It is also critical to document the process and archive key decisions at each step of the way. Not only does this give you the opportunity to analyze why things worked or did not work, but it also serves as a basis for others to understand the logic of your choices and provides the basic ingredients for sound knowledge management. By embracing learning and sharing information, you will open the door to bring in lessons from the outside to be incorporated where appropriate (click here for basic guidance on embracing learning within your project). In line with this thinking, some practitioners prefer to engage with Step 5 (Share) of the PPMS before they start Steps 1 and 2 (Define and Design). Note also that you should register your project on the Insight project database, and periodically share outputs and knowledge on the database.

0.3 Consider Climate Change

Climate changes are unavoidable for the foreseeable future. The global average temperature is on track to increase more than 2.0 degrees C in the decades to come, with associated--but difficult to predict--changes in seasonality, storm events, and the timing and volume of precipitation. Ecological and human impacts may be profound. WWF encourages its programs to be "climate smart" by embracing these four elements:

1. Understanding and responding to existing and future climate change impacts and risks, alongside other conventional threats;

2. Developing and implementing considered (ideally low/no-regret) actions which do not erode options for responding to future climate change and which avoid contributing to greenhouse gas emissions; and
3. Taking an integrated approach to adaptation, contributing to nature conservation and fair, equitable and sustainable development
4. 'Learning by doing' through regular monitoring and revision of actions; adaptation is an ongoing process.

The earlier that such an approach can be integrated into planning the better, yet many WWF projects and programmes are already implementing strategic plans that were developed with only a cursory examination of climate change. Click here [for climate adaptation guidelines](#) to help you include climate adaptation in your strategic plan.

Box1: People and Conservation - WWF Social Principles and Policies

Many of the places where WWF works are also home to rural communities and indigenous peoples whose livelihoods and cultures are closely dependent on the natural environment. The success of our work can strongly depend on the degree to which conservation contributes not only to the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems but also to equitable and sustainable development options for people.

WWF has developed **five principles** and a **set of social policies** to guide the inclusion of social development considerations in our programmes, projects and policies. These principles and policies are intended to strengthen our conservation results and ensure their sustainability into the future.



WWF Social Principles:

1. Respect people's rights in accordance with customary, national and international human rights laws;
2. Promote equity within the scope of our projects, programmes and policies at multiple levels, and promote these principles in policy fora and advocacy work at national and global levels;
3. Aim to enhance the natural assets of local communities, particularly the poor, and ensure that our conservation work does not harm vulnerable people;
4. Address weak governance, taking into account cultural and political contexts, through improvements in tenure and income security and decision-making procedures, devolution of environmental management and empowerment to ensure that the rights (and access) of local people to natural resources, which are the basis of their livelihoods, are exercised and enforced;
5. Address the inequitable distribution of environmental costs and benefits and unsustainable production and consumption patterns at multiple levels whenever possible by influencing local policies and practice, global markets, the private sector, national, regional and global policies and processes.

WWF Social Policies (<https://sites.google.com/a/wwf.panda.org/social-development/home/policies/policies>)

Indigenous Peoples: WWF's Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation (2008) reflects our dedication to respecting indigenous and traditional peoples' human and development rights and recognizes the importance of conserving their cultures.

Poverty and Conservation: WWF's Policy on Poverty and Conservation (2009) reaffirms WWF's commitment to embrace a pro-poor approach to conservation to strive to find equitable solutions for people and the environment and making special efforts to enable local people to play a key part in crafting solutions for sustainable development. WWF defines poverty as encompassing physiological deprivation (non-fulfilment of basic needs, lack of income, ill-health, etc.) and social deprivation and vulnerability (lack of access to natural resources, discrimination, lack of voice and power, gender inequities, etc.).

Conservation Initiative on Human Rights Framework: In signing the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights Framework (2009) WWF recognizes human rights as central to achieving effective and equitable conservation and development outcomes. The Framework states WWF's commitment to respect human rights and to promote rights within the scope of conservation initiatives. It commits WWF to implementation measures contained in the framework and their application across all of our relevant social policies.

Gender: WWF's Gender policy (2011) signifies WWF's ongoing commitment to equity and integrating a gender perspective in its policies, programs, and projects, as well as in its own institutional structure. The policy recognizes that gender refers to the socially constructed roles and opportunities associated with women and men and the differences and inequalities between women and men in access to and control over resources and decision-making opportunities.

Other policies and papers are under development, such as policies on **Community Rights and Resources** and on **HIV/AIDS**, and discussion papers on **Population and Conservation** and **Civil Society**. For supporting information and tools go to <https://sites.google.com/a/wwf.panda.org/social-development/>. This includes the "Poverty and Nature Toolkit", which is constructed around the PPMS cycle.

1. Define

This first step involves specifying the basic parameters for your² project in preparation for the design work that will come in the next step.

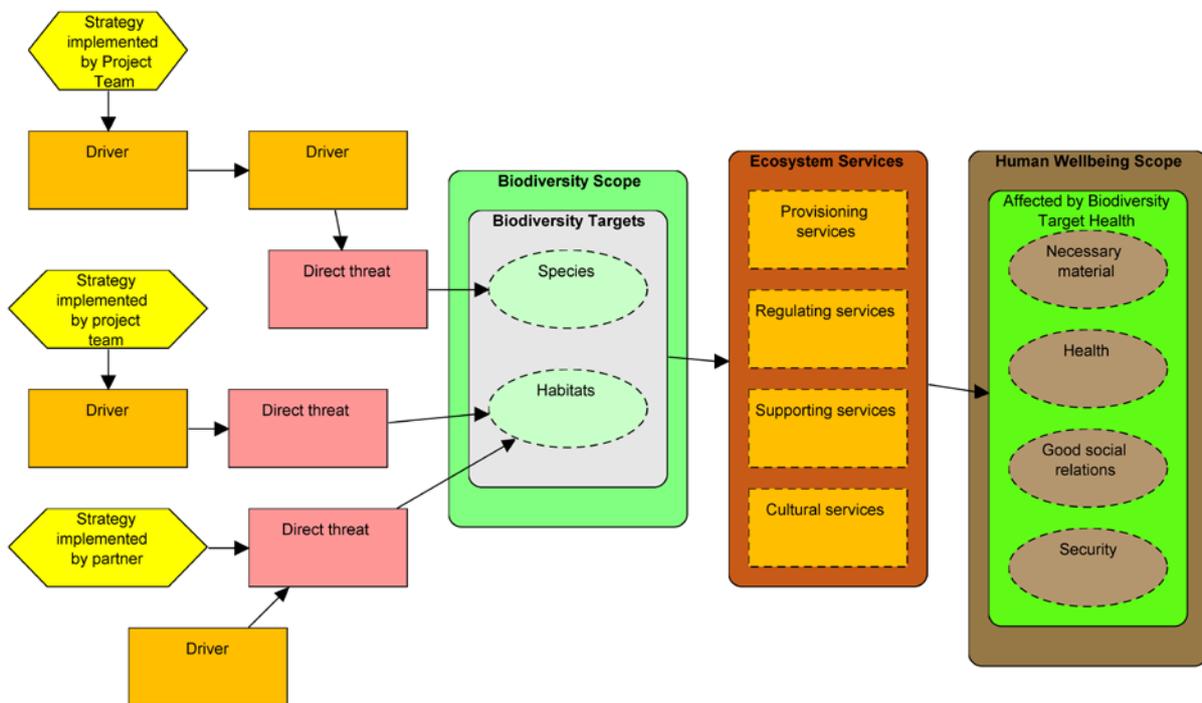
Specifically, it involves identifying:

- Your initial project team
- The project's geographic and/ or thematic scope
- A vision statement of what you hope to achieve
- The key stakeholders
- The project's context, including threats and opportunities

All of these elements are highly interlinked, and most project teams go through this as an iterative process. Change the order of the substeps as your team sees fit, and revisit earlier elements at any time. For example, you may choose to start by identifying the key stakeholders, and consciously involve some of them in the Define process.

At the end of this step you should have a clear understanding of how the above elements are connected. You may find it helpful to keep in mind the generic conceptual model below.

Figure 2. Generic Project Model Showing Scope, Targets, Threats and Drivers



² In this document we generally talk about ‘your’ project rather than ‘the’ project in order to encourage ownership of the project and a personal connection with the text. In practice, of course, successful projects increasingly rely on multiple contributions from stakeholders and are rarely wholly ‘owned’ by WWF.

1.1 Initial Team Composition and Operations

A project is ultimately designed and implemented by a specific group of individuals who comprise your project team. Team members typically include WWF staff as well as other key internal and external partners (click here for [basic guidance on defining team composition and operations](#)). One of the team members is typically designated as the project leader. As you move through the management cycle, for example once you have analysed the project context and stakeholders, the composition of this team should be revisited and may need to be changed. The key, however, is to recognize and make use of existing skills and experience to ensure that the project moves forward with the best available knowledge. In addition to the project team, you may also need to identify one or more advisors to whom the core team can turn for honest feedback and counsel and who can champion your cause.

Once you have identified the core project team, you should develop a charter that outlines how the project team will function and/ or a concept paper that sketches out some initial thinking on the project (click here for an example of a [project concept form](#)). Specific points that this document

should address include what team members will do, how they will make decisions, a rough timeline for project activities, who else needs to be engaged, informed, and involved, and what financial and staff resources are required to move through the project cycle.

Team definition: Do you have social science and climate change/climate adaptation expertise on your team?

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Selection of initial project team and designation of project leader.*
- ◆ *Charter outlining how the project team will function*
- ◆ *Concept paper outlining some initial thinking on the project.*

1.2 Scope and Vision

Before you decide on what specific strategies and activities you will undertake, you need to have a good understanding of what you hope to accomplish. You must define the scope of the project that you are developing, including any generalized ideas on strategic focus, and a vision statement of what you are working to achieve.

A project's scope defines broadly what a project will affect. For example, projects that are focused on a specific place will have a geographic scope or project area. Projects whose boundary is defined by specific species, threats, opportunities or enabling conditions will have a thematic scope. Where the scope is thematic, you will also want to consider whether there is any specific geographic focus. You should justify your choice of scope, explaining its relevance to wider programmes, and to internal or external factors (see Table 2 for examples).

In addition to defining broadly what you will focus on and/or where, the scope should also provide some generalized ideas on the project's strategic focus. Though these ideas will be refined as you progress through your Steps 1 and 2 of the cycle, defining your main focus helps to clarify what you will do and, conversely, what you are less likely to do, perhaps because it is not a typical approach of your organization. Breaking up your scope into finer

units also may make it easier to determine goals, focus strategy development, and begin selection of indicators of success

For example, a project with a geographic scope may be broken down into finer units such as particular focal landscapes within the overall geographic boundary, for example sub-catchments and catchments in the case of river basin work. If the scope of your programme is more thematic in nature such as reducing CO2 emissions in the UK, your strategic focus may specify certain sectors (e.g. transport, homes, food, energy production etc.) Or a programme focused on the education sector in Mongolia will need to define which areas of the education sector to focus on for the greatest impact.

It is also important at an early stage to develop a clear and common vision statement, which is a description of the desired state or ultimate condition that you are working to achieve (see Figure 2). A

vision statement might include descriptions of biodiversity and/or maps of the area and often includes links between people and nature. Whatever it contains, it should meet the criteria of being *relatively general, visionary, and brief*. A project's vision statement should fit within the context of WWF's overall mission, which has the three main axes of 1) biodiversity conservation, 2) sustainable natural resource management, and 3) reduction of pollution and environmentally damaging or wasteful consumption. It should also fit within the scope of WWF's Global Programme Framework. The task of developing a vision statement is often an important way of developing consensus among your core planning team about what the Scope of the project is. In participatory and coalition approaches, visioning is a key tool for getting stakeholders with conflicting interests to work together.

(Click here for [basic guidance on defining scope & vision](#)).

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *A brief description of the project's scope including general ideas on strategic focus.*
- ◆ *If appropriate, a map of the project area (GIS file or hand sketch).*
- ◆ *A vision statement for the project.*

Revisiting your scope

You may need to revisit your project's scope, strategic focus, targets, strategies and actions as your planning advances and you begin implementation. Every project is different, so the exact sequence and approach to each step may vary. For example:

- 1) if your project has a geographic scope, you may already be able to identify specific targets (see Step 1.3).
- 2) Your organisation's (or programme's/team's) strategic direction may already identify preferred broad strategies (see Step 2.1) that will be seriously considered as options as you continue through your planning process.

Box 2. Climate Adaptation in relation to Scope and Targets

Does your geographic scope and targets include consideration of shifting ecosystem and species ranges? If your strategic focus is a species, have you considered latitudinal, elevational or other shifts due to climate change? If yours is a footprint program, will the focal threat be exacerbated by climate change? When you set viability goals, will those goals be attainable given climate projections?

The basic tool used to gauge existing and potential effects of climate change is a vulnerability assessment. Some ideas for conducting a very basic, initial vulnerability assessment are included in the PPMS climate adaptation guidelines. If there are existing climate vulnerability assessments relevant to your scope, by all means use them, but note that it is easy to waste effort on a general climate vulnerability analysis performed by a consultant who does not have specific ecological knowledge of your area and concerns.

Of course, climate adaptation can be a challenging subject. For a new project, you may decide to begin project planning without a comprehensive climate vulnerability assessment, since the majority of activities to address current threats and improve policies will still be appropriate. At the same time, all plans would benefit from incorporating climate change from the beginning. It is up to your project team how to proceed, and some iteration is likely to be necessary.

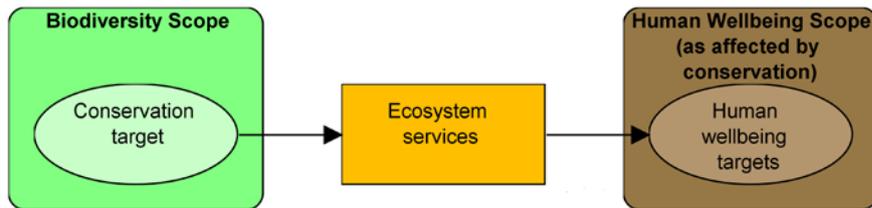
Once your project has identified its conservation targets (including human welfare targets where appropriate), you should review the vulnerability of your targets. You can use an ecological drawing to consider how your targets are already vulnerable to climate, and then examine vulnerabilities to future climate change, which is often along the same themes as past climate vulnerability. Once threats and drivers have also been identified you should focus further vulnerability work on more specific climate, ecological, and social questions.

1.3 Targets

Identifying Target(s) is typically the next step. Targets define more precisely what the project *ultimately* wants to affect in a positive manner. Usually they are related to biodiversity but in some cases human welfare targets may be defined. Associated goals should be set that relate to both types of targets (even if WWF is not the primary actor for all the actions required to meet the goals).

Projects with a geographic scope generally select a limited number of specific targets (often known as conservation or biodiversity targets) – a combination of specific species and/or habitats (ecological systems) that are chosen to represent the full suite of biodiversity in the project area. In theory – and hopefully in practice – conservation of the selected targets will ensure the conservation of all native biodiversity within the project site. Most place-based projects can be well defined by eight or fewer well-chosen biodiversity targets - but this is not a hard and fast rule. Selection of biodiversity targets typically benefits from expert input and from the analysis of spatial data.

Many projects, especially those working with multi-sectoral groups, will combine a focus on biodiversity targets with responsibilities for human well-being. As defined by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, human wellbeing includes: necessary material for a good life, health, good social relations, security, and freedom and choice. Human wellbeing targets focus on those components of human wellbeing affected by the status of biodiversity targets via ecosystem services.



It is important that all projects are able to explain the link between their scope and biodiversity (via threat/ footprint reduction/ sustainable use). Note, however, that not all projects will need to define detailed conservation targets. For example, if your project is part of a larger programme, targets and goals may have already been defined at a broader or higher scale, in which case you could refer to them in your planning rather than creating new targets. Alternatively projects with a thematic threat or footprint scope may have one general target labeled "biodiversity" or "sea turtles" (for a turtle bycatch-focused programme). In these cases, the extent to which the targets are tracked would be at the team's discretion.

Where specific targets are defined, you should next determine the current condition or 'health' and desired future condition of each target. For biodiversity targets, a viability assessment should be conducted specifying key ecological attributes (KEAs) for each target. These KEAs are aspects of the target's biology that, if missing or altered, would lead to the loss of that target over time. For example, the KEA for salmon might be the population size of salmon returning to a river to spawn.

Tips on Targets

- Targets are often finer units of the Scope.
- The desired condition of each target should be defined
- Usually goals, and associated indicators of success, are developed in relation to targets.
- Targets also help to define the breadth and depth of the contextual analysis that needs to be undertaken.

Where human wellbeing targets are defined, the team may also want to define key attributes. You should make sure that these attributes are clearly dependent upon the status of the biodiversity target(s) and/or the ecosystem services they provide. For example, a conservation team would probably not have human wellbeing goals related to reducing HIV infection or decreasing cholesterol levels, even though these might be important for human health. It may, however, have human wellbeing goals related to access to food sources because the conserved biological targets are improving crop pollination services.

Typical outputs for the target step include:

- ◆ *Selection of a limited number of conservation or biodiversity targets for your project, including a brief explanation of why they were chosen.*
- ◆ *Links identified to other programme targets and/or to generalized nature targets*
- ◆ *For thematically oriented scopes and where human welfare targets are set, an explanation of the links to ecosystem services and biodiversity (via footprint or threat reduction, or people related strategies)*
- ◆ *A (generally tabular) description of the current and future desired condition of each target.*

Table 3. Examples of Project Scopes and their links to Biodiversity Targets

Type of Scope	Example	Links to biodiversity
Geographic scope	Virunga National Park - the different ecosystems and the biodiversity contained within the park boundaries.	The link to biodiversity is direct.
Geographic scope with strategic focus	Yangtze River Basin - within this, the programme identifies priority landscapes of high conservation value.	The link to biodiversity is direct. Note that different actions will take place at different scales.
Thematic scope with geographic focus	Tiger NI - wild tigers, focusing on 13 landscapes that the world's top tiger experts have identified as offering the best chance of growing the population.	The link to biodiversity is direct.
	Illegal logging (EU) -- Timber produced and/ or imported illegally into the EU, with a focus on imports that affect WWF priority ecosystems.	The project should identify ecosystems (and perhaps key species) that are being affected. These may be divided into those within and outside the EU.
	Palm Oil (Malaysia) -- High conservation value habitats/species in Malaysia that are liable to be affected by Palm Oil production. (Note this would have a clear relationship to some wider WWF programmes – Heart of Borneo Initiative and the Market Transformation Initiative).	The project should identify specific habitats and species that are affected by palm oil production in Malaysia. N.B. Some practitioners would argue that those specific habitats and species represent the scope; however the project team has already decided to focus on palm oil since they 'know' this is a major threat, so it is important to include this in the description of scope.
Thematic and geographic scope with strategic focus	UK Climate Programme: -- CO2 emissions in the UK, focusing on emissions due to transport, homes, food, and energy production.	The footprint issue is clear (CO2 emissions). The link to biodiversity, perhaps better expressed as 'natural systems' in this case, is direct but very broad (the global climate regime).
Thematic scope with geographic focus (more complex)	Canada Fisheries -- Seafood consumed in Canada and/ or produced within Canadian Oceans, with a focus on consumption that affects key fish species and ecosystems as defined by WWF's GPF. The scope has four distinct parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian seafood production (wild caught fish) • Canadian seafood production (aquaculture) • Global seafood production that is consumed in Canada (wild caught fish). • Global seafood production that is consumed in Canada (aquaculture). 	Mirroring the scope, the project should identify the relationships between the scope and biodiversity targets such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Key fish species in Canadian Oceans b) Ecosystems and non fish species in Canadian Oceans c) Key fish species in oceans globally d) Ecosystems and non fish species globally Related to this, the project should identify its relationship to major WWF programmes such as the Smart Fishing Initiative, Coastal East Africa Initiative, Coral Triangle Initiative etc. Again, some practitioners would argue that the above four areas represent the scope. However the team has defined its boundary as 'Seafood consumed in Canada and/ or produced within Canadian Oceans', and this is a more practical scope from which to plan.

Box 3. Clarifying socially beneficial results and human wellbeing targets

Conservation teams often work on important social issues that have benefits beyond biodiversity (e.g., building capacity for good governance or promoting alternative livelihoods). In such cases, the conservation strategy provides social benefits. These benefits, however, are not equivalent to human wellbeing targets; they are benefits that are derived from a strategy that is done in service of conservation.

For example, a project team may implement an eco-certification strategy to improve forest conservation. Part of the logic of the strategy is to increase loggers' income as an incentive to implement certified practices and improve forest conservation. The increased income is a direct (and necessary) result of that strategy, and is one that benefits humans.

In contrast, human wellbeing targets represent interests of the people within a region that will be enhanced or achieved as a result of the conservation of an ecosystem, habitat, or species and its associated ecosystem services. Some examples of ecosystem services linking biodiversity and human wellbeing targets are below.

For more detailed guidance on human wellbeing targets compared to socially beneficial results, including a consideration of trade-offs, unintended consequences, and feedback loops, go to: <https://sites.google.com/a/fosonline.org/hwt-workspace/home/products>

Threat	Biodiversity Target	Ecosystem Service	Human Wellbeing Target
Industrial pollution and/or over abstraction of water	River tributary	Provision of fresh water	Access to sufficient clean water
Cutting of mangroves for fuelwood	Mangroves	Flood regulation (tidal)	Personal safety/security from disasters
(Local) air pollution	Forests, Lakes	Cultural services (aesthetic and recreational)	Access to clean air and water, mental and emotional wellbeing
Poaching	Rhinos, tigers	Cultural services (aesthetic and recreational)	Livelihoods through income from tourism
Sedimentation and pollution (due to agriculture)	Coral reefs	Provision of fish	Sufficient nutritious food
Overcapacity of fishing fleets	Whitefish	Provision of fish	Sufficient food and adequate livelihoods in the medium/ long term
Clear-cutting for timber	Forests	Climate regulation	All benefits associated with a stable climate

1.4 Context (Threats and Drivers) and Stakeholders

Overview:

This standard asks you to describe your current understanding of your project's context – including the biological environment and the social, economic, political, and institutional systems. This involves carrying out a thorough situation analysis and stakeholder analysis, from which you will be better positioned to design effective strategies and activities. The systems of cause and effect that you need to analyse are often complex, so before you start this sub-step you should think carefully about how you will go about the process and which tools you will use. You should address the three areas described below, but your approach may well be integrated and iterative rather than linear. The challenge here is to make your logic explicit without spending too much time on trying to develop a perfect model of reality. A conceptual model is commonly used by teams to help develop and represent their thinking; generally this is developed from right to left (identify threats, rate/ prioritise the threats, identify drivers).

Identify and prioritise the key factors (threats) affecting the targets – Situation Analysis

A situation analysis involves identifying and understanding the key factors affecting your scope and targets, including direct threats, drivers (indirect threats and opportunities), and enabling conditions (click here for [basic guidance on situation analysis](#)). These factors can range in scale from local to global. Within this analysis, it is important to prioritize the various factors that affect your targets so that you can concentrate your activities where they are most needed. In particular, you should try to determine which of your direct threats are critical threats – the ones that are most important to address. There are a number of tools that can be used to help in this prioritization process – the most common tool involves rating each threat on criteria such as scope, severity, and irreversibility and then combining these individual ratings to produce an overall ranking of the threat for each target and the project as a whole (click here for [basic guidance on threat ranking](#)).

Define key stakeholders

Each factor can typically be linked to one or more stakeholders – those individuals, groups, or institutions that have an interest in or will be affected by your project's activities. You need to consider both powerful and influential stakeholders, as well as those that might be disadvantaged or marginalized (click here for [basic guidance on stakeholder analysis](#)). Disadvantaged groups need to be considered not only in terms of how their actions affect project targets, but also in terms of how project activities may impact them, so that where possible, measures are incorporated into project design that create benefits for these groups or at a minimum mitigate negative impacts from the project. As you review stakeholders, also keep in mind which stakeholders could become important strategic partners that you could involve in action planning.

Clarify the relationships between factors - Conceptual Model

As part of your situation analysis, you should describe the relationships between targets, direct threats, indirect threats, opportunities, and stakeholders. This description can be in text form and/ or in a conceptual model, a diagrammatic illustration of these relationships (see Figures 3 & 4 for generic and actual examples). A good model shows quite clearly the situation in which your project will take place and illustrates the cause-and effect relationships that you and your team assume exists with respect to the project's scope. Good models are also the result of a team effort and are as simple as possible while still including

all necessary detail. It is also important to field test the model with key stakeholders and partners both inside and outside the project team to make sure that the model reflects their understanding of the situation (click here for [basic guidance on conceptual models](#)).

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *An analysis and prioritisation of the critical direct threats/ factors affecting your targets.*
- ◆ *An analysis of key drivers - indirect threats and opportunities – and an explanation that shows the cause-and-effect relationships among factors (e.g. conceptual model)*
- ◆ *An analysis of key stakeholders.*

Box 4. Context and Stakeholders: think carefully about the process and tools you will use

1) How much do you know already?

How you go about this step needs to be tailored to your project. A situation analysis can involve anything from a cursory review of existing information and a relatively brief discussion with key informants to an in-depth analysis of documents and a more lengthy process of consultation.

For example, a project team that is just beginning to work in a site will generally need to dedicate several months to their situation analysis before planning their project interventions. By contrast a team that has been working in a place for several years on forest management may already have a good idea about the current condition of the forests and the threats affecting them.

2) Consider who to involve and when

Recognise that there is a close and dynamic relationship between a situation analysis and stakeholder analysis. Who you choose to involve in your situation analysis (and when) will affect the time it takes, stakeholder ownership of the analysis, and the content of the analysis itself.

For some types of work, for example when deep systems change is required, extensive multi-stakeholder engagement may be necessary to build a shared understanding of the situation and hence develop effective strategies.

3) Manage dynamic complexity

There are many tools and analytical methods that you could use. To support your analysis and manage your information, the use of conceptual models is recommended but not compulsory. Conceptual models help you to organise and communicate the information from your situation analysis, allowing you to articulate and make explicit assumptions about cause and effect relationships. They can help you to reduce the effects of dynamic complexity by helping you (and others) to understand it

4) Use other forms of conceptual models as appropriate

In addition to the ‘root cause analysis’ type of conceptual model, it may be useful to develop other types of models to show the relationship between factors and help identify strategies, for example a commodity value chain diagram, a global/regional trade map, or a policy decision process flowchart.

5) Include different disciplines and analyse multiple levels as necessary

You should integrate perspectives from social sciences, policy, economics and the natural sciences. You may also need to look at issues at a range of levels, from local through to subnational, national and international. At a local scale, you may explore such issues as livelihood needs and concerns of local people and institutions. At a national or international level, you may analyze the relationship of local issues with such major drivers as national debt, trade policies, government or private investments, and poverty reduction strategies.

6) Consider climate change

As part of this step you may decide to carry out a detailed vulnerability assessment. The PPMS climate adaptation guidelines provide guidance on this, and suggest a way to identify and include the components of climate change in your conceptual model and threat ranking. This makes it easier to prioritize climate impacts and to see how climate may exacerbate existing threats.

Figure 3. Example of a Conceptual Model

Coloured boxes in direct threats are priority rankings (red indicates highest priority).

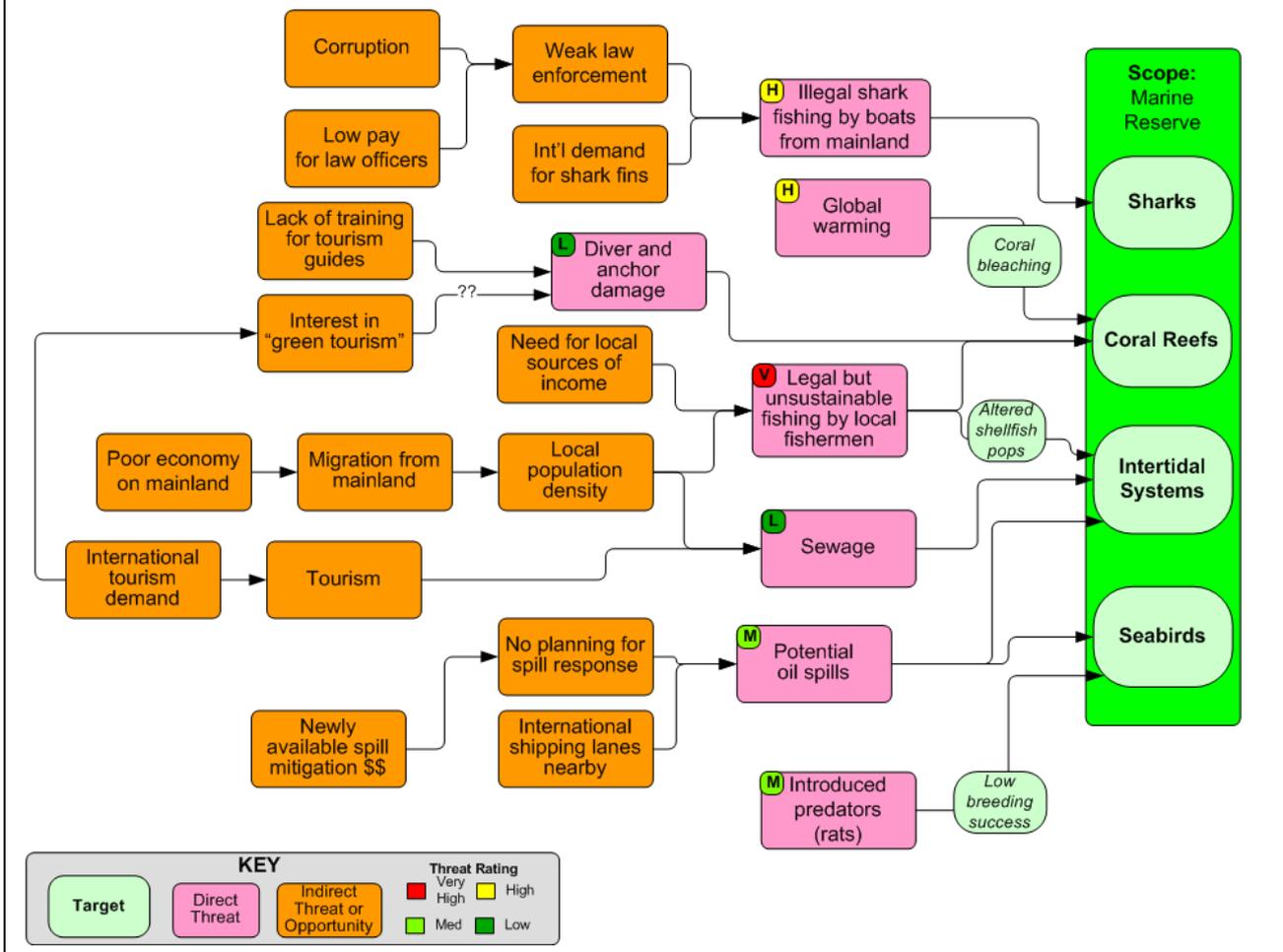


Figure 4. Example of a Relative Whole-Site Threat Ranking

The following is an example of a threat ranking applied at the level of the whole site and using a relative ranking method. This is based on a real-world ranking for a WWF project in a tropical forest site. Three criteria (scope, severity, and urgency) are used to evaluate nine direct threats.

DIRECT THREAT	SCOPE	SEVERITY	URGENCY	TOTAL	CLASSIFICATION
Agriculture frontier expansion	7	8	9	24	Very High
Commercial fishing	1	2	1	4	Low
Freshwater turtle and turtle eggs over-harvesting	3	7	4	14	Medium
Hunting	8	4	7	19	High
Illegal Logging	6	5	8	19	High
Mining	2	9	5	16	Medium
Paiche (Invasive fish species)	4	6	6	16	Medium
Palm exploitation	5	3	2	10	Low
Unsustainable Brazil nut management	9	1	3	13	Medium
TOTAL	45	45	45		

2. Design

Once you have described the scope, targets, threats and drivers for your project, the next step is to design the specific strategies you will undertake to achieve conservation.

The Design step has three sections, all of which are tightly linked, and most project teams go through this as an iterative process.

- Action Plan in which you set your project's goals, objectives and strategies.
- Monitoring Plan in which you will use to guide your project and assess its effectiveness
- Operational Plan that outlines how your project will develop the financial, human, and other resources needed for the project to achieve results that last over the long-term.

All your work in the Define and Design steps should be compiled in a single document - your Strategic Plan. Click here for a [Strategic Plan/ Proposal template](#) and here for [example Strategic Plans](#).

2.1 Action Plan: Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Assumptions

Overview

As your team moved through Steps 1.3 and 1.4, you perhaps began to identify potential strategies. In this section you will test and clarify these strategies, and develop an action plan that describes what you are trying to achieve and how you plan to achieve it. The Action Plan should include:

- (a) A summary of your **goals, objectives and strategies/** activities.
- (b) An explanation of why you selected these strategies.
- (c) Formal descriptions of your overarching theory of change and any core assumptions.

Again these elements are closely linked and are often best developed as an iterative process. In the case of longer-term projects, it often makes sense to develop results chains before you define your objectives.

Tip – think about the process for designing your Action Plan

For larger projects with longer-term goals, a common approach is to draft Goals first (based on your targets and viability analysis), then identify potential strategies (informed by a conceptual model), make the theory of change explicit (using results chains), and finally define your objectives.

On the other hand for a smaller project, you may be able to quickly move from defining goals to identifying some 3 year and 1 year objectives, and the necessary activities may be obvious. You should still make the theory of change explicitly clear.

Goals and Objectives

Developing a clear idea of what you would like to accomplish is the essential first part of putting together your action plan. As a starting point, you may want to revisit the vision statement for your project that you developed in Step 1.2 that describes what you ultimately would like to accomplish. Goals are linked to your project's targets and represent the desired status of the targets over the long-term – they are formal statements of the ultimate impacts you hope to achieve. A good goal meets the criteria of being *linked to targets and SMART (specific, measurable, ambitious and achievable, relevant, and time limited)*. Where specific targets have been identified, the goals come from your analysis of the desired future

condition of each target in Step 1.3, based on key attributes. Objectives are linked to specific threats and opportunities that your project has identified and specify the desired condition of these factors that you would like to achieve in the short and medium-term – they are formal statements of the outcomes necessary to attain your goals. A good objective meets the criteria of being *outcome oriented and SMART*. If the project period is known, you may find it useful to specify objectives which are to be achieved at the end of the project period. Together, your goals and objectives represent what you need to accomplish, and as such, become the ultimate measure against which you will gauge the progress of your project (click here for [basic guidance on Action Plans](#)). You may also want to specify intermediate results that, as their name implies, represent the milestones you expect to accomplish en route to achieving your final goals and objectives – these can be helpful in adaptive management.

Box 5 - SMART Goals and Objectives

A good goal meets the criteria of being SMART and linked to targets, while a good objective should be SMART and outcome-oriented. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Ambitious, Relevant and Time limited.

One of the most challenging aspects is finding a good balance between **achievability** and **ambition**, especially for Goals which are longer-term. Most practitioners are faced with the challenge of managing differing expectations, both internal and external, with respect to whether goals be more ambitious or tend towards being more realistic (i.e. achievable with a high degree of certainty).

Strategy/ Activity selection

Once you have determined what you want to accomplish, you need to think about how you will do it. Your analysis of context and stakeholders helps in determining the key factors where you will intervene, and also where you will not. You can then determine strategies – the prioritized interventions that you and your partners will undertake to reach these ends. Descriptions of these strategies can range in scope from broad strategies (for large projects) to more specific activities used to accomplish each strategy. Good strategies/ activities meet the criteria of being *linked, focused, feasible, and appropriate*. Your challenge is to select the most appropriate and cost-effective strategies that have the highest likelihood of achieving success (click here for [basic guidance on Action Plans](#)). You may need to brainstorm a list of potential strategies and then narrow them down via discussion with your team or through a ranking exercise. These strategies can range in scale from local to global, depending on the situation. It is also important to ensure that your strategies complement other private and public sector programmes and are designed in conjunction with and meet the needs of local stakeholders.

Box 6 - Tips on selecting strategies

Apply criteria to rank strategies. You can devise a rating scale to compare potential strategies to deliver a desired result. Commonly used criteria are effectiveness, feasibility, affordability (cost), and sustainability.

Consider WWF's 'Niche'. To help decide whether it makes sense for WWF to implement a particular strategy, it can be useful to carry out a simple SWOT analysis e.g. define WWF's particular strengths and weaknesses in relation to delivering strategy, and any external opportunity and threat if WWF delivers this strategy. Also, ask questions like:

- Who else could do this? Could they do it better?
- Is anybody doing something similar? Should we partner with them?
- What would happen if we didn't do this?

Strategies and Activities - hierarchy of terms for actions. The recommended hierarchy of terms to describe actions (from largest to smallest) is Strategy>Activity>Task>Subtask. There can be overlap in the use of these terms, but in general;:

- 'Strategy' tends to be used by larger projects and programmes only
- 'Activities' are fine enough that you can assign staffing levels to them
- 'Tasks' define specifically what will be done when.

Theory of Change/ Core Assumptions

The essence of this step lies in making explicit and testing your overarching theory of change, including the logical sequences that link your activities to your targets – your project’s core assumptions. Once you have decided on the strategies that you will include in your project, a results chain is a useful tool that provides a graphical depiction of these logical sequences (click here for [basic guidance on results chains](#)). Results chains show the combination of all the major strategies and associated activities necessary to achieve your objectives/goals - including those that others may need to undertake (see Figure 5).

Box 7 - Theory of Change and the use of Results Chains

A Theory of Change is a narrative and/ or diagram that explains the underlying theory that links what you will do (your strategy) to what you want to achieve (long-term objectives and goals). It is often expressed in the form of a diagram such as a Results Chain that helps to make a project’s specific assumptions explicitly clear, combined with a statement of an overarching approach or philosophy that the project considers to be ‘true’ (and for which there is good supporting evidence). Examples of theory of change statements include the following:

- CBNRM (Community Based Natural Resource Management): If people are given control over the management of their natural resources along with adequate support, they will manage those resources (more) sustainably.
- Linking Policy and Practice: If a policy is framework is developed at National level combined with on the ground examples of practice, this will lead to rapid magnification of project results.
- Participatory Processes: Innovation strategies are most likely to succeed when they are co-created by a multi-stakeholder process.

As well as helping to identify specific assumptions, Results Chain can help a project to define or refine its goals, set objectives at the most critical points in the intervention logic, and hence focus monitoring around the core assumptions.

For larger projects, it may be helpful to have a hierarchy of results chains, with one master chain that shows how the strategies link together, and more detailed chains for each strategy. Note that some practitioners like to work from relevant sections of their conceptual model, addressing each driving factor in turn – while others simply complete their chains and check back with the situation analysis/ conceptual model to see that all factors have been addressed.

As with Conceptual Models, Results Chains are a tool that can help you to manage the complexity of your project situation. It is recognized that in practice, change is unlikely to occur in such a linear fashion.

You should capture the final versions of your goals, objectives, and strategies/ activities and the logic behind them in your formal Action Plan. A tabular logical framework (logframe) matrix can be used to help summarize and record your goals, objectives, and activities, as well as your monitoring indicators and methods (see Figure 6; click here for [basic guidance on logical framework analysis](#)).

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Goals for all of your targets (or refined Goals if they were defined in Step 1.3).*
- ◆ *Objectives for critical threats and other factors that your project will address.*
- ◆ *One or more strategies/ activities that will achieve conservation objectives, and a rationale for selecting these.*

- ◆ *Results chains and/ or other formal descriptions of both your overarching theory of change and core assumptions, plus the detailed logic of your strategies/activities.*
- ◆ *Overall Action Plan that compiles your goals, objectives, strategies and theory of change.*

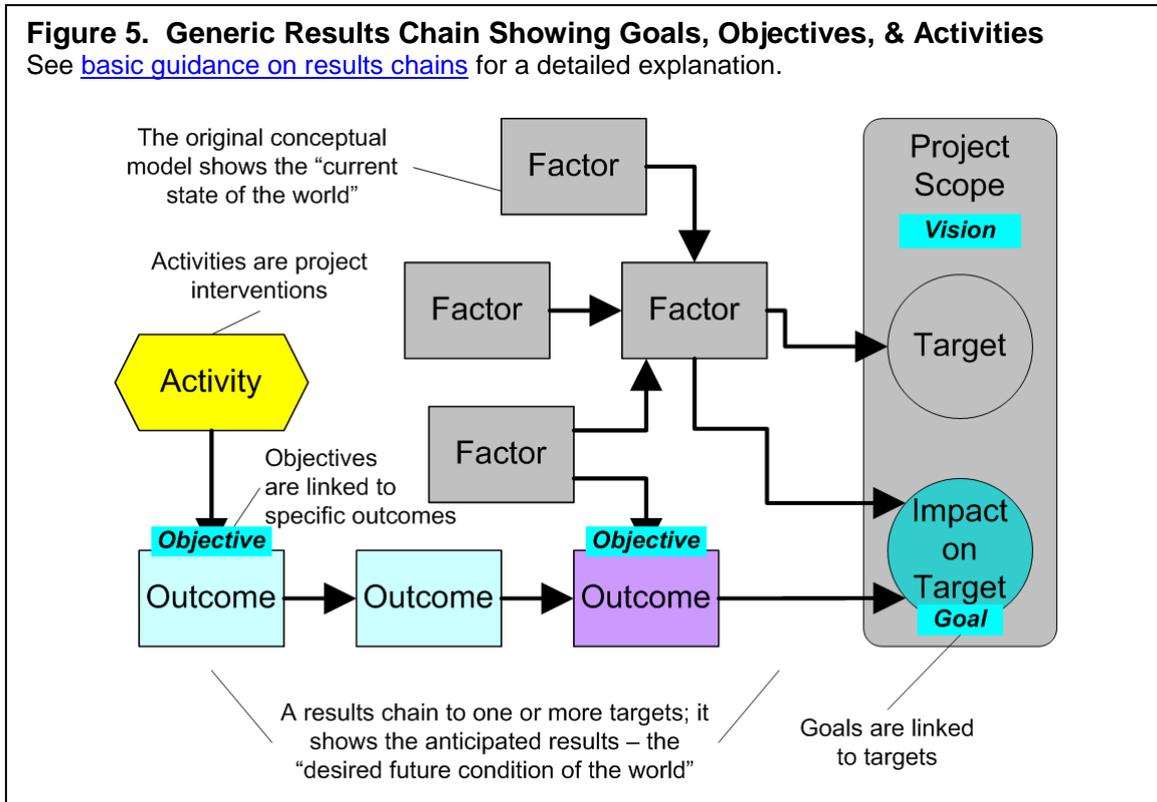
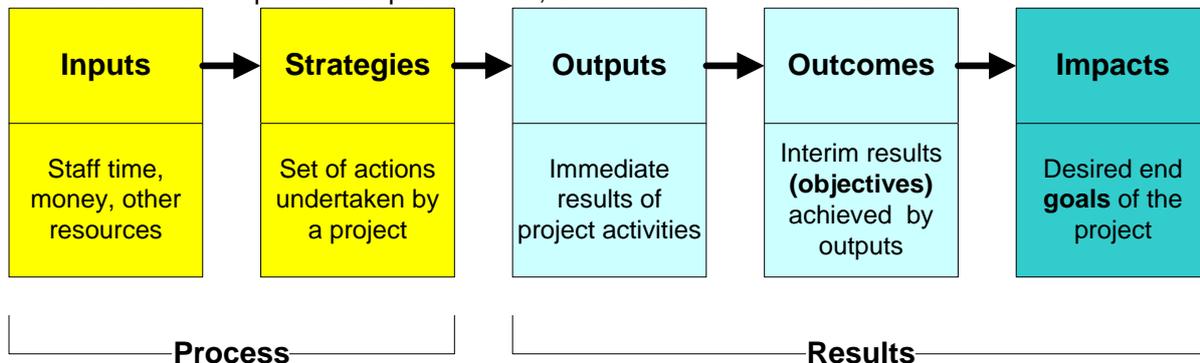


Figure 6. Generic Logical Framework Matrix
See [basic guidance on logical framework analysis](#) for a detailed explanation.

Logical Framework Matrix			
Action Plan (Intervention Logic)	Indicators	Method or Source of Verification	Assumptions & Risks
Vision Statement			
Goal(s)		Method or Data Source: Geographic scope: Frequency: Responsibility:	
Objective(s)		Method or Data Source: Geographic scope: Frequency: Responsibility:	
Activities			

Box 8. An Overview of Terms Used to Describe Results

There is a great deal of confusion over the different terms used to describe the results of a project. What one person calls an “outcome,” another calls a “result,” and yet a third person calls an “impact.” The following figure shows the terms as they are most commonly used by evaluation experts in different fields such as development and public health, as well as in the conservation sector.



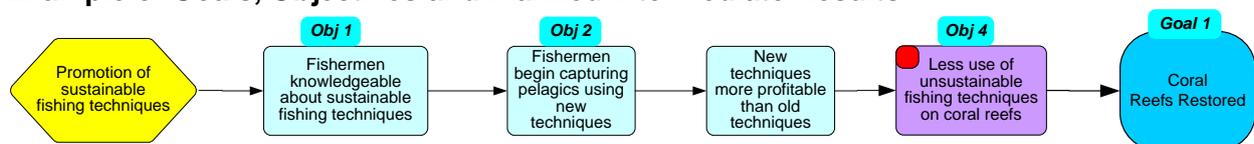
Based on the above figure, the following terms can be defined for use in results chains:

- **Impact** – The desired future state of a target. A **goal** is a formal statement of an impact.
- **Outcome** – The desired future state of a threat or opportunity factor. An **objective** is a formal statement of an outcome.
- **Output** – The desired product of an activity or task.
- **Strategies** – The actions (strategies) that a project implements.
- **Result** – A generic term used to describe the desired future state of a target or factor. Includes impacts, outcomes, and outputs.

The above terms refer primarily to a sequence of results in a logical sense. There is also a sequence of results in a temporal (time-based) sense:

- **Final result** – The ultimate desired result over time.
- **Intermediate result** – A milestone along the way to that final result.

Example of Goals, Objectives and Planned Intermediate Results



Objective 2: By 2009, at least 50% of artisanal fishermen fishing with 5 km of the Marine Reserve are using at least one of the new, sustainable fishing techniques promoted by the project:

Planned Intermediate Result (Milestone) related to Objective 2: By 2007, at least 10% of artisanal fishermen fishing with 5 km of the Marine Reserve are using at least one of the new, sustainable fishing techniques promoted by the project:

Goal 1: By 2015, at least 80% of the coral reef habitat in the northern bioregion & 60% in the western bioregion are ecologically functioning* & contain healthy populations of key species**

Planned Intermediate Result (Milestone) related to Goal 1: By 2013, at least 65% of the coral reef habitat in the northern bioregion & 40% in the western bioregion are ecologically functioning* & contain healthy populations of key species**

* *Ecologically functioning* = will have live coral coverage of at least 80% and contain a representative diversity of coral species

** *Healthy populations of species at the top of the food chain, such as sharks, and an abundance of other key species, such as lobster, black coral, etc. Project team to work with university scientists to define “healthy”.*

Box 9. Action Plans: tips to help achieve transformational and sustainable change

Many WWF programmes, especially at broader scale (e.g. large-scale landscapes and ecoregions), try to address multiple drivers of environmental change at local, subnational, national, and international levels. In such cases, it is important to develop strategies that are clearly linked or '*vertically-integrated*', for example influencing behaviours, policy processes, and institutions at these multiple levels. WWF's diversity, global outreach, and international character give us unique potential to achieve such links and hence achieve 'transformational' results.

When building your action plan you should think not only about transformation but also about how you will go about the conservation process so that you can enhance the sustainability of your work over the long-term. Some suggestions for improving transformation and sustainability include:

Engage Stakeholders - Conservation strategies that are developed with key stakeholders and also deliver wider socioeconomic value to those stakeholders will be more readily adopted and are more likely to be sustainable. For more information on socioeconomic valuation see the Basics section on the [Biodiversity Economics website](#).

Select Strategic Partners - Engaging one or more strategic (influential) partners, typically from the public or private sector, can lead to bigger changes, especially where they derive significant benefit from being involved. They may also be willing to continue the project. For more on partnerships see [3.4 Partnerships and Partnership Management Arrangements](#).

Demonstrate Good Practices and link them to policy change – Real examples of successful projects or good practices provide models that can be adopted by other practitioners (for example, other NGOs, government agencies). Indeed it is crucial that a good demonstration is associated with a strategy for its wider adoption. Conversely, when linking between levels the creation of supportive policy at the national or international level allows strategies to be employed locally that would otherwise be very difficult. For more information see [Linking Policy and Practice](#).

Coordinate Advocacy, Communication, and Programme Work. A further dimension – communication – can be combined with field and policy/ advocacy actions to deliver achieve greater results. (For more on communications strategy, see [Conservation Strategies: Awareness and Communications](#). See also Advocacy and Lobby module from WWF College).

Consider other factors for sustainability

Note that in Step 2.3 you are asked to review the extent to which your project, through its design, has addressed various factors that will support or affect the sustainability of results. Amongst these factors is climate change.

Climate Adaptation strategies

Any potential climate adaptation strategies need to be weighed against other potential activities intended to address existing threats or drivers. Most of the necessary actions that a conservation project requires will be unaffected by climate change, but will have benefitted from ensuring that that is indeed the case. We want to avoid maladaptation at all costs. Pure adaptation measures tend to fall into three categories:

- No regrets strategies - activities intended to respond to existing climate effects and that will make targets more resilient to existing threats and future climate changes.
- Monitoring strategies - activities intended to gather more detailed information about either the climate itself or specific ecological elements in relation to climate effects.
- Hedging strategies - these are strategies that you are not ready to implement because they are drastic and/or expensive. Such strategies may need a trigger or threshold to prompt their implementation

2.2 Monitoring Plan

Overview

In this step you specify your core monitoring needs and define a process for gathering and assessing the associated data. The majority of your monitoring resources should normally be focused on **effectiveness monitoring** - monitoring of Goals and Objectives to help answer questions like: *Have we made any difference and can we demonstrate it? Is our theory of change working?* If the project has developed a clear Action Plan as described above, you are well placed to define useful indicators for monitoring effectiveness.

You also need to allocating some resources to Status/ Context and Risk monitoring: to help answer questions such as: *Are our strategies and activities the right things to do, given wider contextual developments?* These types of monitoring can be particularly important for projects that are operating in a dynamic context; this is often the case for policy work.

Finally you should plan to monitor your **Activities** (in a simple, light way against your workplan) and your **Resources/Finances** (via your finance system) to help answer questions like: *Have we done what we said we would do?*

A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods is encouraged.

Audiences and Information Needs

The first part of developing your *Monitoring Plan* involves specifying your information needs that you will monitor over time. Effective monitoring uses the minimum amount of financial and human resources to provide you with the minimum information needed to determine if your project is on track and what to do if you are not. All too often project teams either collect no information or too much information because they are unsure of what is needed.

As a first step, you should be clear about for whom you are doing the monitoring, and recognize that it is primarily for the project itself – to help the team to learn from experience and integrate lessons. The following table list some common audiences and their information needs.

Table 4 - Common Monitoring Audiences and their Information Needs

Audience	Typical Information Needs/ Interests
Project Team	How the project is progressing against goals and objectives. What is and what is not and why. How to improve the project.
Project Partners	How the project is progressing against goals and objectives. What is and what is not and why. How to improve the project.
Donors	How the project is progressing against goals and objectives.
Communities or stakeholders affected	General information on the project's progress. How will the project impact them.
Conservation community	What is working, what is not, and why.
Academics and students	What is working, what is not, and why.

Once you know for whom you are monitoring, you need to then identify what you want to know (your learning questions) and what you should monitor. By focusing your monitoring efforts squarely on the core assumptions that link your goals, objectives, and strategies, you are more likely to collect only the information that will be useful to you as you manage your

project (click here for [basic guidance on Monitoring Plans](#)). Your logical framework and/or results chains should be useful here (see Figures 5 and 6).

Where relevant, you should identify information needs that contribute to the relevant goals and objectives of the Global Programme Framework, including associated Global Initiatives and Priority Programmes. Whenever possible you should also show linkages to any relevant donor or country targets (e.g., those from Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers or from Millennium Development Goals).

Indicators and Methods

Once you have clarified your information needs for your project, the next step is specify the indicators and the methods that will be used to collect and analyze the data required to meet your information needs. Good indicators meet the criteria of being *measurable, precise, consistent, and sensitive*. Methods vary in their *accuracy and reliability, cost-effectiveness, feasibility, and appropriateness*. The key is to select the most cost-effective method that will give you data that is reliable enough to meet your management needs. For many information needs, you may not have to collect primary data. For example, one method for collecting data about a given fish population would be to “download harvest records posted by a government agency on the internet.” Finally, you should also determine roughly when, where, and by whom data will be collected, and how data will be analyzed and used (see Step 4.2). In developing your Monitoring Plan, it is best to test and adjust indicators and methods before using them, to plan for the storage and processing of each type of data in advance, and to budget for monitoring activities and build this into your overall financial planning.

Typical outputs for this standard practice include a formal monitoring plan that contains:

- ◆ *Audiences and their associated information needs clearly defined.*
- ◆ *Finalised monitoring plan (includes indicators; methods for collecting data; when, where, and by whom each kind of data will be collected; plans for baseline data collection).*
- ◆ *A description of how data will be stored and analyzed.*

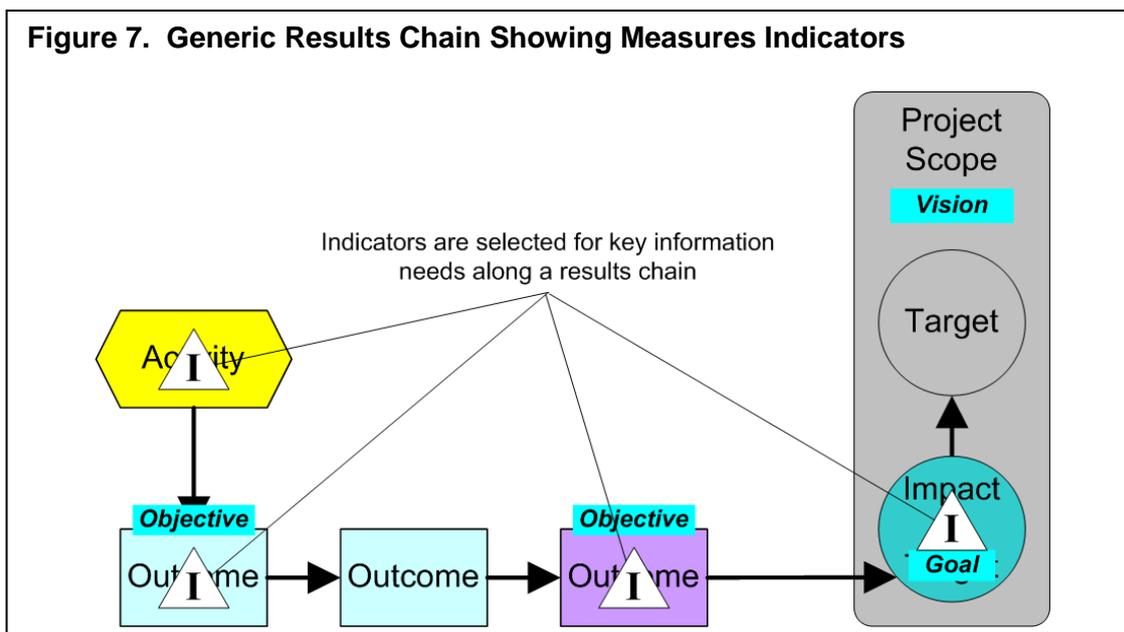
Figure 6 – Monitoring plan template (as per Annex 2 of the WWF Proposal template)

Information needs (from the action plan)	Indicators (what will you measure?)	Method/ source of data (how will you measure?)	Location (where will monitoring be done?)	When (timeframe & frequency of data collection)	Who to provide (who will provide and analyse the data?)	Baseline data (most recent figure and date) ³	Planned intermediate result ⁴			Planned final result (value and date)	Cost (estimate for monitoring the indicator)
							FY	FY	FY		
Goal 1											
Goal 2											
Objective 1.1											
Objective 1.2 etc.											

³ If no baseline data is available, state when the baseline will be defined.

⁴ For objectives, annual measurement is recommended. Goals are likely to be measured less frequently.

Figure 7. Generic Results Chain Showing Measures Indicators



Box 10 - Tips on developing monitoring plans

1) Define a manageable number of indicators based on your Action Plan

By developing results chains, setting good (SMART) goals and objectives, and defining learning questions, you can narrow down a nearly infinite set of potential indicators to a manageable set.

2) Consider use of both quantitative and qualitative methods

In addition to collecting quantitative data, qualitative methods can bring a deeper and richer understanding of a project's effectiveness and context. For example, the use of informal reviews and simple questions can bring important insights. You can also use semi-qualitative ranking methods (e.g. ask participants to ranking the effectiveness of training on a scale from 1 to 5).

3) Allocate some resources to monitoring status/ context and risks

Tracking of risks and external context is important but may be kept simple, for example by checking with relevant information sources and networks whether changes have occurred. In the case of policy or advocacy work in dynamic situations, it is critical to carry out frequent reviews of the external context. Click here for [Monitoring Advocacy guidelines](#)

4) Think ahead to Analyse/ Adapt and Share steps

You can already start thinking about how you will analyse data to inform adaptive management (Step 4), and any information that you will need to support an effective evaluation (Step 5.3).

5) Establish your baseline early

Collection of baseline data is the first step in the actual use of the monitoring plan. It is critical that baseline data is collected early, since all subsequent data gathered over the life of the project will be compared against the baseline. The use of already existing data for a baseline is strongly encouraged. Data may be available backwards through time, in which case it will be possible to compare trends before and after the start date for the project.

6) Be realistic about 'impact' monitoring (monitoring Goals)

In WWF, true 'impact' concerns the effect of our actions on biodiversity, footprint and human welfare. However change at this impact level may be observable only after several 3 year phases of a project, so resources may need to be allocated to monitoring beyond the life of the project. (Note, however, that in common speech the term 'impact' is often used to refer to changes that strictly speaking are 'outcomes').

2.3 Operational Plan

Conservation projects are ultimately implemented by people and institutions. Even if you have the best action and monitoring plans in the world, they will be useless unless you also have the necessary financial, human, and other resources to implement these plans over the life of your project. Although you may not have all necessary resources in hand when you start your project, you should at least have an idea of what you need and how you will go about attaining them. You also need to assess the risks to your project and develop governance mechanisms. In other words, you need to have an *Operational Plan* for your project (click here for [basic guidance on operational plans](#)). Key components include:

- **Human & Other Resource Requirements** – A broad analysis of the human capacity and skills required to implement your project, and your current and potential sources of these resources (see Step 3.3 for more specific details about developing your human resources). Also, other resources and enabling conditions required to implement your project (such as partners, infrastructure, and a supportive legal framework).
- **Financial Requirements** – A broad analysis of the funding required to implement your project, your current and potential sources of these funds (i.e. your anticipated income and expenditure any gap between the two). These analyses often look at both best and worst-case scenarios and link to your fundraising activities (see Step 3.2).
- **Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategy** – An analysis of what risk factors exist for your project and how they can be addressed.
- **Estimate of Project Lifespan and Exit Strategy** – A discussion of how long your project will last and how you will ensure sustainability of your project's achievements.

The level of detail and formality of your operational plan will vary depending on the size and level of complexity of your project. Small projects may only briefly touch on each of these topics whereas large, complex ones (Priority Programmes and projects over €250K per year) might have an extensive and formal treatment of each. However, all projects should have thought through the items included in an operational plan.

Typical outputs for this standard practice include an operational plan that contains:

- ◆ *Estimates of human and other resources required to implement your project and your current and potential sources of these resources.*
- ◆ *Estimates of financial resources required to implement your project and your current and potential sources of these resources.*
- ◆ *An assessment of potential risks to your project and how you might mitigate them.*
- ◆ *An explanation of how your project is designed to deliver sustainable results and an exit strategy, if appropriate.*

At the conclusion of Step 2, you should ensure to compile the work you did in Steps 1 and 2 into your overall *Strategic Plan* (click here for [examples of Strategic Plans](#)). The output here is:

- ◆ **Your overall Strategic Plan.**

Figure 8: Example financial plan for large programme in graph form: Mesoamerican Reef Protected Area Network - Expenditures, Income and Gaps



Figure 9 - Factors to be considered when assessing capacity, risk, and sustainability

Note that some dimensions are the same or are closely related, so one combined analysis may be appropriate, at least for your initial design.

Dimensions of capacity	Dimensions of Risk	Factors for Sustainability
Skills	Partner	Local Situation / Grounding in Reality
Shared vision, goals and strategy	Political	Biodiversity and Ecological Processes
Systems	Economic	Policy and Legislative Environment
Management	Infrastructure	Economic Forces
Partners	Technical	Financial Resources
Governance	Capacity	Institutional, Community and Individual Capacity
Resources	Financial	Appropriate Technology and Methodologies
Power and influence	Leadership/Management	Stakeholders' Priorities
	Other	Participation and Partners
		Socio-cultural Issues and Gender
		Equity
		Climate resilience/ adaptive capacity

3. Implement

This is the most important step in the entire adaptive management cycle process. In the Implement step, you turn your general plans from the define and define steps into action. This step involves:

- Developing and executing specific workplans and budgets
- Ensuring sufficient funding to meet short and longer-term needs
- Building the necessary capacity to deliver results
- Establishing strong partner management to implement activities

3.1 Workplans and Budgets

In the previous steps of the project cycle, your project team developed your general action, monitoring, and operational plans. In this phase of the cycle, you need to turn these general plans into more specific ones and then implement these plans on an ongoing basis.

The first part of this step is to take your overall plans and work with your project team and partners to develop much more specific short-term workplans. Teams generally prepare annual (one year) workplans, but the time frame can vary from a few months to two or three years. These workplans take your overall action, monitoring, and operational plans and specify the following in much greater detail:

- **What** specific tasks are required to complete each planned activity, monitoring step, or operational function,
- **Who** will be responsible for helping to complete each task,
- **When** each task will need to be undertaken and the sequence of linked tasks, and
- **Cost: How** much money and other resources will be needed to complete each task.

These workplans can be recorded in a table, Gantt chart, and/or project calendar.

Working closely with finance/ operational staff from your office, you should then develop and refine your project budget, working from your initial analysis of funding that you developed in your Operational Plan Step 2.3. The timeline for corresponding workplans and budgets should be the same i.e. typically one year.

For many projects, your most expensive resource needs will be staff time. In addition, you should consider what other major expenses such as physical infrastructure, vehicles, boats or machinery are needed. You should also consider the related functions or logistical support that the project might need, ranging from monitoring and management expenditure, to administrative or logistical support. The WWF Budgeting Standard explains what is expected in terms of budget detail, format, and quality. (Click here for [basic guidance for workplans and budgets](#), here for the Budgeting Standards and a [budget template](#), and here for [cost recovery guidelines](#)). Typically the development of workplans and budgets will take place in the organizational planning and budgeting context of the office that has oversight of the project (click here for [WWF-US procedures](#) and for [WWF International procedures](#) as applicable).

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Detailed short-term workplans for your project showing tasks, who will do them, and when.*

- ◆ *Gantt chart and/or calendar of project activities.*
- ◆ *Project budgets.*

The next and most important part of this step – and indeed this entire process – is to implement your work plans according to schedule and within budgets. In subsequent years, you should then update your workplans and implement them. The output here is simply:

- ◆ *Implementation of strategic plan (action, monitoring, and operational plans).*

Figure 10 - simple Gantt chart format for a Workplan

Strategy/ Activity/ Task (number and description)	Who (individual responsible and staff to support)	Duration (man days required to complete the task)	When				Cost (Estimated cost and corresponding budget line)
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Strategy 1							
Activity 1.1	MM						
Task 1.1.1		20					
Task 1.1.2		10					
Task 1.2.3		25					
Activity 1.2	WB						
Task 1.2.1		15					
Task 1.2.2		20					
Task 1.2.3		5					

3.2 Fund Raising

Perhaps the first part of your strategic plan that you need to implement is to secure funding for your project. There is often a long lead time between developing funding proposals and having money in the bank that you can spend and as such, it is important to get a jump on this work early in your project work.

The starting point here is to look at your resource needs in the general project budget you developed in Step 2.3 and the specific budgets you develop in Step 3.1.

Once you have identified your resource needs and assessed what you currently have available, the next steps involve identifying potential funding sources, writing funding proposals, and meeting with potential donors. Click here for the [internal proposal template](#). The many potential sources of project funding include the following:

Box 11 - Sources of funds

- Direct government appropriations or public funds
- User fees and payments for environmental products or services
- Fines or penalties for illegal use of natural resources
- Debt reduction and debt-for-nature swaps
- Grants or contracts from government and aid agencies
- Institutional, foundations, or private individual support
- Funds raised through or generated by conservation trust funds
- Corporate support and partnerships

Traditional fundraising involves soliciting donors such as GAAs, foundations, corporations and individuals for grants that support some part of your project (the partnership may include additional aspects, especially in the case of corporates e.g. HSBC). These sources are excellent short to medium term sources of income, but it may not be possible to count on their long-term support over the entire expected lifetime of the project. It may therefore be necessary to develop sustainable long-term financing mechanisms, examples of which are trust funds, debt swaps, and payments for services.

Your team can begin developing ideas or proposals, and begin meeting with key donors or officials while you are still creating your action and operational plans. After completing Steps 1 and 2 (define and design), you will find that the logical and visual nature of a comprehensive strategic plan helps to make a strong case for support.

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Project budget refined, if necessary.*
- ◆ *Potential funding sources identified.*
- ◆ *Funding proposals developed and submitted.*
- ◆ *Meetings with donors and other supporting work completed.*
- ◆ *Financial resources obtained*

Box 12 - What makes a good proposal?

Whatever precise format has been used for your proposal, keep in mind that the criteria against which Donors (both internal and external) typically appraise or assess Proposals/ Strategic Plans can be summarized quite concisely (as below). Clearly-written responses to each section of a proposal template will help a proposal to be seen as responding well to these criteria:

- 1) **Relevance** of the project, especially to WWF's Global Programme Framework for internal donors
- 2) **Transformational potential.** Does the project have the potential to 'make a real and significant difference' e.g. through linking policy work with practice, linking 'local to global' actions, engaging 'strategic' partners, adopting or piloting innovative approaches.
- 3) **Feasibility.** Does the project have a clear and credible (i.e. evidence-based) 'theory of change', setting out how change is intended to take place and clarifying any underlying assumptions. And does the project have the capacity to deliver?
- 4) **Sustainability.** Are the expected results of the project likely to be sustainable, for example financially, institutionally and politically?
- 5) Sound **Monitoring and Evaluation** processes - to support adaptive management and impact assessment, and to demonstrate progress.

3.3 Capacity Building

Capacity building is the process of developing your project's ability to deliver the level of activities and results required. Your initial assessment of human capacity in Step 2.3 may have been relatively high level, and you may decide to now carry out a more detailed assessment. In any case, you now need to address any needs that have been identified.

You should seek to build the capacity of your own staff, structure and systems, and that of your core partners as well. You need to feel confident that you and your partners will have enough people with the right skills, knowledge and availability to deliver the project and ensure its longer term sustainability. You also need to make sure that the management and operational support functions of your office will be able to take on the additional workload.

Each project will differ in the level and detail of needed capacity assessment and building, but in general they might include core programmatic skills, leadership and managerial abilities, financial management and accounting skills, and others (click here for [guidance on assessing and building capacity](#)). From your assessments, you may decide that you or your partners need to conduct training, hire consultants or recruit and train new staff. Funding, people and the time to do this should be built into your operational plan. Your office's human resources staff can be a good source of support and advice in recruiting staff, conducting performance appraisals, and assisting people with their professional development. You may be able to draw on the support and advice of colleagues in the WWF Network and outside.

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Capacity assessments completed.*
- ◆ *Strategies developed and implemented to address capacity shortfalls.*

3.4 Partnerships

Successful conservation depends on forging effective partnerships with key stakeholders. Most conservation projects will probably not have sufficient expertise or internal resources to do all the work that needs to be done. Furthermore, most if not all projects need to ensure that the work that they start will continue after the initial project ends. To ensure sustainability of the work, you must mobilize effective participation and information-sharing with these partners both throughout the life of the project and after “the project” is over.

At different points in the project cycle, you will need to revisit your team composition and structure to ensure that you have the right complement of people as staff, consultants, volunteers or other working arrangements that make the project possible and sustainable.

At the implementation stage if not before, it is usually important to formalize your partner management arrangements. Key actions that can help ensure the development of good partnerships include:

- Review your stakeholder analysis from Step 1.4 to make sure all key stakeholders are engaged appropriately.
- Redefine the project team and roles and responsibilities as needed and agree on accountabilities.
- Allocate resources for the participation and information sharing needed to strengthen current/ potential partnerships and ownership.
- Review existing and/or create new partnership arrangements and governance structures as needed to ensure that all partners have an appropriate voice in how the project is managed and how decisions are made.

- Execute informal or formal management arrangements such as contracts, grants, memoranda of understanding, Programme Implementation Agreements (PIAs), or similar means (For templates for some of these arrangements, see [basic guidance on Partnerships, Governance and Managements Arrangements](#)).
- Set up a process for monitoring the progress of all partners and your relationships with them.

For large projects, a typical partnership system has three parts:

- 1) A project oversight team or steering committee. This includes high level representation from your team and your closest and most important partners.
- 2) A project coordination or work team. This smaller unit is responsible for coordinating the day to day work of the project and reports up to the oversight team or steering committee. This role can be assigned to one of the partners on behalf of the overall project.
- 3) Internal or external project management or technical assistance (staff, consultants, or both). This function typically reports to the project coordination or work team.

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Project team composition revisited.*
- ◆ *Key stakeholders identified and brought into project as appropriate.*
- ◆ *Information sharing strategies developed and implemented.*
- ◆ *Formal arrangements with partners developed and implemented as appropriate.*

4. Analyze & Adapt

Regardless of how well a project is planned and managed, your team must make a consistent effort to gather and analyse relevant performance and contextual data, assess what it means for your project, and adapt your plans accordingly. The amount of time needed to complete this step is often underestimated by project managers, leaving them with lots of data that they have collected, but have not analyzed or used. By making this a deliberate step, you should find it easier to observe and understand changes, solve problems, and make improvements to your project.

4.1 Manage Incoming Data on an Ongoing Basis

Analysis is a process of transforming raw data into useful information. Analysis should not happen at only one point in time during the life of the project. To continuously understand what is going on in your project – and to be able to change things in a timely fashion – it is essential to capture and analyze your monitoring data as part of routine project work. In particular, it is important to systematically check, clean, and code raw data as soon as you get it; store and back-up your data, and then analyze and discuss your data to check if you are on track (click here for [basic guidance on managing data](#)). This work should be done for both programmatic data as well as operational and financial data. You should also upload your data to the [Insight CPM database](#).

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Development and regular use of systems for storing, processing and backing up project data.*
- ◆ *Uploads of data to Insight CPM database.*

Table 5 - Different Types of Data and Where They Come From and Are Stored

Type of Data	Examples of Sources	Examples of Databases
Quantitative – data that can be represented as numbers including both <i>continuous</i> data measured along a scale & <i>categorical</i> data recorded in intervals or by groups	Biological censuses or transects of species, counts of poaching incidents, household stakeholder opinions recorded on a 4-point scale, numbers of tourists visiting a site	Paper logbooks, simple spreadsheet tables (<i>Excel</i>), relational databases on desktop computers (<i>Access</i>) or online servers
Qualitative – data that are not easily represented in numerical form	Stories from stakeholders or focal group interviews	Word processor documents, relational databases, folders of audio or visual clips
Spatial – data that are linked to specific geographic coordinates (typically quantitative, but could be qualitative)	Locations where animals have been poached recorded on a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit, boundaries of a national park	Paper maps in a file cabinet, Geographic Information (GIS) systems (<i>Arc software products</i>)
Financial – a special form of quantitative data that contain financial information	Business records, project operations	Spreadsheet tables (<i>Excel</i>), accounting software (<i>ACCPAC</i> or <i>QuickBooks</i> software)
Pictures & Images – photos, drawings, and other images	Before & after photos of a specific site, stakeholder drawings, conceptual models	Photo albums, slide files, computer file folders, album software

Video & Audio Clips – film, video, and audio materials	Recordings of stakeholder meetings, film clips of key project events	video library, computer file folders, archive software
Metadata – data about your other data; the documentation that accompanies any dataset	Lists of all your databases, descriptions about fields in a database, information about pictures in a photo album	Paper list, spreadsheet file

4.2 Analyze Project Results and Assumptions

One of the most important aspects of adaptive management is that it allows you to systematically assess whether you are on track to achieve your stated goals and objectives. Your monitoring data should provide you with the information needed to see whether you have achieved your expected intermediate results and whether you are on track to achieve long-term success. In addition, adaptive management also allows you to determine why certain activities have succeeded or failed. Your monitoring data provide you with the opportunity to see whether the core assumptions you laid out in the planning steps above hold true in reality. By testing these core assumptions, you are in a better position to adapt and change your project activities accordingly (click here for [basic guidance on analysis](#)).

To check if you are on track or why something may have succeeded or failed, you should undertake the following tasks:

- Consider your results in the context of your model, results chains, and/or logframe.
- Review your assumptions and assess if you are on track to meet your goals and objectives and if your activities are having the desired impact.
- Assess the utility of your indicators.
- Determine if your goals and objectives were set at an appropriate level and if the timeline was appropriate.

Depending on the type of data that you have and your information needs, these analyses can range from formal statistical studies to simple qualitative assessments. The most important thing is that the right people be involved in and made aware of the results of your analyses. As a general rule, analyses should involve members of the project team. However, input from outside experts during the analyses of your monitoring results and thinking through from other perspectives can often be useful. Either way, a critical part of this analysis work involves communicating the results to your project team and key partners. In communicating within a team it is best to provide: clear management recommendations to all the right people based on your analysis, all necessary details to help interpret results, alternatives and contingencies based on the results, and regular reports to all team members (click here for the internal [technical report template](#)).

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Appropriate scheduled analyses of project results and assumptions.*
- ◆ *Documentation of discussions and decisions.*
- ◆ *Regular reports to project team members and key stakeholders.*

Box 13 - Purpose of the TPR (Project/ Programme Technical Progress Report)

The main purposes of the WWF TPR template and associated process are:

- To facilitate adaptive management by projects and programmes,
- To provide inputs to priority programme and network management decision-making processes; and
- To provide accountability and transparency to internal and external donors and other stakeholders.

Learning — and quality reporting — depend on good monitoring and analysis, and the template should be completed based on the information obtained from regular monitoring and analysis/ evaluation. To the extent possible, **all** team members should be involved in reviewing progress and producing technical and financial reports.

4.3 Analyze Operational and Financial Functions/Performance

In addition to analyzing your conservation results and core assumptions, it is also important to analyze your operational and financial data to make sure things are on track and that you are not going to run an operational deficit (click here for [basic guidance on analyzing operational and financial performance](#) and here for the [financial report standard and template](#).) For example, periodic and full-term forecasting should be undertaken to ensure that changes in work plans are adequately translated into changes in financial needs, and vice versa. Significant variances between planned, actual and forecasted figures should be clearly explained in your financial report.

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Appropriate scheduled analyses of operational and financial data.*
- ◆ *Regular financial reports linked to technical reports including financial forecasts.*

4.4 Adapt Your Plans and Budgets

Collecting and analyzing data as part of routine monitoring activities allows you to determine how effective your interventions are and what you need to do to adjust your project to reach your goals and objectives more efficiently. As the final part of this step, you need to use what you have learned during the analysis and discussions to modify and optimize your activities. This is the essence of adaptive management.

All the planning that you did earlier was not meant to be a one-time event, never to be revisited or used again. Instead, in order to learn over time and to continue to improve the effectiveness of your project, you must revise your project parameters and core assumptions, conservation action plan, monitoring plan, work plans and budgets, and operational plan. Therefore, you may need to update all sections of your strategic plan to reflect what you have learned. As you make changes, you should also document the rationale behind them so that others will understand what you learned and why you made these changes. Click here for basic guidance on [adapting your plans and budgets](#).

When updating your plans, you should also respond to findings from outside your project team. For example, if your project has undergone a formal evaluation or audit (see Step 5.3),

you should examine the findings and see how you can use them to adapt and improve your project.

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Revised project documents work plan, and budgets.*

Box 14 - Managing (for) change

Successful adaptation relies primarily on the quality of four main factors:

- Preparing in advance to adapt, knowing when the opportunities to adapt are likely to arise and scheduling around those.
- Clear definition of the change required and why it is required;
- Maintaining strong relationships and communication with partners and stakeholders; and
- Effectively implementing the change.

Most donors will be sympathetic to, or even impressed by, the need to adapt – provided that the rationale is clear and they have been kept informed.

5. Share

The final step in the management cycle involves sharing lessons and formal products with key internal and external audiences. It also involves giving and receiving feedback, conducting evaluations and audits, and promoting a performance and learning culture. When initiating a project, some practitioners prefer to start with this step, making a deliberate effort to learn from previous relevant experiences and reflection before starting to define and design their project.

5.1 Lessons

As you go through the process described in these standards, you should make sure you harvest the lessons that your project team is learning on a regular basis. Lessons can take the form of formal statistical results or anecdotal stories and can focus on something as large as your core project assumptions or something as specific as a new and improved way of tracking project expenses. One of the keys to harvesting lessons is to keep track of learning questions that emerge as you go through the project management process and then try to answer these questions when data become available to do so. Another key is to provide time and incentives to do this work. Harvesting lessons requires a balance between art and science – and will require patience and making time in any work plan for these tasks. Click here for [basic guidance on sharing lessons](#).

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Identification of learning questions.*
- ◆ *Harvesting of key results and lessons.*

5.2 Formal Communication Products

Communication can be an important conservation strategy in its own right (see Step 2.1). In addition, if you capture what you have learned in written or recorded documents, you will be able to remember from year to year what you have done, what you found worked and what didn't, and what you plan to do in the future. This will help your current project team over the long term and more importantly, once current project staff have moved on, will ensure that new project staff will have a record of what you did and what you learned. Production of formal documents will also help you communicate your findings to practitioners around the world – both within and outside the WWF Network – who could benefit from what you have learned. Documenting and sharing what you have learned will help practitioners working under similar conditions, dealing with similar threats, and using similar tools to benefit from your successes and avoid any pitfalls or problems you may have encountered during the implementation of your project. In effect, it creates a magnification or leveraging of good results and findings to other places around the world.

In order to create documents that a variety of audiences will understand, internalize and use, you must understand how they typically receive messages, and what they would be interested in learning. Developing a clear communication and dissemination strategy provides you with a systematic way of identifying your audiences most effectively. For example, many projects distinguish between their internal audiences (the project staff, partners and other stakeholders) and their external audiences (donors, other practitioners). Next, identify the

lessons you wish to communicate to these priority audiences, determine the best format to reach each key audience, and then develop and distribute your communication products. Communication products can encompass many different forms ranging from formal academic papers to stories and videos. It is important to evaluate each product to see if it worked to communicate your messages as intended and to learn what you might do to improve similar efforts in the future.

Finally, it is worth noting that sharing documents does not just mean providing them to other people. It also means obtaining and using documents from other people yourself. Some of the best sources of lessons are the experiences of others. Click here for basic guidance on [formal communications strategy and products](#) and here for guidance on [awareness and communications strategies](#).

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Identification of key audiences.*
- ◆ *Development of a communications strategy.*
- ◆ *Development and distribution of appropriate communication products.*
- ◆ *Use of other people's communication products.*

Box 15 – Communications work as a 'project'

Step 5 of the WWF Standards is about formally and informally communicating conservation results and achievements to both internal and external audiences. In this respect, it is about sharing with others what has worked, what has not worked, and why.

Communications, however, is often a conservation strategy in and of itself (see Step 2.1). For example, a project might use an awareness raising campaign to discourage the killing, harvesting, or trafficking of threatened and endangered wildlife species.

But whatever the purpose of the communications work, its development and implementation can be handled as a 'project'. The suggested steps below are similar to the PPMS cycle.

Define and Design:

- ❖ **Context** – (Including issue, statistics, principles)
- ❖ **Who - is leading the communication work?**
- ❖ **Desired Outcome (Objective)** - (Measurable)
- ❖ **Target Audience** (involvement, awareness, attitude, demographics, lifestyle)
- ❖ **(Flexible) Key Message** (Including benefits)
- ❖ **Call to Action – what you want the audience to do**

Implement:

- ❖ **Communications Plan** (Players, Activity/ies, Resources, Tone of voice)
- ❖ **Measurement and Monitoring**

Analyse/ Adapt and Share:

- ❖ **Evaluation**
- ❖ **Results**
- ❖ **(Lessons Learned)**

5.3 Feedback, Evaluations and Audits

For any project to be effective and to be able to adapt, the team members will need feedback on their findings, progress, and lessons learned. Although feedback in many organizations is limited to formal performance reviews, some of the best feedback can happen on an informal basis if people take the time to ask questions of their peers and colleagues and then listen to what they have to say. This informal feedback can take place in face-to-face meetings or through exchange of documents and e-mail and telephone calls. It is vital to remember that feedback is a two-way process – that even though you may be busy with your own work, it is important to take the time to give your colleagues feedback on a regular basis, especially when they request it.

It is also important to build in more formal feedback mechanisms into your project's lifecycle. Two common kinds of formal mechanisms are evaluations, which assess a project against specific performance criteria (see Box 16), and audits, which assess a project against an external set of standards, such as the ones outlined in this document. Both evaluations and audits can be conducted at various phases of the project cycle. They can be conducted either internally or externally. Internal evaluations and audits, which are done by project team members and close partners, have the advantages of being relatively easy and cheap to conduct and that the people involved in the assessment can make direct use of the findings. External evaluations and audits, which are done by outside parties, have the advantage of providing an outside and unbiased perspective to the project team (click here for [basic guidance on feedback, evaluations and audits](#) and here for the [WWF Evaluation Guidelines](#)). External evaluations are normally considered a mandatory requirement for larger projects and programmes (above €750K over 3 years).

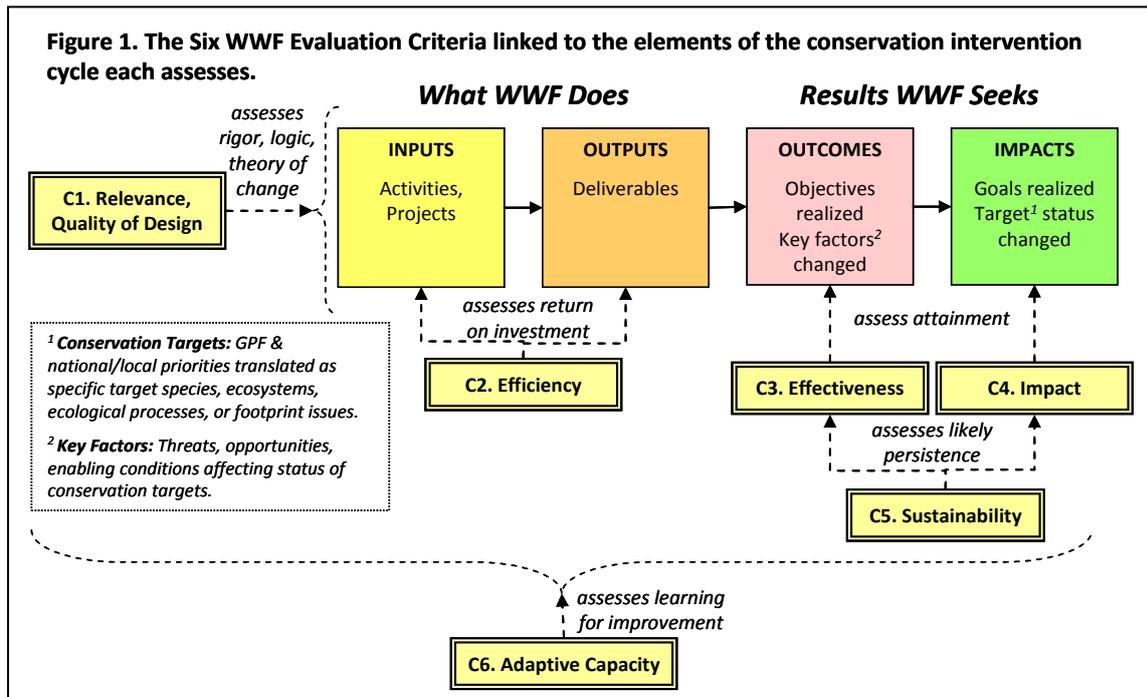
Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Regular feedback session – both give and take.*
- ◆ *Evaluations and/or audits at appropriate times during the project cycle.*

Box 16 - Formal evaluations of WWF Projects and Programmes

In general, WWF evaluations should address six fundamental evaluation criteria:

1. Quality and Relevance of Design
2. Efficiency (of delivery of outputs)
3. Effectiveness (of delivery of intermediate results and outcomes)
4. Impact (on ultimate conservation targets)
5. Sustainability (of progress, benefits, and impact realized)
6. Adaptive Capacity (monitoring, evaluation, adaptation, learning)



5.4 Performance and Learning Culture

The last standard of practice in the cycle involves creating a performance and learning culture within your project team and partners, across your organization, and among conservation practitioners around the world. Too effectively apply these standards, you need to work in a project environment that promotes learning and adaptation over time. This process is not an easy one. It requires leaders and donors who understand the need to reallocate scarce resources from immediate action to the long-term work of adaptive management. It often requires enabling practitioners to take some chances and question the conventional wisdom related to specific conservation tools and strategies. It requires providing project teams with the institutional security and context that affords them the knowledge that innovation and questioning assumptions are valued in their organizations. And it requires a commitment to share both successes and failures with other practitioners around the world – to create true communities of practice. Click here for [basic guidance on performance and learning culture](#).

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Demonstrated commitment from leaders to learning and innovation.*
- ◆ *A safe environment for encouraging experimentation and questioning the status quo.*
- ◆ *A commitment to share success and failures with practitioners around the world.*

Box 17 - Characteristics of a Performance and Learning Culture

- 1) **Shared Vision, Goals and Objectives.** All team members understand how their work contributes to goals and objectives, at both project and organizational levels. Accountability for results and good adaptive management practice is clear.
- 2) **Adaptive Management practices are consistently used** i.e. it's the way we do things round here. The practices themselves are regularly modified and improved, and help to answer key questions such as:
 - i. *Are we doing what we said we would do?*
 - ii. *Have we made any difference and can we demonstrate it?*
 - iii. *Are our strategies the right things to do, given wider contextual developments?*
- 3) **Openness to challenge.** There is an openness to internal and external challenge, and a willingness to take tough decisions and tackle difficult problems. There are few (if any) subjects that cannot be discussed by team members and the wider stakeholder group.
- 4) **Reflection and Learning are given adequate resources.** At both project and organizational levels, learning is seen as an integral part of each team member's responsibility. Staff are recognised for the contribution they make towards the project's learning – whether a project itself 'succeeded or failed'. Internal politics and power relations are not allowed to get in the way of sharing experience and knowledge
- 5) **Review and Evaluation Outputs are used to make a difference.** Staff and senior management central to implementation of evaluation/review recommendations are involved throughout the process, and ensure that the key recommendations are implemented.

Iterate Through the Cycle

The standards of practice outlined in this document are presented in the form of a cycle. A typical project team might go through Steps 1 & 2 in the cycle fairly quickly (perhaps over a 3-4 day workshop) to sketch out the basic strategic plan for their project. They may then circle back and fill in the details over the next few months for Steps 1 & 2 while they are also beginning the implementation work in Step 3. The team might then conduct its first analyses in Step 4 after six months and then use this work to develop their first communication products in Step 5.

As shown in Fig. 1, once you complete Step 5, the arrow then takes you back to Step 1. The intent behind this cycle is not to put you and your project team in an endless loop of work. Instead it is to remind you that adaptive management is a dynamic process that requires you to constantly learn and change over time. Based on your analysis of your data, should you revisit your vision and targets? Are there new factors or relationships that you had not previously considered that you believe should be incorporated into your model or addressed by a specific goal or objective? Do you need to change your Monitoring Plan? Do you need to adapt your operational plan? Iteration is about repeatedly going through the steps in the project cycle to determine if you need to augment or further develop any of them over time. It is the essence of transforming ordinary management into true adaptive management.

Acronyms Used in this Document

CAP	Conservation Action Planning (TNC's Project Management System)
CMP	Conservation Measures Partnership
EAP	Ecoregion Action Programme
GPF	Global Programme Framework
GIS	Geographic Information System
MRS	(Global) Monitoring and Reporting System
HR	Human Resources
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PIA	Programme Implementation Agreement
SAP	Species Action Plan
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TOR	Terms of Reference

References for Additional Material and Guidance

Most of the documents referenced are available on WWF-International's website (panda.org) and on the WWF Network's intranet (OneWWF). To have access to documents on OneWWF, you need to be registered; if you are WWF staff but are not registered on OneWWF, please contact the administrator at: onewwf@wwfint.org.

The following documents are available at www.panda.org/standards and on OneWWF in the relevant subfolder at: <https://sites.google.com/a/wwf.panda.org/ppms/>

- WWF Programme Standards Overview (this document – including some translations)
- WWF guidelines and tools to each PPMS substep (1.1, 1.2 etc.)
- WWF key templates (Concept, Proposal/ Strategic Plan, Evaluations etc.)
- WWF guidelines for other key tools (e.g. Conceptual Model, Results Chains etc.)
- WWF guidelines integrating Climate Adaptation in PPMS
- WWF Evaluation Guidelines (OneWWF only, see Step 5)
- Examples of strategic plans and of application of particular PPMS substeps
- Miradi download instructions and access code (OneWWF only, see Step 0)

Other important WWF references include:

- WWF Global Programme Framework 2008-2020
<https://sites.google.com/a/wwf.panda.org/wwf-international/divisions/conservation/cspu/cspu-products/publications>
- Insight CPM database
<http://insight.panda.org/cpm>
- Operational Network Standards (includes Budgeting and Financial Reporting, and full Network Standards terminology)
<https://sites.google.com/a/wwf.panda.org/ons/home>
- GAA Standards
<https://sites.google.com/a/wwf.panda.org/psp-share/tools/documents/quality-management>
- Technical Reporting instructions, including PPMS good practice self assessment tool
<https://sites.google.com/a/wwf.panda.org/wwf-international/divisions/conservation/cspu/monitoring/reporting/fy12-reporting>

- Social Development for Conservation (SD4C)
<https://sites.google.com/a/wwf.panda.org/social-development/>
- Climate Change Adaptation portal
<https://sites.google.com/a/wwf.panda.org/climate-change-adaptation-portal/home>
- US Policies and Procedures Handbook
<https://intranet.wwfus.org/policy/tableofcontents/index.htm>. Users will need an ID & password which they can obtain from Joy Patterson at WWF-US.
- WWF-International Policies and Procedures (Field Operations Manual)
<https://sites.google.com/a/wwf.panda.org/pom/standards-policies-procedures>.

Other useful external references include:

- Foundations of Success site
<http://www.fosonline.org/resources>. Note especially the guidance to conceptual models and results chains at http://www.fosonline.org/resources_categories/guidance
- Detailed guidance on human wellbeing targets compared to socially beneficial results, (including a consideration of trade-offs, unintended consequences, and feedback loops): <https://sites.google.com/a/fosonline.org/hwt-workspace/home/products>
- The Nature Conservancy conservation action planning
<http://www.conservationgateway.org/topic/conservation-action-planning>

Glossary

There is an endless debate among planners as to the relative meaning of technical terms such as goals, objectives, activities, targets, milestones, outputs, and results. Every office, project, and even individual seems to have their own preferred set of terms. And things become even more confusing when terminology gets translated across different human languages – for example in English, a *goal* is broader than an *objective* whereas in Spanish, an *objetivo* is broader than a *meta*. The technical terms in this document were carefully selected based on current usage of words by the WWF Network, other conservation organizations, and planners in other disciplines. Whilst it is preferable to use the standard terms to the extent possible, it is even more important that the members of your project team, and the people with whom you work, have a clear and common definition of whatever terms you choose to use.

Click here for a [broader glossary of terms](#) across the WWF Network.

Action Plan – A description of a project’s goals, objectives, and strategies that will be undertaken to abate identified threats and make use of opportunities. It should include an explanation of why you selected these strategies, and also formal descriptions of your overarching theory of change and any core assumptions. A WWF action plan outlines what WWF’s contribution is to a joint project’s overall action plan.

Activity – A specific action or set of tasks undertaken by project staff and/or partners to reach one or more objectives. A good activity meets the criteria of being: *linked, focused, feasible, and appropriate*. Sometimes called an action, intervention, response, or strategic action.

Adaptive Management – The incorporation of a formal learning process into conservation action. Specifically, it is the integration of project design, management, and monitoring, to provide a framework to systematically test assumptions, promote learning, and supply timely information for management decisions.

Assumption – A project’s core assumptions are the logical sequences linking project activities to one or more targets as reflected in a results chain diagram – see also theory of change. Other assumptions are related to factors that can positively or negatively affect project performance – see also risk factor.

Audit – An assessment of a project or programme in relation to an external set of criteria such as generally accepted accounting principles, sustainable harvest principles, or the standards outlined in this document. Compare to evaluation.

Biodiversity Target – An element of biodiversity at a project site, which can be a species, habitat/ecological system, or ecological process that a project has chosen to focus on. Strictly speaking, biodiversity targets refer to all biodiversity elements at a site, but typically the term is used as a shorthand for a specific element of biodiversity that a project has chosen to focus on. Synonymous with conservation target.

Community of Practice – A group of practitioners who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.

Conceptual Model – A diagram that represents relationships between key factors that are believed to impact or lead to one or more biodiversity targets. A good model should link the biodiversity targets to threats, opportunities, stakeholders, and intervention points, capturing the logic of the intended change behind planned activities. It should also indicate which factors are most important for measures.

Conservation Target – A synonym for biodiversity target.

Critical Threat – Direct threats that have been prioritized as being the most important to address.

Direct Threat – A human action that immediately degrades one or more biodiversity targets. For example, “logging” or “fishing.” Typically tied to one or more stakeholders. Sometimes referred to as a “pressure” or “source of stress.” Compare with indirect threat.

Driver – A factor identified in an analysis of the project situation that is affecting, or could affect, a direct threat. It can be an indirect threat, opportunity, or enabling condition. Also known as contributing factor.

Enabling Condition – A broad or high-level opportunity within a situation analysis. For example, the legal or policy framework within a country.

Evaluation – An assessment of a project or programme in relation to specific performance criteria: quality and relevance of design, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and adaptive capacity. Compare to audit.

Factor – A generic term for an element of a conceptual model including direct and indirect threats, opportunities, and associated stakeholders. It is often advantageous to use this generic term since many factors – for example tourism – could be both a threat and an opportunity.

Forecasting – A method for assessing the financial performance of a project or programme.

Goal – A formal statement detailing a desired impact of a project, such as the desired future status of a target. A good goal meets the criteria of being *linked to targets and ‘SMART’*.

Indicator – A measurable entity related to a specific information need such as the status of a target/factor, change in a threat, or progress toward an objective. A good indicator meets the criteria of being: *measurable, precise, consistent, and sensitive*.

Indirect Threat – A factor identified in an analysis of the project situation that is a driver of direct threats. Often an entry point for conservation actions. For example, “logging policies” or “demand for fish.” Sometimes called a root cause or underlying cause. Compare with direct threat.

Information Need – Something that a project team and/or other people must know about a project. The basis for designing a monitoring plan.

Intermediate Result – see planned intermediate result.

Iteration – The process of repeating the steps in the project cycle, each time refining and adjusting project plans and hopefully coming closer to the project’s vision and goals.

Logical Framework – Often abbreviated as logframe. A matrix that results from a logical framework analysis that is used to display a project’s goals, objectives, activities, and indicators in tabular form, showing the logic of the project.

Magnification – Taking lessons learned from one project and applying them to others, thus increasing the impact of the first project.

Monitoring Plan – The plan for monitoring your project. It includes information needs, indicators, and methods, spatial scale and locations, timeframe, and roles and responsibilities for collecting data.

Method – A specific technique used to collect data to measure an indicator. Methods vary in their *accuracy and reliability*, *cost-effectiveness*, *feasibility*, and *appropriateness*.

Objective – A formal statement detailing a desired outcome of a project such as reducing a critical threat. A good objective meets the criteria of being *outcome oriented and SMART*. If the project is well conceptualized and designed, realization of a project’s objectives should lead to the fulfillment of the project’s goals and ultimately its vision. Compare to vision and goal.

Operational Plan – The operational plan for your project. Key components include analyses of financial, human, and other resource requirements and risk assessment and mitigation, governance and communications, and project lifespan/exit strategies.

Opportunity – A factor identified in an analysis of the project situation that potentially has a positive effect on one or more targets, either directly or indirectly. Often an entry point for conservation actions. For example, “demand for sustainably harvested timber.” In some senses, the opposite of threat.

Planned Intermediate Result – A benchmark or milestone that a project is working to achieve en route to accomplishing a final goal or objective. (In this case, “intermediate” typically refers to a temporal dimension, but it can also be used to refer to a causal dimension).

Practitioners – All people involved in designing, managing, and monitoring conservation projects and programmes.

Programme – A group of jointly-managed, interdependent projects which together aim to achieve a common broad vision. In the interest of simplicity, this document uses the term “project” to represent both projects and programmes since these standards of practice are designed to apply equally well to both.

Project – A set of actions undertaken by a defined group of practitioners – including managers, researchers, community members, or other stakeholders – to achieve defined goals and objectives. The basic unit of conservation work. Compare with programme.

Project Area – The place where the biodiversity or footprint issue of interest to the project is located. It can include one or more “conservation areas” or “areas of biodiversity significance” as identified through ecoregional assessments. Note that in some cases, project actions may take place outside of the defined project area.

Project Team – A specific core group of practitioners who are responsible for designing, implementing, and monitoring a project. This group can include managers, stakeholders, researchers, operations staff and other key implementers.

Result – The desired future state of a target or factor. Results include *impacts* which are linked to targets, *outcomes* which are linked to threats and opportunities, and *outputs* which are linked to activities. See the Action Plan section for more explanation.

Results Chain – A graphical depiction of a project’s core assumption, the logical sequence linking activities to one or more targets. In scientific terms, it is equal to a “hypothesis.”

Risk Factor – A condition under which the project is expected to function, but which can cause problems for the project. Often, a condition over which the project has no direct control. Killer risks are those that when not overcome, will completely stop the project from achieving its goals and objectives.

Scope – The broad geographic or thematic focus of a project. Projects that are focused on a specific place will have a geographic scope or project area. Projects whose boundary is defined by specific species, threats, opportunities or enabling conditions will have a thematic scope. Where the scope is thematic, there may also be a geographic focus.

Stakeholder – Any individual, group, or institution who has a vested interest in the natural resources of the project area and/or who potentially will be affected by project activities and have something to gain or lose if conditions change or stay the same. Stakeholders are all those who need to be considered in achieving project goals and whose participation and support are crucial to its success.

Strategic Plan – The overall plan for a project. A complete strategic plan includes descriptions of a project’s scope and vision, targets, analysis of project situation, Action Plan, Monitoring Plan (monitoring plan), and Operational Plan.

Strategy – A group of activities with a common focus that work together to reduce threats, capitalize on opportunities, or restore natural systems. Strategies include one or more activities and are design to achieve specific objectives and goals.

Target – What the project *ultimately* wants to affect in a positive manner. Sometimes used as shorthand for biodiversity/conservation target. Usually targets are related to biodiversity but in some cases human welfare targets may be defined as well.

Task – A specific action in a workplan required to implement activities, Monitoring Plan, or other components of a strategic plan.

Theory of Change – A narrative description and/ or diagram linking a project strategy to what the strategy wants to achieve (long-term objectives and goals). Often expressed in the form of a diagram such as a Results Chain that clarifies the project’s logic, combined with a statement of an overarching approach or philosophy that the project considers to be ‘true’ (and for which there is good supporting evidence). See also assumption.

Threat – A human activity that directly or indirectly degrades one or more targets. Typically tied to one or more stakeholders. See also direct threat and indirect threat.

Vision – A description of the desired state or ultimate condition that a project is working to achieve. A complete vision can include a description of the biodiversity of the site and/or a map of the project area as well as a summary vision statement.

Vision Statement – A brief summary of the project’s vision. A good vision statement meets the criteria of being *relatively general, visionary, and brief*.

Workplan – A short-term schedule for implementing an action, monitoring, or operational plan. Workplans typically list tasks required, who will be responsible for each task, when each task will need to be undertaken, and how much money and other resources will be required.

Criteria for Key Terms

Vision Statement: A general statement of the desired state or ultimate condition that a project is working to achieve.

- **Relatively General** – Broadly defined to encompass all project activities
- **Visionary** – Inspirational in outlining the desired change in the state of the targets toward which the project is working
- **Brief** – Simple and succinct so that that all project participants can remember it

Goal: A formal statement detailing a desired impact of a project such as the desired future status of a target. A good goal should meet the criteria of being ‘**linked to targets and SMART**’ as follows:

- **Linked to Targets:** Directly associated with one or more of your targets, representing the desired future status of the target over the long-term.
- **Specific:** Clearly defined so that all people involved in the project have the same understanding of what the terms in the goal mean
- **Measurable:** Definable in relation to some standard scale (numbers, percentage, fractions, or all/nothing states)
- **Ambitious yet Achievable:** Describes a highly significant aim that has a realistically possibility of being achieved.
- **Relevant:** Clearly related to the WWF’s mission and priorities, and the priorities of other organisations and stakeholders.
- **Time Limited:** Achievable within a specific period of time, generally 10 or more years

Objective: A formal statement detailing a desired outcome of a project. A good objective meets the criteria of being ‘**outcome-oriented and SMART**’

- **Outcome Oriented** – Represents necessary changes in critical threats, opportunities, or other factors that affect one or more project goals
- **Specific** – Clearly defined so that all people involved in the project have the same understanding of what the terms in the objective mean
- **Measurable** – Definable in relation to some standard scale (numbers, percentage, fractions, or all/nothing states)
- **Achievable:** Practical and appropriate for the project context, and with a strongly possibility of being achieved.
- **Relevant:** Clearly related to delivery of the project goals, and the priorities of other organisations and stakeholders.
- **Time Limited** – Achievable within a specific period of time

Strategy: A group of activities with a common focus that work together to reduce threats, capitalize on opportunities, or restore natural systems. Strategies include one or more activities and are design to achieve specific objectives and goals.

- **Linked** – Directly related to achieving a specific goal or objective
- **Focused** – Outlines specific courses of action that need to be carried out
- **Feasible** – Accomplishable in light of the project’s resources and constraints
- **Appropriate** – Acceptable to and fitting within site-specific cultural, social, and biological norms

Indicator: A measurable entity related to a specific information need such as the status of a target, change in a threat, or progress toward an objective.

- **Measurable** – Able to be recorded and analyzed in quantitative and qualitative terms
- **Precise** – Define the same way by all people
- **Consistent** – Not changing over time so it always measures the same thing
- **Sensitive** – Changes proportionately in response to the actual changes in the condition being measured

Annex 1. Summary of Standards of Practice and Outputs

Numbers denote steps and sub-steps, and diamond bullets (◆) denote outputs. Of course, not all standards or outputs are appropriate under all conditions and for all projects, so you should adapt as necessary.

WWF Conservation Project and Programme Management Process

0. General Practices

0.1 Engage Stakeholders

0.2 Embrace Learning

0.3 Consider Climate Change

1. Define...

1.1 Initial Team Composition and Operations

- ◆ Selection of initial project team and designation of project leader
- ◆ Charter outlining how the project team will function
- ◆ Concept paper outlining some initial thinking on the project

1.2 Scope and Vision

- ◆ A brief description of the project's scope including general ideas on strategic focus
- ◆ If appropriate, a map of the project area (GIS file or hand sketch)
- ◆ A vision statement for the project

1.3 Targets

- ◆ Selection of a limited number of targets and a brief explanation of why they were chosen
- ◆ Links identified to other programme targets and/or to generalized nature targets
- ◆ For thematically oriented scopes and where human welfare targets are set, an explanation of the links to ecosystem services and biodiversity (via footprint or threat reduction)
- ◆ A (generally tabular) description of the current and future desired condition of each target.

1.4 Context and Stakeholders

- ◆ An analysis and prioritisation of the critical direct threats/ factors affecting your targets
- ◆ An analysis of key drivers - indirect threats and opportunities – and an explanation that shows the cause-and-effect relationships among factors (e.g. conceptual model)
- ◆ An analysis of key stakeholders

2. Design...

2.1 Action Plan: Goals, Objectives and Activities

- ◆ Goals for all of your targets (or refined Goals if they were defined in Step 1.3).
- ◆ Objectives for critical threats and other factors that your project will address.
- ◆ One or more strategies/ activities that will achieve conservation objectives.
- ◆ Results chains and/ or other formal descriptions of both your overarching theory of change and core assumptions, plus the detailed logic of your strategies/activities
- ◆ *Overall Action Plan* that compiles goals, objectives, strategies and theory of change

2.2 Monitoring Plan

- ◆ A list of the indicators your project will measure to track the effectiveness of each activity
- ◆ Finalised monitoring plan (includes indicators; methods for collecting data; when, where, and by whom each kind of data will be collected; plans for baseline data collection)
- ◆ A description of how data will be stored and analyzed

2.3 Operational Plan

- ◆ Estimates of human and other resources required to implement your project and your current and potential sources of these resources
- ◆ Estimates of financial resources required to implement your project and your current and potential sources of these resources
- ◆ An assessment of potential risks to your project and how you might mitigate them
- ◆ An exit strategy, if appropriate
- ◆ Your overall *Strategic Plan*

3. Implement...

3.1 Workplans and Budgets

- ◆ Detailed short-term workplans for your project showing tasks, who will do them, and when
- ◆ Gantt chart and/or calendar of project activities
- ◆ Project budgets
- ◆ Implementation of strategic plan (action, monitoring, and operational plans)

3.2 Fund Raising

- ◆ Project budget refined, if necessary
- ◆ Potential funding sources identified
- ◆ Funding proposals developed and submitted
- ◆ Meetings with donors and other supporting work completed
- ◆ Financial resources obtained

3.3 Capacity Building

- ◆ Capacity assessments completed
- ◆ Strategies developed and implemented to address capacity shortfalls

3.4 Partnerships

- ◆ Project team composition revisited
- ◆ Key stakeholders identified and brought into project as appropriate
- ◆ Information sharing strategies developed and implemented
- ◆ Formal arrangements with partners developed and implemented as appropriate

4. Analyze & Adapt...

4.1 Manage Incoming Data on an Ongoing Basis

- ◆ Development and regular use of systems for storing and backing up project data
- ◆ Uploads of data to Insight CPM database

4.2 Analyze Project Results and Assumptions

- ◆ Appropriate scheduled analyses of project results and assumptions
- ◆ Documentation of discussions and decisions
- ◆ Regular reports to project team members and key stakeholders

4.3 Analyze Operation and Financial Functions/Performance

- ◆ Appropriate scheduled analyses of operational and financial data
- ◆ Regular financial reports linked to technical reports including financial forecasts

4.4 Adapt Your Plans and Budgets

- ◆ Revised project documents and work plans

5. Share...

5.1 Lessons

- ◆ Identification of learning questions
- ◆ Harvesting of key results and lessons

5.2 Formal Communication Products

- ◆ Identification of key audiences
- ◆ Development of a communications strategy
- ◆ Development and distribution of appropriate communication products
- ◆ Use of other people's communication products

5.3 Feedback and Evaluations

- ◆ Regular feedback session – both give and take
- ◆ Evaluations and/or audits at appropriate times during the project cycle

5.4 Performance and Learning Culture

- ◆ Demonstrated commitment from leaders to learning and innovation
- ◆ A safe environment for encouraging experimentation and questioning the status quo
- ◆ A commitment to share success and failures with practitioners around the world

Iterate Through the Cycle