



## Strategic Plan: FY2017 – FY2020

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## Introduction

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

- Helen Keller

"In a gentle way, you can shake the world."

- Mahatma Gandhi

By almost any measure, the world has lost a considerable amount of its biodiversity and natural capital over the last 500 hundred years. Despite substantially increased knowledge, a growing number of protected areas, and tens of thousands of dedicated volunteers and professionals working hard over the last 150 years, we have lost so much. And yet at the same time there is so much to be saved and cared for! The tremendous threats facing the planet's natural realm mean that those undertaking its protection must be passionate, dedicated, and efficient with our resources. The immediate problem that needs attention is the development and implementation of the very best ideas for saving and managing the natural world around us.

By working together in a network, we have a much greater probability of developing and sharing solutions to solve this complex problem. The global loss of biodiversity is a perfect example of what social scientists call a "wicked problem" – a highly complex problem that involves many actors; solving it requires changing the attitudes and practices of many people. According to the authors of *Connecting to Change the World* (Plastrik et al. 2014), addressing wicked problems requires the use of "generative" solutions based on learning, innovation and adaptation. The Conservation Coaches Network (CCNet) is what the authors call a "generative social impact network" – a network of individuals working to solve a difficult problem by working together, learning, innovating and adapting. According to the authors, "Networks have unique capabilities for achieving social impact that distinguishes them from other forms of social organizing, and generative social-impact networks are particularly suited for addressing complex problems.

This document represents the Conservation Coaches Network's third strategic plan. It summarizes CCNet's ideas and commitments for contributing to global conservation issues in the fiscal years 2017 – 2020.

## How is CCNet Working to Improve the Practice of Conservation?

The *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation*<sup>1</sup> (Conservation Measures Partnership 2013) is a powerful approach to decision-making, measuring and learning that is adaptable and responsive to diverse applications. It emerged from the applied work of conservation practitioners and has been refined and agreed upon by a coalition of conservation organizations. Taking a page out of the open source computer program movement, these conservation "standards" provide a free, common structure that conservation practitioners can use to manage their work and to learn from each other across organizational, geographic, cultural, temporal or spatial barriers. The proven value of the Open Standards

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<sup>1</sup> In 2007 eleven major non-governmental conservation organizations, in an alliance called the Conservation Measures Partnership, adopted a general framework for conservation project management, known as the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation* (the Open Standards).

to conservation project design and management is prompting widespread adoption and a need for support and training all over the world.

Frequently, a “Conservation Coach” (which we will refer to as simply a “Coach”) is used to facilitate the Open Standards process - a conservation practitioner with special training and experience in leading the planning, implementation, and monitoring & evaluation process. The Conservation Coaches Network (CCNet) is a true network of conservation practitioners who believe that the Open Standards can improve conservation practice and that trained Coaches can greatly improve the application of the Open Standards – and thus result in better conservation around the world. CCNet is about identifying useful problem-solving tools – consistent with the Open Standards approach - and training, connecting and supporting conservationists to use these tools, in all the world’s diverse conservation situations, from grazing cooperatives in Kenya--to Northern Australia, where indigenous people are working to go back “on country”--to North America, where government land managers, foresters, NGOs and community

**Table 1. Some Examples of Open Standards Use and Adoption**

- Landscape and fire safe community planning by US Fire Learning Network;
- Used by various marine protected areas in Scandinavia, Sweden in particular;
- Adopted by the Mongolian, Madagascan, and Chilean protected areas agency for management planning;
- Used in State Wildlife Action Planning by several US states;
- Used by US Fish & Wildlife Service and National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for species recovery;
- Part of curriculum for managers in the US Bureau of Land Management and the China Department of Forestry;
- Endorsed by the Convention on Biological Diversity for protected area planning and management;
- Taught in more than a dozen universities and academic institutions;
- Adopted by Palau, Chuuk, Kosrae and Pohnpei Conservation Societies;
- Actively used by Greening Australia, Bush Heritage Australia, World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Tasmanian Land Conservancy, CONANP, and Pronatura Peninsula de Yucatan – Mexico, and many others;
- Recommended by the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance as one of the methods for designing and proposing “Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation” (REDD) projects internationally;
- Recommended by the Australian federal government for development of Indigenous protected area management planning.

members are building sustainable forest management programs and fire-safe communities together. Coaches not only teach practitioners and teams the basic principles of the Open Standards; they also help teams identify strategies, develop measures, explicitly articulate and capture their uncertainties, and encourage on-going assessment and continuity of effort. Coaches link practitioners to each other, with other support services, and with peer projects where project leaders can find additional review and support for similar challenges. Coaches also actively promote the Open Standards around the world.

CCNet consists of more than 500 individually trained Conservation Coaches as well as subnetworks, called “Franchises” (not to be confused with profit-making commercial franchises) on each continent which provide additional support to the Coaches. **The CCNet vision is that these Coaches use and continuously improve and adapt the Open Standards framework in ways that are responsive to the cultures and communities in which they work and the unique conservation challenges they face.** These Coaches, organized in regional Franchises, are supported by a small CCNet Coordination Team focused on enhancing their skills and effectiveness and providing them with opportunities to share promising practices across the greater Network. In this way, every conservation team, all over the world, in every institution and organization, no matter what size, that needs support will have access to a trained,

connected Coach who will help them plan, manage, monitor and learn from their work, leading to meaningful conservation results.

To date, the CCNet Core Team's main work, in coordination with Franchises, has been the training and support of new and existing Coaches in specific coach trainings, at a biannual Coaches Rally, through webinars, a website, a list serve, and a semi-annual e-magazine. The Franchises themselves extend this work and have their own similar initiatives. By using the power of peer learning through a facilitated community of practice, CCNet enables Coaches to support each other and learn by sharing best practices among themselves.

While the Network is growing and the Coaches are active, demand is greater than supply, and the increasing complexity of conservation projects also increases the need for advanced skills training for existing Coaches.

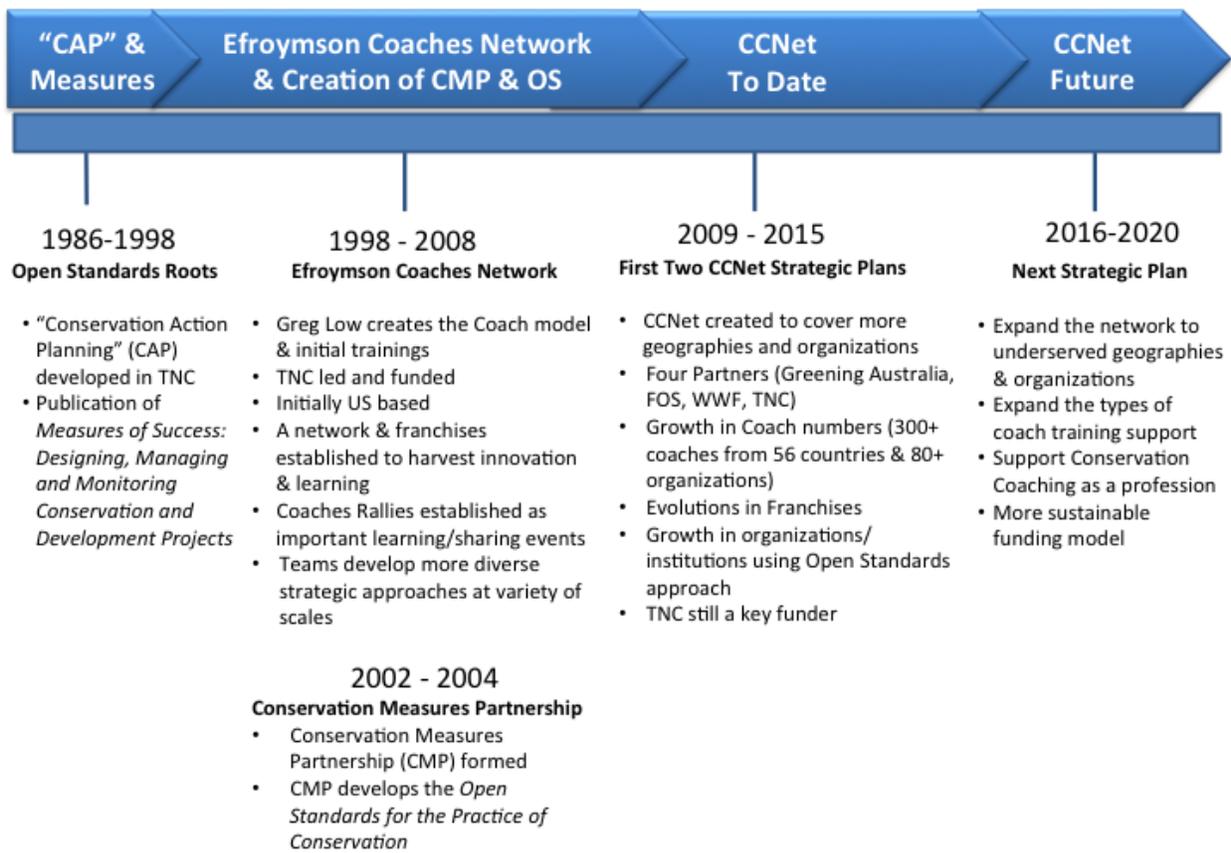
## **Situation Analysis**

To evaluate the current situation upon which to build the work of CCNet going forward and to understand the broader conservation landscape in which we now work, Board and Coordination Team members are relying on a number of analyses, including:

- A review of the history and intended purpose of the Network and documented progress on objectives set in CCNet's last strategic plan (2013-2016);
- A review of two previous CCNet strategic plans (2009-2012 and 2013-2016) and documented progress on objectives set in those plans;
- A 2015 external evaluation of CCNet and the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) performed by Archipelago Consulting;
- A 2012 analysis of TNC's project database;
- A 2013 survey of TNC program managers;
- 2015 Conversations with Franchise Leads via one-on-one, end-of-the-fiscal-year interviews and a Coaches Rally session;
- A collection of future strategic plan ideas submitted by Network coaches during the 2015 CCNet Coaches Rally held near Barcelona, Spain in 2015;
- Literature on Networking and CCNet;
- A CMP Situation Analysis and Strategic Plan
- A Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities Analysis

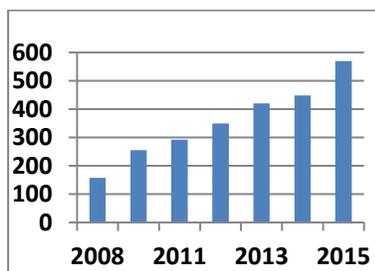
## **CCNet History**

CCNet grew out of an internal effort of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to develop, spread and support TNC's "Conservation by Design". It started as a small, informal group of TNC practitioners in 2004, grew to a more structured but internal TNC organization (Efroymson Coaches Network) and evolved into CCNet as a chartered partnership with a more global reach in 2009 when WWF, The Nature Conservancy, Greening Australia and Foundations of Success determined that Open Standards coaches were needed more broadly in the global conservation community. Figure 1 provides a sketch of CCNet's history to date.

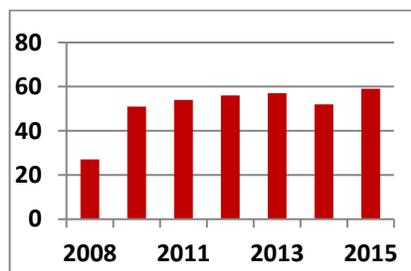


**Figure 1. Overview of the History and Future Aims of CCNet**

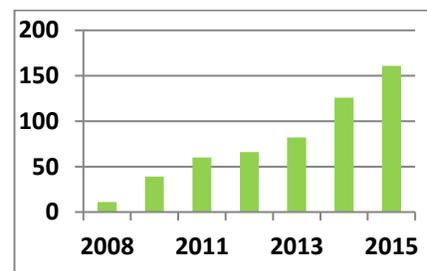
As our historic context shows, CCNet has been continuously evolving to respond well to needs and trends of the conservation community. This includes virtually continuous growth, as illustrated in Figures 2-4 below.



**Figure 2. Cumulative CCNet Coaches Trained**



**Figure 3. Countries with CCNet Coaches**



**Figure 4. Organizations with CCNet Coaches**

As our historic context shows CCNet has been continuously evolving to respond well to needs and trends of the conservation community. An important driver in our current evolution relates to finances. In the first three years after CCNet was chartered in 2009, one Partner (TNC) provided most of the funding for its core operations. When TNC announced in 2012 that it needed to reduce its level of support, it became necessary to develop a more diverse, multi-institutional CCNet funding model. Although this change in funding source was a challenge, the reliance on one Partner for funding was never a realistic model for

sustaining our work. In late 2012, CCNet's Board and the Network Coordination Team began taking action to expand the funding base to ensure support for core operations and programs. This has been relatively successful in securing cash funding and in-kind commitments equal to basic needs. Since that time, funding support has been encouraging but the commitment to on-going support is not sufficiently stable or diverse to sustain our program needs. A key component of this strategic plan remains the need to establish a more sustainable funding model of CCNet.

#### 2014 External Evaluation

In April 2014, the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) and CCNet contracted with Archipelago Consulting to conduct an independent, summative evaluation of our work (Redford et al. 2015), managed by a Steering Committee. The Gordon and Betty Moore and Margaret A. Cargill Foundations provided generous funding for the evaluation, which was submitted in January 2015. The evaluation included a total of 73 interviews, a web survey completed by 250 individuals (a 37% completion rate), and the review of over 50 internal documents that supplied key information.

Major findings of the Evaluation related to CCNet:

- CCNet uniquely fills a niche of creating a globally distributed, cross-institutional networked community of practice through which to develop and share lessons learned to improve conservation outcomes.
- CCNet can demonstrate achievement of 2012 strategic plan goals for creating a well-trained coaching network that is both globally and culturally diverse and well connected.
- The major accomplishment of both CCNet and CMP has been to create broad communities of practitioners using the OS, whose organizations currently represent an estimated \$1 billion in annual conservation spending. This broad adoption of the OS by the conservation community has resulted in:
  - Increased conservation funding for conservation projects
  - Increased stakeholder participation
  - Increased efficiency of implementation of actions
  - Increased investment in learning
  - Increased sharing of lessons
- The evaluators' expert opinion is that use of the OS has significantly impacted biodiversity in positive ways in numerous locations around the globe.
- These accomplishments of the Coaches and the Open Standards movement have been achieved in little over a decade. Given that nothing less than complete sectoral change is the objective; this is a remarkable amount to have accomplished in such a short time.
- CCNet has achieved its considerable accomplishments efficiently, working with the strong central CCNet core of three part-time staff and the significant efforts of volunteer franchise leaders.
- Cooperation between conservation organizations is uncommon. The partnerships that underlie CCNet and CMP show that strategic gains can result from working together. The cooperation between CCNet and CMP has also contributed significantly to giving the movement towards results based management/evidence based management in the conservation field more momentum, greater credence and power. As such they have raised collaborative standards across the conservation sector.

Key Recommendations from the Evaluation:

- Financial Sustainability Recommendations:
  - Publish to Build More Buy-in
  - Reach out to practitioners of behavioral economics and related disciplines
  - Expand engagement with government sector to fund needs

- Develop “full-cost accounting” information that includes in-kind contributions
- Structure and Governance Recommendations:
  - It is advisable to seek ways of more formally integrating CMP and CCNet, including merger.
- Strategic Direction Recommendations:
  - Geographies of need (where conservation capacity need is greatest);
  - Identify key institutions to spread good practices
  - Developing a hierarchical coaching model (e.g., training for individuals and organizations who have no prior experience), or develop specialty coaches.
- Open Standard’s Implementation Recommendations:
  - The full power of the OS will be fully realized when the OS are used broadly and through the full cycle.
  - Formally consider the role of the OS relative to a small but critical set of alternative conservation Results Based Management (RBM) approaches (e.g., Systematic Conservation Planning, Structured Decision Making).
  - Consider a more proactive promotion of the OS in different organizations and sectors.
  - Use the OS to help establish a strong, shared learning system for the biodiversity conservation sector.
- Measuring Impact Recommendations:
  - The fastest, lowest cost, and easiest option is the development of case studies. We recommend that CMP/CCNet develop a set of “test beds” – areas where decision-making bodies are willing to consider results of OS work in determining how and where to deliver conservation results. The desired outcome would be a set of peer-reviewed publications from a broad range of settings that demonstrate that use of OS improves impact at lower cost.

#### Quotes about CCNet from the Evaluation

**On conservation importance:** *“...seeing great work coming out of the projects that [Coaches] have been doing... [The results are] “realistic, actionable strategies that can and are being applied in the real world.”*

**On quality control and rigor:** *“...if a Coach was involved I had confidence that the most critical questions were being asked.”*

**On innovation:** *“Every time we have something new to figure out, I turn to the Network [Coaches].”*

**On knowledge transfer and connection:** *“Foremost value is the connection to a larger community for access to lessons learned and best practices.”*

**On process design and facilitation:** *“Coaches were able to get the participants focused and to extract useful and understandable information.”*

#### 2011 Analysis of TNC Project Database

An analysis of conservation projects registered in an internal TNC project database (Salzer 2011) found significant increases in the implementation of 9 of 10 steps of the core adaptive management process in coached vs. non-coached projects. This same analysis also found that projects had a 70-110% increase in measures, work planning, adaptation and learning steps when Coaches are involved. This kind of proven value is leading to more demand for Coaches’ services. By training new Coaches and providing on-going training and mentoring of existing Coaches, CCNet has been working to fill this need.

#### 2011 Survey of TNC Program Managers

During the summer of 2011, thirty-two TNC senior managers were interviewed to understand how they viewed the Coaches in their organization (CCNet 2011a).

### 2015 CCNet Franchise Lead Conversations

The CCNet Coordination Team conducts annual interviews with the Franchise Leads in order to understand their challenges and concerns and how the Coordination Team can assist them. Additionally, a special session for existing and potential Franchise Leads was held at the 2015 Coaches Rally. Themes that have emerged from those conversations include:

- How to have and energize a strong CCNet Franchise core team?
- What does it take to organize a multi-team Open Standards workshop?
- How to fund CCNet trainings?
- Should we start a new CCNet franchise (in the Caribbean)?
- What has worked well and what has not worked well?

### Ideas Collected during 2015 CCNet Coaches Rally

During a special plenary session during the 2015 Coaches Rally near Barcelona, Spain, ideas for the 2017-2020 CCNet strategic plan were solicited from the approximately 140 Coaches present at the Rally. Although the session was preceded by a presentation on CCNet as an institution, the request for ideas was open-ended. The following summary represents over 200 separately submitted ideas from the participants.

<b>Table 2. Summary of 2016-2020 Strategic Plan Ideas from the 2015 Barcelona CCNet Coaches Rally</b>
Promotion of the Open Standards to governments, donors, academic institutions, and international fora (e.g., Natura 2000)
Integrating Spatial Elements into the Open Standards
Measure Impact of the Open Standards in Conservation
Find a comfortable and efficient relationship with CMP
Increase Miradi functionality
Document and make accessible more case studies
Measure Impact of CCNet specifically
Build new and existing coach capacity with a broader array of training, coaching and mentoring opportunities
Strengthen CCNet franchises
Establish coach certification option
Establish more links to other fields (e.g., social science, other planning frameworks)
More sustainable and varied funding model for CCNet
Communicate for greater CCNet and coach visibility
Expand CCNet to fill gaps in specific geographic areas
Develop more committees to solicit more participation in the management of CCNet
Next CCNet Rally in Australia!

### Literature on Networking and CCNet

As part of the development of CCNet's second (FY2012-2016) strategic plan, the planning team reviewed current literature on best practices in networks and cross-boundary collaboration. One insightful paper by William Eggers and John O'Leary (2012) identified three pillars of cross-boundary collaboration in networks:

- New relationships and shared value emerge when networks are able to connect disparate individuals and organizations and when they turn weak ties into strong ones;
- Networks can also add value when people bridge institutional, sectorial, geographic, cultural or educational boundaries to jointly work on latent issues or innovative enhancements to existing tools or processes;
- When networks foster improved collaboration, bringing together disparate agencies or people with complementary skills, this can lead to more efficient execution and better mission attainment.

CCNet is actively working in all three of these ways by:

- Forming multi-organizational cohorts of coaches who train and work together within and across geographic regions
- Hosting a multi-organizational bi-annual Rally that brings together coaches from around the world to share ideas, products, etc.
- Organizing multi-organizational task forces to address shared needs that arise amongst practitioners
- Supporting training teams from multiple organizations to conduct new coach training
- Etc.

### Conservation Measures Partnership Situation Analysis

Our situation analysis also builds on a conceptual diagram created by the Conservation Measures Partnership revealing the high-level barriers to Results-Based management (RBM)<sup>2</sup> and a suite of strategies to overcome these barriers (see Appendix A). The following factors were identified as conditions that limit the ability to do good RBM:

- Lack of examples of good RBM;
- Lack of best practice standards for RBM;
- Lack of expectation and demand for RBM in projects and organizations;
- Lack of training and coaching;
- Lack of cross-project learning mechanisms.

By limiting the ability of projects and organizations to carry out good RBM, these conditions pose a barrier to teams trying to achieve effective conservation around the world.

### Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities Analysis

The planning team for CCNet’s second strategic plan (2009-2013) undertook a Strengths-Challenges-Opportunities analysis, much of which is still relevant, summarized in the following table:

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<sup>2</sup> Results Based Management is a term that is often used interchangeably with “Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation.” It references the concept of an adaptive management framework for implementing conservation.

**Table 3. Modified Planning Team Analysis of the Situation facing CCNet in 2012**

Opportunities & positive trends	Challenges & negative trends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Coaches and activities of Coaches continues to grow</li> <li>• Demand for Coach services is increasing</li> <li>• Coach supported projects implement more steps of RBM framework</li> <li>• Networking activity between Coaches is vibrant, diverse and active</li> <li>• Regionally and locally hosted events are expanding</li> <li>• Number of organizations adopting the OS and engaging with Coaches and network is expanding</li> <li>• Coaches come from more countries and organizations</li> <li>• Network is expanding to new continents</li> <li>• Affiliation with CMP is expanding</li> <li>• Involvement of Partners and Franchise leaders in active leadership of network is growing</li> <li>• Some of the Franchise units are becoming very active and strong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World economic crisis has lingering effects on conservation funding and specifically resulted in significant cuts for operations funding in TNC and WWF and reductions of staff in many NGOs</li> <li>• While number of Coaches overall is growing, number of Coaches in TNC is stable or shrinking in some regions</li> <li>• With cuts in staff in many NGOs, Coaches have less time to serve outside their immediate programs and to learn new skills</li> <li>• Awareness of Network in some of the Partner organizations is not as strong or deep as it needs to be to ensure management support</li> <li>• Skills of existing Coaches vary greatly</li> <li>• Some existing Coaches need to update their skills to keep pace with changes in methods and challenges facing conservation organizations</li> </ul>

### Actors and stakeholders

- Conservation practitioners are CCNet’s largest audience (including both current and potential conservation Coaches). These are people with various educational and cultural backgrounds who implement conservation projects within government agencies, academia, private industry, communities or NGOs. These individuals, especially the project managers (e.g., protected area managers, NGO technical managers) are absolutely key to successful implementation of RBM because they are responsible for day-to-day decisions and implementation of conservation plans and actions.
- Individual Coaches who have been trained by CCNet or are simply part of the network need our encouragement and support.
- Franchises and Franchise leaders are essential actors and stakeholders. Franchises represent clusters of Coaches who focus their “service area” around a common theme or geographic region. Franchises are the key appendages of CCNet’s body that make work happen in real-life projects. Franchise leaders work cooperatively with the Coaches and the Franchise sponsor and conservation program directors whom they serve to identify the conservation planning needs within their geographic territories. On an annual basis, they review progress and develop plans of action to maintain progress and interact with the larger community as a whole.
- Existing and potential Partner organizations are also important stakeholders. At present, these are WWF, TNC, FOS, Greening Australia (the founding Partners).
- Conservation Funders are also important stakeholders for CCNet., especially those interested in capacity-building and empowerment in conservation and sustainable development,
- The CMP is also a key stakeholder. CCNet and CMP work closely together, with an annually updated Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix B), and are investigating the idea of forming an umbrella alliance – an “Alliance for the Advancement of Conservation Practice.”

## Niche

In the past years CCNet has demonstrated its value as an effective vehicle for supporting and delivering training to Coaches, providing materials to Coaches and practitioners, connecting Coaches and practitioners and contributing to innovations and methodological and tool updates in RBM. CCNet is in close coordination with the Conservation Measures Partnership, whose core work has been to advance Results-Based Management by promoting and maintaining and developing the Open Standards.

As illustrated in the conceptual diagram developed by CMP in Appendix A, CCNet's efforts contribute to:

- Addressing the need for examples of RBM to obtaining greater commitment and support for RBM;
- Establishing best practice standards;
- Ensuring capacity for training and coaching, and also for cross-project learning.

A quote from the Archipelago Consulting evaluation is relevant here:

*"CCNet is unique in its mission to improve the practice of conservation by creating a globally networked, cross-institutional community of practice for conservation."*

## CCNet Mission, Theory of Change, Vision & Objectives

### CCNet Mission

The **mission** of the Conservation Coaches Network is to *train, connect and support conservation practitioners to do better, smarter conservation that achieves tangible results benefitting people and nature all around the world.*

CCNet seeks to improve the effectiveness of project teams working to protect, conserve, and restore NGO, government, community, and privately managed lands and waters worldwide. While ultimately our work will be evident in healthy and resilient ecosystems and in the well-being of human communities in the projects supported by Coaches, these goals lie beyond our direct sphere of influence. Therefore, the key intermediate outcome on which our efforts are focused is empowering conservation practitioners whose actions can achieve these ultimate outcomes.

### CCNet Theory of Change

Our network expects to contribute to effective conservation results worldwide by: building the skills of the Coaches; ensuring service to the organizations who are members of Conservation Measures Partnership and any other organization or institution that wants to have trained Coaches; and expanding, operating and supporting a strong, functional, diverse and sustainable Conservation Coaches Network.

Starting from our belief that the Open Standards is the most effective and flexible planning framework for conservation, our "theory of change," or hypothesis about how this will work in its simplest form is found in Figure 5 and in narrative form below:

- By strengthening CCNet in alliance with the Conservation Measures Partnership to function as a multi-organizational collaborative to build support for the Open Standards, we will increase leadership buy-in, organizational commitment to apply the Open Standards, recognition of the need for more coaches, and support for the implementation of the CCNet strategic plan.

- As a result, Partner organizations and other organizations will commit more people and more resources to training new Coaches and supporting existing Coaches and other aspects of the Network's strategic plan.
- This will lead to more CCNet training and networking. By enhancing Coach competency (Objective 1) and developing a pathway for professional development of coaches (Objective 2), the skills and knowledge of Coaches will improve to better serve projects that need help. By promoting efficient knowledge sharing (Objective 3), active Coaches will increase and improve connectedness. This will result in their sharing the best content more frequently, sharing new ideas and adaptations more regularly, and helping each other across organizational and geographic boundaries with greater frequency.
- All of this will contribute to a higher quantity and quality of coaches and greater innovation. With more coaches, more teams will gain access to a Coach to help them effectively implement the Open Standards.
- By recruiting and retaining sufficient active, well-trained, experienced Coaches representing a diversity of cultures, skills, institutions and regions around the world, the diversity, reach and number of Coaches will increase and the use of the Open Standards will expand into underserved regions.
- As a result of these actions, a significant number of conservation teams representing the projects of most importance to members of the CMP will have strong results based management plans in place and more of these projects will complete the adaptive management cycle by monitoring, learning and adapting to improve their effectiveness.
- Our efforts will empower project teams and people worldwide to implement work that will contribute to threat reduction and more effective conservation, and the evidence of these results will be found in healthy and resilient ecosystems that provide ecosystem services and contribute to human well-being around the world.

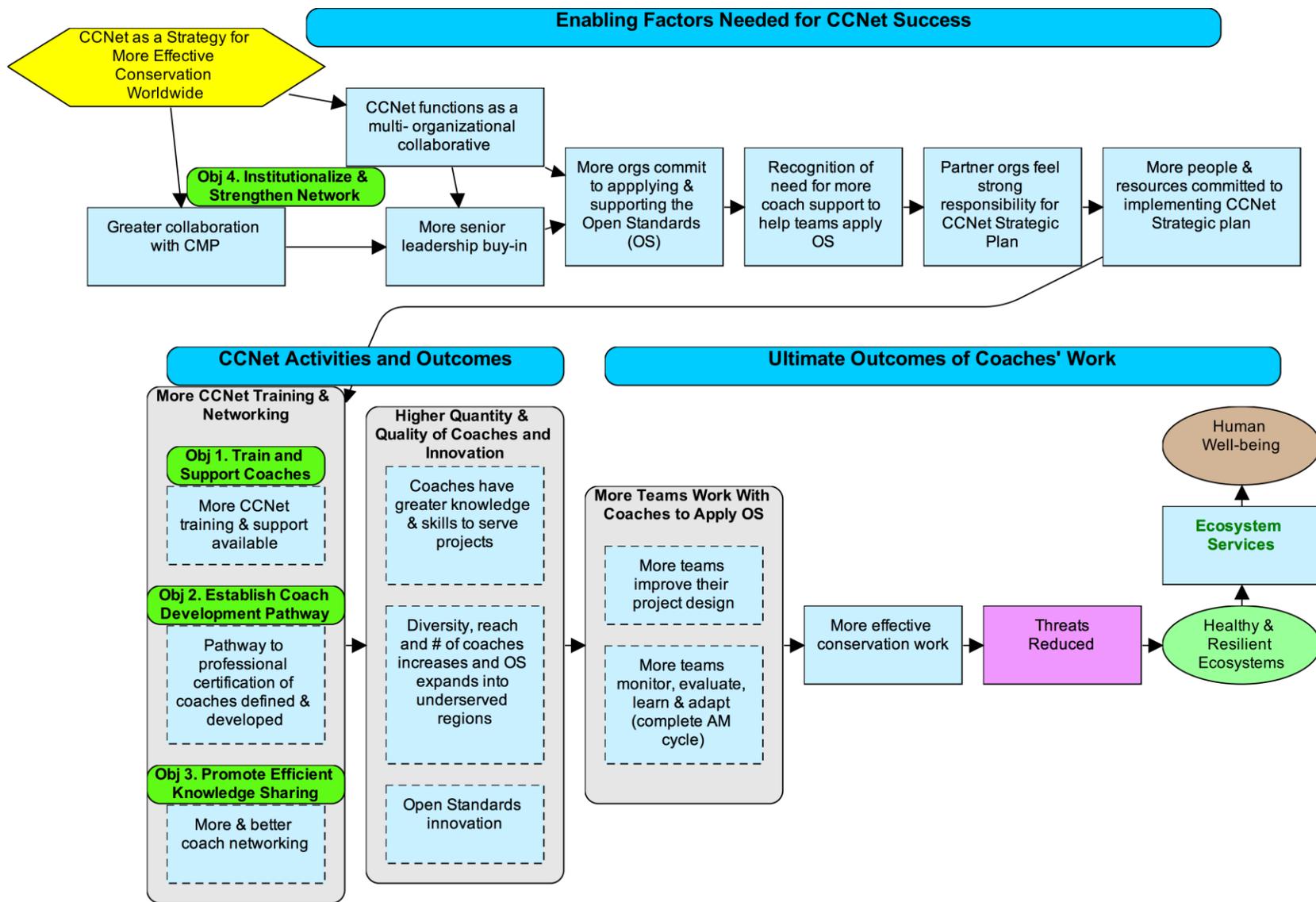


Figure 5. CCNet's Theory of Change

## Vision & Objectives

### Long-term Vision

There are enough trained and experienced conservation Coaches to allow for the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation to be applied effectively on all continents, in most regions, by relevant communities, conservation NGOs and government agencies.

### 2020 Objectives

To advance our mission while establishing a more sustainable network, we have decided to focus on the following objectives during the next four years. While the CCNet Coordination Team and Board oversee the implementation of the strategic plan, the efforts of active Conservation Coaches around the world provide the underpinning for our collective results.

#### **Objective 1. Recruit, Train and Support Well-Trained, Experienced Coaches across Multiple Institutions across the Planet**

By 2020, there are “sufficient”<sup>3</sup> “competent”<sup>4</sup> and “engaged”<sup>5</sup> Coaches actively supporting projects<sup>6</sup> in all Franchises around the world.

Measure(s): number of “competent” and “engaged” Coaches” working in all Franchises around the world who are actively supporting projects .

To ensure that projects around the world have access to competent coaching support, we will:

- Support existing Franchises to meet their objectives;
- Produce materials in multiple languages to support local training for new coaches;
- Hold New Coach trainings at the request and discretion of Franchise leads, as needed. We will attempt to hold at least 4 new coach trainings each year;
- Design and implement other coach training opportunities, including multi-team workshops, peer-to-peer mentoring and other formats, in coordination with Franchise and/or partner leads.

#### **Objective 2. Establish a Clear Pathway towards Professional Conservation Coaching**

By 2020, there is a clear and widely recognized coach development pathway and the opportunity to seek 2<sup>nd</sup> party (CCNet) certification as a Conservation Coach.

Measure(s): documented and recognized coach development pathway (presented at 2018 Rally and on website) and existence of a 2<sup>nd</sup> party (CCNet) coach certification program.

To support the development of coaches, we will:

- Establish an online self-assessment opportunity for coaches to assess their skills and experience;

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<sup>3</sup> “Sufficient” will be defined for each franchise by the franchise lead

<sup>4</sup> “Competent” is be defined using the Coach Self-Assessment tool

<sup>5</sup> “engaged” defined by completed Coaches training; attended rally or other on-going training opportunities; participating in virtual networking or other peer exchanges for sharing and learning and acknowledging their role as a “Coach” in their annual objectives.

<sup>6</sup> “actively supporting projects” defined as coaching at least one team to develop or revise their conservation plans and/or supporting implementation as needed and desired by a project team and/or helping to train others.

- Promote a clear and flexible pathway for Coach development;
- Establish a 2nd party Coach certification process.

### **Objective 3. Promote Efficient Knowledge Sharing**

By 2020, sharing among coaches has contributed to innovations that lead to the evolution of CCNet’s collective knowledge base.

Measure(s): number of CCNet coaches that have done one of the following things:

- Contributed to the program for the Rally at least one time;
- Contributed to a network or CMP working group project;
- Taught a new coach training workshop or continuing education webinar;
- Co-led a fellowship workshop;
- Contributed an article to a peer reviewed journal;
- Contributed a story to CCNet News.

To enhance knowledge sharing, innovation and connections, we will:

- Maintain and improve CCNet’s website and share information in multiple languages;
- Maintain the CCNet Listserve;
- Produce 2 issues of CCNet News per year;
- Hold Coach Rallies approximately every two years in different locations around the world;
- Sponsor webinars through the Franchises;
- Support ongoing thematic work streams ((e.g. climate change guidance) between and connecting the Rallies);
- Contribute to building a knowledge base, documented through Miradi Share, journal articles, and other means;
- Provide mentorship opportunities; and
- Work with partner organizations to leverage learning opportunities (e.g., TNC’s CBD 2.0).

### **Objective 4. Institutionalize and Strengthen the Network.**

By 2020, CCNet will be a stronger network, with a growing number of active franchises, committed leadership, partners and alliances, greater recognition, and financial sustainability.

Measure(s):

Active Franchises - % of all CCNet Franchises considered “active” with coaches who regularly interact with coaches outside their Franchise and contribute to the Network as a whole.

Committed Leadership, Partners and Alliances – number of institutional Partners and Supporting Members contributing to the core CCNet operating budget with in-kind services and operational dollars.

Greater Recognition - % of the CMP member organizations’ representatives who know who CCNet is and who have a favorable opinion of CCNet’s contribution to conservation and their role in the propagation and support of the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation.

Financial Sustainability – whether CCNet has sufficient funds either pledged or on hand to plan for 2 to 3 years in the future.

To institutionalize and strengthen the Network, we will:

- Develop and maintain a revised Charter that provides for multiple levels of contribution and risk management;
- Develop a coherent and inspiring strategic plan that is being implemented collectively;
- Engage a broad partner base that supports the Network;
- Expand franchises to underserved regions such as the Caribbean, Middle East, Indochina, and North Africa.
- Invest in two part-time hires to support fundraising and communication actions;
- Secure sustainable core and franchise funding:
  - A diverse funding pool including Foundations that understand and value CCNet for its networking and capacity building efforts.
  - Sufficient funds promised or on hand to plan for 2 to 3 years in the future.
- Conduct full cost accounting to reflect the significant volunteer time that sustains CCNet;
- Position the role and brand of CCNet, so that it is widely known and respected.
  - The Network is widely recognized in the conservation community for its capacity building work to train and support leaders using the Open Standards.
  - Coaches are recognized as competent, professional leaders for conservation planning, implementation, and adaptive management.
  - Work with committed advocates empowered to influence decision-makers;
- Build and strengthen alliances with CMP and other relevant groups that leverage organizational assets, advance conservation practice and strengthen the use and evolution of the Open Standards:
  - Collaborative engagement in strategic planning and priority operational issues;
  - Promotion of the Open Standards;
  - Development and vetting of guidance materials;
  - Exploration of the impact and value added of the OS and Conservation Coaches;
  - Collaborative fundraising and outreach to shared audiences and donors;
  - Establish joint communications and meetings and shared knowledge management approaches;
  - Exploration of opportunities to collaborate with other organizations / networks to promote adaptive management (e.g., Outcome Mapping, etc.)

## CCNet Structure and Function

The essence of CCNet is the network of Conservation Coaches themselves, doing their best to improve conservation outcomes – and, some additional structure helps the network function effectively and hopefully sustainably. Below we describe the roles and functions that make up the Network:

### Coaches

As of 2016, the network supports more than 500 Conservation Coaches operating on five continents in 60 countries. The core focus of CCNet as an entity is to recruit, train, support, inspire and develop Coaches to help teams succeed in conservation projects. The Coaches use simple, powerful decision-making tools consistent with the Open Standards to develop focused and measurable action plans for specific sites and projects. There are different levels and areas of expertise within the Coaches' community. The Network is undertaking a more formal classification and certification of Coaches with input from the Franchise leaders and Coaches.

### Franchises

Franchises are groups of Coaches who share a geographic area and work together on a regular basis to assess needs, set priorities and support planning. The existence of a Franchise is contingent upon the

willingness of at least one person to be the Franchise Lead, often supported by co-leads and/or a core team. A Franchise Sponsor, sometimes but not always the employer of the Franchise Lead(s), is usually identified. A Franchise Agreement is usually executed so that respective roles and responsibilities are understood. The proposed Franchise is reviewed and approved by the Network Board. Active Franchises have decision-making rights at CCNet Board meetings. A set of CCNet Franchise Best Practices is found in Appendix C.

In January 2016 there are fourteen CCNet Franchises:

- Africa
- South Asia
- Australia
- Europe
- North America - Sierra Nevada and California
- North America - Rocky Mountains, Pacific Northwest, Canada
- North America - Central US
- North America - Eastern US
- Malaysia/Indonesia
- China
- Mongolia
- South America
- Mesoamerica
- Pacific Islands

### **Partner Organizations**

CCNet Partners provide active leadership and support to strengthen and expand the network. Together with the Franchise leaders, Partners will provide the governance and support structure to the Network. It is expected that CCNet will include many Coaches from organizations that may not choose to be active Partners.

CCNet was founded by four organizations, who are our current (as of December 2016) Partners:

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC);
- Greening Australia (GA);
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF);
- Foundations of Success (FoS).

CCNet Partners are organizations, agencies, and institutions that are committed to:

- Implementing the Open Standards within their organization;
- Contributing to the work of CCNet;
- Sponsoring (supporting, backstopping) one or more CCNet Franchise units;
- Working jointly with other Partners to implement and periodically update the CCNet strategy.

### **Network Coordination Team**

The Network Coordination Team (NCT) is composed of paid staff with significant programmatic responsibilities for Network activities. NCT members will most likely work for one or more of the Partner organizations.

### **Network Board**

The Network Board includes all Franchise leaders (or their designated representatives) and one representative of each Partner organization (each Partner representative will have a designated alternate). The CCNet Board chair works together with Board members to provide timely and efficient input and direction to the Network Coordination Team staff.

## **Network Functions**

Together, the Network NCT and Network Board need to actively fulfill at least nine essential functions:

1. New Franchise identification, recruitment and start-up
2. Coach identification and training
3. Coach placement and deployment
4. Technical support and innovation
5. Knowledge sharing
6. Marketing, communications, and advocacy
7. Funding and fundraising
8. Network governance and strategic planning
9. Monitoring and evaluation.

A list of the names, and roles of the Network Coordination Team and Board members can be found in Appendix D.

## Fundraising and Communications

Since the development of CCNet’s 2012 – 2016 Strategic Plan, two relevant activities have been undertaken by CCNet’s Board and Coordination Team that provide important input to the development of the fundraising component of this strategic plan:

- 2015 Independent Evaluation (see pages 5-6 above for background and additional highlights of this evaluation)

The evaluation noted that, “CCNet, as a young organization, remains in a fragile condition with respect to institutional sustainability.” The Evaluation continued, “CCNet has not had success in engaging its members’ organizations or other targeted groups to join by committing resources to support CCNet.” In addition, the evaluation also noted the lack of general knowledge of CCNet’s program, particularly among key audiences: “CCNet has not yet succeeded in developing a brand name that is well recognized across the global conservation community. Donors are vital to achieving the missions of both organizations yet there has been limited success in getting private foundations to be fully engaged in CMP and CCNet.”

However, the evaluators point out that within this context, there are several bright spots. “CCNet uniquely fills a niche of creating a globally distributed, cross-institutional networked community of practice through which to develop and share lessons learned from the practice of conservation to improve conservation outcomes. The sustainability of CCNet can be considered along four lines: policy support, adoption by targeted groups, institutional capacity and technical and economic factors”. They also point out that CCNet has policy support from small but enthusiastic group of NGOs and the field offices and country programs of its partners and the network has expanded greatly. They conclude by noting that “CCNet has explored a variety of opportunities for raising funding support from the organizations to which its members belong. These remain a primary challenge for CCNet.”

- 2016 Fundraising Working Group

Given the importance of this issue, a CCNet Fundraising Working Group (FRWG) was convened in February 2016. The purpose of the FRWG was to “develop the next generation fundraising strategy by July 2016 to deliver consistent, diverse and dependable funding for CCNet core operations.” The group reviewed a number of

background documents, including the “CCNet Funding Model” approved by the Board in 2013, the previous Strategic Plan objectives and actions for fundraising, communications and marketing and the 2015 independent evaluation mentioned above. They also

reviewed funding models of other networks to determine the pros and cons and applicability to CCNet and investigated the feasibility of a range of potential funding sources for supporting key Network functions as well as the possible marketing and communication strategies necessary to support and sustain fundraising. The recommendations provided by this FRWG for how we should proceed in the near term (FY 2016) and over the next three years have been incorporated into this strategic plan’s objectives.

**FRWG Members:** Brad Northrup, Board Chair CCNet; John Morrison, CCNet Coordination Team Lead; Angie Woo Sosdian TNC; Terri Schulz TNC; Hilary Toma TNC; Charlie Sheerin, WWF-US; Nick Salafsky, Foundations of Success; Lydia Gaskell, WWF-UK; Sheila O’Connor, WWF-International; Mark Anderson, National Association for Sustainable Agriculture (Australia), Felix Cybulla, Independent Consultant (Germany).

## 2017-2019 Strategy-Based Budget

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS	THREE YEAR TOTAL (US\$)		
<b>Objective 1. Recruit, Train and Support Coaches</b>			
Support existing Franchises.			\$ 34,900
Expand franchises to underserved regions.			\$ 5,400
Produce materials in multiple languages to support local training for new coaches.			\$ 10,800
Hold New Coach trainings at the request and discretion of Franchise leads, as needed.			\$ 120,500
Design and implement other coach training opportunities with Franchise leads and/or partners.			\$ 70,900
<b>TOTAL BY OBJECTIVE: \$ 1,364,500</b>	<b>IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS: \$ 1,122,000</b>	<b>CCNET CASH BUDGET:</b>	<b>\$ 242,500</b>
<b>Objective 2. Establish a Clear Pathway towards Professional Conservation Coaching</b>			
Establish an online self-assessment opportunity for coaches to assess their skills and experience.			\$ 2,400
Promote a clear and flexible pathway for Coach development.			\$ 5,400
Establish a 2 <sup>nd</sup> party Coach certification process.			\$ 24,900
<b>TOTAL BY OBJECTIVE: \$ 44,700</b>	<b>IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS: \$ 12,000</b>	<b>CCNET CASH BUDGET:</b>	<b>\$ 32,700</b>
<b>Objective 3. Promote Efficient Knowledge Sharing</b>			
Maintain and improve CCNet's website and share information in multiple languages.			\$ 19,400
Maintain the CCNet Listserve.			\$ 7,000
Produce 2 issues of CCNet News per year.			\$ 17,400
Hold Coach Rallies approximately every two years in different locations around the world.			\$ 161,700
Sponsor webinars through the Franchises.			\$ 1,500
Support ongoing work streams (between and connecting the Rallies)			\$ 0
Contribute to building a knowledge base, documented through Miradi Share, journal articles, etc..			\$ 0
Provide mentorship opportunities.			\$ 33,400
Work with partner organizations to leverage learning opportunities (e.g., TNC's CBD 2.0).			\$ 15,500
<b>TOTAL BY OBJECTIVE: \$ 796,400</b>	<b>IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS: \$ 540,500</b>	<b>CCNET CASH BUDGET:</b>	<b>\$ 255,900</b>
<b>Objective 4. Institutionalize and Strengthen the Network</b>			
Develop an updated Charter that provides for multiple levels of contribution and risk management.			\$ 1,600
Develop a coherent and inspiring strategic plan that can be implemented collectively.			\$ 66,700
Engage a broad partner base that supports the Network.			\$ 8,000
Engage a broad partner base that supports the Network.			\$ 89,000
Invest in two part-time hires to support fundraising and communication actions			
Conduct full cost accounting to reflect the significant volunteer time that sustains CCNet.			\$ 34,500
Position the role and brand of CCNet, so that it is widely known and respected.			\$ 10,800
Build and strengthen alliances with CMP and other relevant groups that leverage organizational assets, advance conservation practice and strengthen the use and evolution of the Open Standards.			\$ 10,400
<b>TOTAL BY OBJECTIVE: \$ 447,500</b>	<b>IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS: \$ 226,500</b>	<b>CCNET CASH BUDGET:</b>	<b>\$ 221,000</b>
<b>TOTAL CCNET CASH BUDGET</b>			<b>\$ 752,100</b>
<b>TOTAL IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS</b>			<b>\$ 1,978,009</b>
<b>CCNET GRAND TOTAL</b>			<b>\$ 2,721,109</b>

## Closing Thoughts

Through the great work of our partners, Franchise leaders and Coaches, we have created a sound platform upon which we can build. Since CCNet was chartered in 2009, the number of Coaches has more than doubled and the number of organizations and countries from which these Coaches come has more than tripled. The geographic coverage of Franchises is expanded, and the Franchises are growing in terms of their organization and ability to act independently.

This strategic plan provides a road map to move us forward and substantially strengthen the impact of our work. Two key themes in this plan will influence our success in the coming years. First, we are reaffirming the ambitious goals and objectives set in our last strategic plan: training and support of Coaches, harnessing the Network for continuous improvement and enhancing knowledge sharing. We will recommit ourselves to these goals and explicitly address current challenges, including connecting and improving the skills of our expanding Network and harvesting and sharing innovative techniques, tools and methods to meet the demands of large-scale, people-focused conservation. Second, we are deepening our commitment to the Network's institutional strength. We have ambitious goals for building a more sustainable funding strategy, strengthening and diversifying our Partnerships and Franchises, and expanding outreach and communication to build support.

Ultimately, the value of the work of the Conservation Coaches Network can best be understood in the words of Naomi Hobson as she describes working with CCNet Coaches on her indigenous people's lands in northern Australia:

“...we were stuck on how to think through a way forward. We had many passionate people who all want to see things happen but without a way to think clearer, capture all the ideas and work through a logical framework to understand what we should do, why and when. With the support of coaches, we were able to proceed with complete confidence in a thorough planning process that engaged all of our clan members; our cultural elders, our hunters, and even our young teenage boys and girls. We are now filled with confidence that our objectives and strategies will deliver the healthy cultural and biodiversity outcomes we desire. And that we will be working on our country looking after all the things that are important to us and managing cultural and environmental threats that we now have and those to come.”

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