



**Conservation  
Coaches Network**  
Strengthening conservation strategies and practice through coaching

## Welcome to CCNet Stories February 2024!

The stories in this newsletter show how CCNet coaches and the Conservation Standards are supporting conservation efforts across the globe. Enjoy!

## Coaches Around the World



Photo (above): Under the shade of trees, groups of women participate in the Social Impact Assessment workshops in Burkina Faso. Photo by Oscar Maldonado.

### Assessing the Potential Risks and Side Effects of a Carbon Project in Burkina Faso

Story from [Oscar Maldonado](#) (independent consultant)

I was recently asked by [Earthshot Labs](#) to conduct a Social Impact Assessment for the [Tond Tenga Carbon Project](#) in Burkina Faso. Led by Earthshot's partner [Tree Aid](#), a United Kingdom-based organization working in the Burkina Faso drylands as well as in other Sahel countries, Tond Tenga aims to reforest, restore, and protect degraded lands while tackling poverty and the effects of the climate change.

Since my first application of the Conservation Standards, back in 1999, I have been very sensitive in understanding the potential risks and negative side effects of the conservation projects. My original approach to assess risks and unintended negative side effects was first systematized in the Social and Biodiversity Impact Assessment methodology for [REDD+ projects](#). It has evolved since then and has proven useful for other conservation initiatives as well, in particular for those with a strong social component, involving local communities, or where positive or negative impacts can be expected, especially for the most vulnerable groups. One of the benefits of this approach is that it can be applied in a participatory manner with minimal effort at the time of project planning. Because of its practicality, part of this approach was added as a

supporting tool in the practice of the Conservation Standards.

In Burkina Faso, Tree Aid's local field staff learned how to apply this methodology so they could assess the carbon project's risks and negative side effects in the community of Tewaka, in the municipality of Noberé. The workshop was attended by about 40 people from the community and included different social sectors involved with the initiative and its future benefits. The participation of women was outstanding (more than 50% of the group!), which allowed them to unreservedly discuss their concerns regarding the project. Since then, local Tree Aid teams have facilitated two more workshops in the municipalities of Guiba and Gomponsom, the results of which will be aggregated with those of Tewaka. These outcomes will be a fundamental piece to formulate the Project Description Document for this carbon project.

To learn more, contact [Oscar Maldonado](#).



Photo (above): The SILC Project was presented at the International Congress for Conservation Biology in Rwanda. Photo by Frank Weisenberger.

### **Scaling Indigenous-led Conservation Using the Conservation Standards**

**Story from [Frank Weisenberger](#) and [Marina Best](#) (CCNet CoP Indigenous CS Projects)**

International goals like the 30x30 target of the [Global Biodiversity Framework](#), which seeks to effectively conserve at least 30% of the world's lands and seas by 2030, uphold the crucial role Indigenous Peoples and local communities play by respecting Indigenous Peoples and local communities, recognising their territories, and acknowledging the need to equitably govern the conservation estate.

The ever-growing contribution of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to global conservation efforts is reflected in CCNet through the establishment of a Community of Practice Conservation Standards Projects on Indigenous Lands and Waters ([CoP Indigenous CS Projects](#)). Momentum for this CoP grew through the widespread use of adaptations like Healthy Country Planning by Indigenous People and communities in Australia.

In 2022, the CoP was invited to participate in the ["Taking Conservation to Scale" learning network](#) (facilitated by Foundations of Success) as one of six partner programs to investigate the mechanisms behind scaling conservation. The project "Scaling Indigenous-led Conservation using the CS (SILC)" was established to investigate how Healthy Country Planning blossomed in Australia as a successful planning and engagement tool with Indigenous Peoples and local communities—and how lessons learned can be applied internationally to achieve global conservation goals.

Since the first Healthy Country Plan by Wunambal Gaambera Traditional Owners in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, there are now more than 60 plans over an area of more than 1.4 million hectares of their traditional territories, contributing to 23% of Australia's National Reserve System.

Over two years, the SILC project explored how different scaling models contributed to the success of Healthy Country Planning and how the circumstances under which the framework spread in Australia compared to other regions. Describing the tilt of a system helped determine enabling conditions for scaling and how those conditions inform the use of different scaling models.

The CoP will use findings and recommendations from the SILC project to achieve its goal of supporting conservation led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities by increasing access to relevant adaptations of the Conservation Standards. Findings are captured in a number of [regional reports](#) for Australia, North America, and Latin America and a series of [case studies](#) from five countries that portray how Indigenous Peoples and local communities use adaptations of the Conservation Standards.

Outcomes of the overall learning network are captured in the Foundations of Success publication ["Achieving Impact at Scale."](#) To guide projects through the process of roadtesting a scaling idea, Foundations of Success developed the [Scaling Challenge](#), a tool that guides teams through a six-step process to sketch out a scaling strategy, define the change you want to see and to clarify the pathway to get there and its feasibility.

The CoP Indigenous CS Projects would like to thank Foundations of Success, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the Walton Family Trust and Conservation Management for the opportunity to participate with the SILC project in this learning network.

For more information, please contact the [CoP Indigenous CS Projects](#).

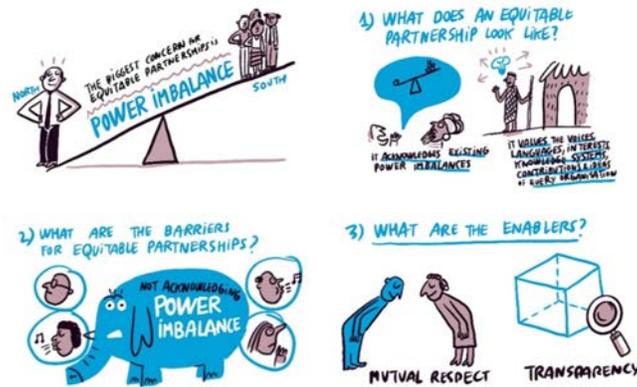


Photo (above): Cartoons capturing the dialogues about equitable partnerships. Illustrations by Jorge Martin.

### **Identifying the Dimensions of Equitable Partnerships**

Story from [Karen Wong Pérez \(IIED\)](#)

Envisioning together the meaning of and pathways to effective and just conservation demands coordinated efforts involving multiple actors to plan, implement, analyze, adapt, and share conservation initiatives. However, imbalances in resources and power among partnering organizations often hinder processes and outcomes, perpetuating historical inequalities. So, how do we achieve equity in partnerships between organisations that are so unequal in power and resources?

In 2023, several organisations, including grassroots organisations, civil society organisations, research organisations and philanthropies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, as well as several conservation coaches and colleagues from organisations within the Conservation Measures Partnership, explored this question during a series of four online dialogues organised by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

Participants concurred that an equitable partnership is one that:

- Acknowledges power imbalances; actively addresses them
- Values the voices, languages, interests and knowledge systems of all involved actors; ensures equitable compensation for partners' contributions
- Is based on transparency, reciprocity, trust, solidarity, respect, and shared visions of purpose
- Follows fair decision-making processes
- Understands and adapts to the local context
- Promotes mutual learning
- Shares risks fairly
- Brings about mutual accountability and complementarity

Participants also highlighted barriers such as:

- Limited awareness of power imbalances
- Cultural bias
- Unequal resource distribution
- Insufficient transparency and mutual accountability
- Top-down decision-making processes
- Colonial legacies
- Onerous donor requirements
- Terminology and language perpetuating power dynamics

Some enablers included:

- Addressing power imbalances explicitly
- Shifting mindsets
- Allocating resources to smaller/local organizations
- Enhancing transparency

Drawing on personal and institutional experiences, participants shared valuable lessons, including the importance of standing in solidarity during challenges, considering partnership life cycles, and allowing time for organic growth.

Insights from the dialogues were compiled into an [online report](#). Currently, the International Institute for Environment and Development is incorporating these insights in a draft framework that can be used by organisations to plan, monitor, and evaluate equity in partnerships. This draft framework will be presented to interested organizations during a workshop in March 2024.

We thank all CCNet and CMP members who participated in the dialogues and extend a kind invitation to participate in the workshop for the co-production of the framework for equitable partnerships.

For more information, contact [Karen Wong Pérez](#).



Image (above): The cover of the English version of the USAID's Pause & Reflect Toolkit.

#### **Navigating Step 4: The Pause & Reflect Toolkit for Adaptive Management**

**Story from [Megan Hill](#) (USAID)**

The [Pause & Reflect Toolkit](#), available in [Spanish](#) and [English](#), draws on lessons learned from the past 10 years of [USAID](#) (the United States Agency for International Development) adaptive management experiences. The toolkit serves as a guide for Step 4 of the Conservation Standards, where teams pause, reflect, and strategize how to adapt.

"Pause and reflect," as defined by USAID, is a critical component of learning and adaptive management that involves thinking critically about ongoing activities to inform future plans. The toolkit provides resources to facilitate this process.

Ready to dive in? Test out the toolkit and share your thoughts with us!

Not sure where to start? Here are some suggestions:

<b><i>If you're thinking...</i></b>	<b><i>Check out the...</i></b>
I'd like to learn how others facilitate pause and reflect processes – or – I've never participated in or facilitated a pause and reflect process!	<b>Good Practices Guide</b> to learn about key pause and reflect concepts – then you can adapt the process to meet your needs.
I'm not sure which questions I need to ask to scope a Step 4 or pause and reflect process.	<b>Design Worksheet</b> to decide which pause and reflect process is best for your context.
My team wants an easy place to track progress periodically – or – we have a hard time remembering why we made decisions.	<b>Adaptive Management Workbook</b> as a starting point for collecting and representing data, and tracking decisions.
My organization's leadership or donors are asking for justification for major changes we've made during our pause and reflect process.	<b>Example Workshop Reports</b> for inspiration, and the <b>Adaptive Management Workbook</b> to help you keep track of justification.
My team isn't always on the same page with roles and responsibilities.	<b>Team Charter</b> to set expectations and clarify who is doing what across teams and participants in the pause and reflect process.

For more information, contact [Megan Hill](#), USAID.



Photo (above): Conservation Coaches Anita Diederichsen, Gustavo Gatti, Frank Weisenberger, and Emily Gonzales with Jim Hallett (coordinating author of the Standards of Practice to Guide Ecosystem Restoration), at

## **Ecosystem Restoration and Conservation, Speaking the Same Language**

Story from [Emily Gonzales](#) (Parks Canada)

THIS IS OUR MOMENT. These are the opening words on the [United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration website](#). They are an urgent call to action to prevent, halt, and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. And we will only succeed if everyone plays a part. To guide this burgeoning global community of restoration practitioners, a UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration task force developed the [Standards of Practice to Guide Ecosystem Restoration](#) (SOP).

To develop the SOP, the writing team combed through dozens of documents to pull out the common threads that they could weave into comprehensive guidance. The SOP were released in September 2023, during the Society for Ecological Restoration's world conference in Darwin, Australia.

The SOP has a five-step cycle (see the graphic below): assessment, planning and design, implementation, ongoing management, and monitoring and evaluation. Broad engagement, information sharing, and adaptive management are crosscutting components.



Look familiar? It is not a coincidence! We want to make sure that standards from conservation and restoration speak to each other. For the past five years, Anita Diederichsen and Emily Gonzales have been introducing the Society of Ecological Restoration to the Conservation Standards. During the Society's world conference in 2023, Marina Best, Frank Weisenberger, and Gustavo Gatti were excellent ambassadors for our conservation community, and the plenary session featured Healthy Country Planning, a Conservation Standards adaptation.

This is our moment! The Conservation Standards framework is showing up in new disciplines. But there have been growing pains. Some elements of the Conservation Standards have been more difficult to interpret and integrate with other disciplines. As conservation and restoration move forward together, we will be reaching out to the CCNet community for your expertise and wisdom.

Read the full [Standards of Practice to Guide Ecosystem Restoration](#) or read a [summary report](#).

For more information, contact [Emily Gonzales](#), Parks Canada.



Photo (above): The Nature Returns project team. Photo from Nature Returns.

## **Nature Returns: Bringing together innovative businesses and effective management of Protected Areas**

Story from [Luis Costa](#) (Nature Returns), [Marko Pecarevic](#) (freelance consultant), and [Stefan Ferger](#) (EuroNatur)

The efficient management of protected areas is a complex process and difficult challenge that includes scientific and technical background, good management planning, financial resources, and acceptance by local communities and users. Very often, protected area managers lack human resources, struggle to find funding for their management, and feel distant from the local communities in terms of support and governance.

Nature Returns is a legacy project from the [MAVA Foundation](#) that aims to turn over these problems by identifying and assessing the main pressures in a site using the Conservation Standards and finding innovative businesses that can help reduce or eliminate these pressures.

Creating businesses that contribute to managing protected areas through the involvement of local stakeholders and entrepreneurs brings potential benefits: site managers save resources; entrepreneurs get a source of income; and local communities get environmentally friendly jobs and income which support their own livelihood.

This approach is being tested in five sites: Lonjsko Polje (Croatia), Pico Island (Azores, Portugal), Principe (Sao Tome and Principe), Shar Mountain (North Macedonia) and Ulcinj Salina (Montenegro). So far, Nature Returns, EuroNatur, Connectology, and the management authorities of the five protected areas listed have worked together to identify the criteria and prerequisites of suitable sites for this approach and developed a generic theory of change framework to apply to every site. The generic theory of change describes the process and is associated with learning questions and indicators that will allow a five-year adaptive management process to test and validate this novel concept.

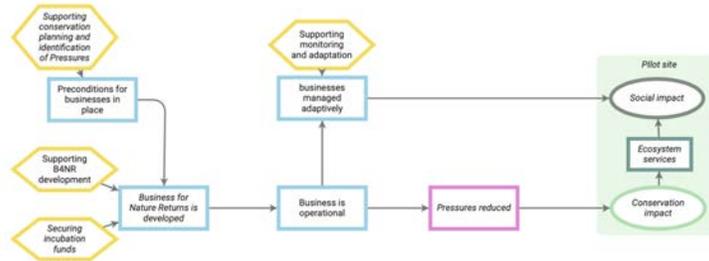


Image (above): The Nature Returns project's theory of change. Image from Nature Returns.

We are now starting the management planning process and calling for business ideas in each site, together with local entrepreneurs that can use our incubation fund to kick off their businesses.

We understand that harnessing business for protected area management cannot be the only solution for site conservation, but we are eager to learn to what extent it can become part of a more efficient management of protected areas. The project will monitor and evaluate its effectiveness and publish the findings as an open-source toolkit for the conservation community. We look forward to more sites joining and having more examples of involving businesses that benefit conservation goals in protected areas.

For more information, contact [Luis Costa](#), Nature Returns.



Photo (above): Exchange participants visit the "Bosque de las Nuwas" medicinal plant cooperative. Photo by Ximena Gómez-Lavi, Environmental Incentives.

### **Insights from USAID's Peer Learning Exchange in Peru**

#### **Story from [Megan Hill](#) (USAID)**

Peer collaboration plays a vital role in implementing and scaling conservation enterprises effectively. To foster knowledge sharing around conservation enterprise approaches, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) [Conservation Enterprises Learning Group](#) recently hosted a peer learning exchange in Moyobamba, Peru. The exchange convened a diverse group of USAID staff and implementing partners from Madagascar, Uganda, Vietnam, Colombia, and Peru. CCNet coaches Megan Hill (USAID) and Judy Boshoven (Foundations of Success) were also involved. Through vibrant discussions and firsthand experiences, participants were able to compare and draw connections across conservation enterprises, identifying meaningful adaptive management actions to apply in their own contexts.

Aligning with key outcomes in the generalized Conservation Enterprises Theory of Change, topics included business planning in a market system, strategies for threat reduction and conservation at scale, and understanding stakeholder benefits, attitudes, and behaviors. Spotlight sessions featured two successful initiatives in Peru, Alianza Forestal (AIDER) and the Amazon Business Alliance (Conservation International), providing valuable insights into community engagement and sustainable business practices.

A highlight of the exchange was the immersive field visit to local enterprises, which offered firsthand insights into their impact on both communities and ecosystems. Participants explored

diverse ventures, like the Bosque de las Nuwas Medicinal Plant Cooperative, which empowers indigenous women through medicinal plant cultivation. Participants also visited shade coffee and cacao agroforestry demonstration plots and a native fish aquaculture producer.

Throughout the exchange, participants had opportunities to apply newfound knowledge and insights to their respective conservation enterprises. As the week concluded, project teams reviewed these ideas and created commitment posters outlining actions they pledged to undertake upon returning home.

For more information, contact [Megan Hill](#), USAID.

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### **New Endowment Honors Brad Northrup**

#### ***Story from Margo Rybeck (TNC) and [Cristina Lasch](#) (TNC and CCNet Global)***

To honor Brad Northrup, our dear colleague and former CCNet Board Chair who passed away in 2022, The Nature Conservancy has established an endowment to support the future and growth of the Conservation Coaches Network.

Before his eight years as CCNet Board Chair, Brad was one of the first champions of The Nature Conservancy's Efrogmson Coaches Network and was instrumental in guiding its evolution into CCNet. Brad has always recognized the importance of the network's mission and the invaluable contributions of its people. He cared deeply about ensuring CCNet's continued success. Through this endowment, we commemorate Brad's enduring legacy while supporting CCNet coaches and their vital work with conservation teams around the world. This support will help CCNet continue to shine brightly as it shapes a more just and harmonious existence for all of us on this planet.



Known for his kindness, virtue, and joyful sense of humor, Brad was energetic and ambitious in work that spanned many cultures and geographies. From confronting conservation challenges, to leading thoughtful strategy, to fundraising, to mentoring and recruiting staff, Brad's endeavors fostered many conservation victories. This endowment is a reflection and continuation of his profound contributions to the global conservation community and his enduring legacy.

If you are interested in learning more about the endowment, please contact [Olivia Millard](#) or [Cristina Lasch](#). We extend our deep gratitude to those of you who have already contributed to this effort.

Photo (above): Brad Northrup, our dear TNC and CCNet colleague, who contributed to many conservation victories and whose legacy we honor with an endowment fund. Photo courtesy of Brad Northrup.



### **Announcing the 2025 CCNet and CMP Global Rally in Chile!**

Dear members and friends of the Conservation Coaches Network and the Conservation Measures Partnership--

Approximately every two years we come together to connect, share innovations, sharpen our skills, and uplift our spirits to support better, smarter conservation all around the world. In response to community requests to foster international participation and the generous offer of support from CCNet Latin America, we will be holding our joint CCNet and CMP global Rally in Chile, South America, in March of 2025!

We are finalizing details about the venue, dates, and specific costs, but wanted to share this announcement so you can include the Rally in your budget. For now we suggest that you set aside a total of US\$1500 to US\$3000 (depending where you are located).

- US\$1000 should cover three nights of lodging, your registration fee, and local transportation costs (not including your travel to/from Chile).
- Depending on where you are located, flights typically range from US\$500 – US\$2500.

The Rally planning team will start preparations soon, and we will work hard to be able to offer travel assistance to colleagues who need support.

Stay tuned for updates through our global CCNet listserv, our website, and CMP communications. Please look out for our upcoming survey to identify session interests.

For more information, CCNet colleagues can contact [Cristina Lasch](#). CMP colleagues can contact [Claire Relton](#) and [Jaclyn Lucas](#).

**We are looking forward to seeing you in Chile in March of 2025!**

## Share Your Stories

*CCNet Stories* comes out approximately once per quarter. You can submit stories for upcoming newsletters at any time and we'll feature them in the next issue.

To share job openings, upcoming trainings, and other announcements, please use the CCNet [listserv](#).

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Contact CCNet Global:

[John Morrison](#) (CCNet Global Coordinator)

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