



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

Welcome to *CCNet Stories* November 2023!

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): Community of Iténez participating in conservation planning workshops. Photo by WWF Bolivia.

WWF Uses a Conservation Standards Adaptation in the Co-Creation Process with Local Communities

Story from [Alfonso Llobet](#) (WWF Bolivia and CCNet coach, Latin America)

Since 2012, WWF Bolivia has supported the management of natural resources with local communities in the Iténez Departmental Park and Integrated Management Natural Area. In 2023, a new project was initiated in the area with the support of WWF Switzerland. The project has a vital component of natural resource management and livelihood improvement, but also focuses on the principles of inclusive conservation and co-creation of the project with the communities involved. We conducted a technical exercise to establish the project planning framework, develop a situational analysis, and draft results chains using the Program and Project Management Standards (the WWF adaptation of the Conservation Standards). Then, through a participatory process, the local communities deconstructed these drafts. They provided more inputs to generate a richer context analysis, stakeholder analysis, and problem identification based on their interpretation of the local reality, and solutions that responded to local interests and expectations. Even though this approach requires a considerable investment of time and effort, the process and results can have a much higher level of legitimacy. Local stakeholders' ownership of the project is also greater, ensuring a better level of sustainability in implementing the proposed activities. Another important aspect of this process was the peer review of the results, where other coaches from the region had the opportunity to point out aspects of the theory of change that needed clarification so that the project teams could make adjustments in the final version.

For more information, contact [Alfonso Llobet](#).



Photo (above): Jenny and Xavi meeting with coaches in Madagascar. Photo by Jenny Hertzman, SwAM.

Conservation Coaching Capacity on the Rise in Madagascar

Madagascar is an exceptional country. It is home to unique landscapes, biodiversity, and natural resources as well as diverse people and cultures. The conservation challenges it faces are also unique. Madagascar has received a great amount of attention from the conservation community and donors, and now, a powerful group of conservation coaches is emerging in Madagascar, raising the capacity of site managers, and tending to the specific needs of this great island.

Over the years, many large organizations have invested in projects in Madagascar. Some have played an important role in supporting local initiatives, evolving into Malagasy NGOs or big players in the field. Many of these projects have included components related to the Conservation Standards. One of these initiatives is an ocean protection project which is being implemented in partnership with Foundations of Success Europe (the project is led by SwAM, the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, and financed by Sida, the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency). As part of the SwAM Ocean project, coaches Jenny Hertzman (SwAM) and Xavi Escuté (FOS Europe) provided coaching and online training for Marine Protected Area managers in Madagascar in 2021 and 2022. This training built on capacities developed in previous projects, such as the HayTao and Mikajy projects sponsored by USAID, during which other practitioners got support for their conservation coaching skills. After talking with a few of these previously trained coaches, Jenny and Xavi organized an informal group of around 25 Malagasy conservation coaches from different organizations. Over the last few months, this group has been very busy, working together to raise the capacity of protected area managers to use the Conservation Standards. The team is training practitioners in French and Malagasy, adapting materials from SwAM Ocean and other projects, and developing new tools adapted to the local needs. The team is led by coaches Tina Rahagalala, Clarence Rrazakamihaja, Ny Aina Andrianarivelo, and Henintsoa Rakotoarisaona. Please join us in welcoming this team into our global conservation coaches community and wishing them lots of success for the decades to come!

To learn more, visit the [SwAM Ocean website](#) or contact [Jenny Hertzman](#) (SwAM) and [Xavier Escuté](#) (FOS Europe).



Photo (above): Illegal trapping of common quail in Egypt. Photo by Watter AlBahry.

Applying "The Scaling Challenge" to the Illegal Killing of Birds in the Mediterranean

Taking conservation to scale is an initiative funded by the Moore Foundation and Walton Family Foundation and facilitated by Foundations of Success. The initiative is developing approaches and guidance to support teams – including those implementing the Conservation Standards – to design, manage, and deliver impact at scale.

As a partner in the learning network initiative, we focused on the work being done in four countries (Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, and Montenegro) that are part of the wider partnership tackling illegal killing of birds in the Mediterranean. Illegal killing of birds is often concentrated in specific “hotspots,” but can also be diffuse. The total number of hotspots is quite large (over 70 in Croatia alone). Different actors illegally kill birds for many different reasons. To address the issue nationally and locally, organisations are working together in a partnership-based approach with support from international partners on policy, fundraising, training, and other key issues. A major challenge of the work is developing locally appropriate solutions, while also achieving regional scale oversight, coordination, and impact.

Testing the exercises and methods developed by the learning network has helped us in many ways:

- It delivered a clearer theory of change, which has provided a stronger basis for scaling approaches to stop the illegal killing of birds, understanding the linkages between the different areas of work within the partnership, and adapting our approach for different local and national contexts (while still retaining the overall picture).
- Identifying specific scaling approaches and “doing the math” to assess the feasibility of our chosen approaches has helped us identify societal thresholds that are impactful and achievable.
- The process also helped us define, test, and apply a stronger framework for working in partnership (with significant relevance for other initiatives).

We also learned lessons that can support teams applying the Conservation Standards more generally:

- When developing a strategy/theory of change, be as specific as you can about both the actors (people) involved and the changes in behaviour that you are trying to bring about. For example, hunters, farmers, and trappers stop illegally killing birds; enforcement agencies and judiciary detect, prosecute, and convict cases of illegal killing of birds.
- Consider the wider system you are working in, such as the relationships between work at site and wider national/regional levels. For example, rather than trying to scale up a partner’s work to cover all sites where illegal killing of birds is an issue (which is unfeasible in many cases), we placed more emphasis on how to use site-level efforts to achieve wider national/regional systemic change through monitoring, legitimacy, demonstration of impact, and so on.
- Assessing how easy/difficult it will be to change a given behaviour (or how “tilted” the system is against you) and listing associated barriers and opportunities provides a powerful foundation for planning, monitoring, etc. For example, working directly with hunters to change deeply entrenched cultural norms is often very challenging, so we put more focus on working with enforcement agencies to achieve behaviour change through more effective deterrents.

We hope that the scaling framework and the related tools and approaches we helped develop (such as the Scaling Challenge, a step-by-step method to help map out how to take your idea to scale) will provide a straightforward and intuitive means for thinking about scaling. We strongly encourage others to explore the outputs of the *Taking Conservation to Scale* learning network and to try them out with their own projects and initiatives.

To learn more, explore the materials on fosonline.org/scaling or contact [Iain Dickson](#).

The following CCNet Europe coaches worked together on this challenge: Iain Dickson (Birdlife International), Mate Zec (formerly BIOM, now TNC Europe), Zeljka Rajkovic (formerly BIOM, now independent), Annette Olsson, Xavier Escute and Ilke Tilders (all FOS Europe) Birdlife International, Association BIOM; EuroNartur, the Vulture Conservation Foundation, the Hellenic Ornithological Society, BirdLife Cyprus, and the Center for the Study and Protection of Birds of Montenegro.

The work was funded by Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Walton Family Foundation, and Foundations of Success.



Photo (above): Participants at the coach training in Malaysia in October. Photo by WWF Malaysia.

Coach Training Builds Capacity for Adaptive Management in Southeast Asia

Story from [Lavernita Bingku](#) (WWF Malaysia)

During the first week of October twenty one conservation practitioners from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand completed five days of rigorous training in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The training was sponsored jointly by WWF Malaysia and CCNet Southeast Asia and was conducted by John Morrison (WWF/CCNet) and Hui Shim Tan (WWF) as the main trainers, supported by Zurinah Yaakop, Poh Leem Choo and Lavernita Bingku, all representatives from WWF and CCNet Southeast Asia.

The fundamental objective of the training was to launch new conservation coaches who are responsible for facilitating and supporting conservation teams in the practice of an adaptive management framework designed to develop effective conservation strategies and measures and who will commit to sharing their experiences and knowledge across a larger community of conservation practitioners.

Throughout the workshop participants also:

- Received in-depth orientation on the fundamentals of supporting and coaching the practice of the Open Standards for Practice of Conservation
- Shared and received insights, tips and an overview of the support available for acilitating and organizing both individual team and multi-team workshops.
- Reviewed CCNet (including partner) support and training materials (e.g. PowerPoint presentations; guidelines for sponsors, coordinators, facilitators; "tools"; website, etc.)
- Practiced coaching and facilitating some of the newer elements available to support the Conservation Standards approach
- Met practitioners and coaches from other parts of CCNet and shared experiences of what has worked and what hasn't worked in different types of processes.
- Identified areas of the practice for which new coaches would like additional support and training, so CCNet can foster continued professional development.

The commitment of these newly minted conservation coaches is inspiring and we look forward to seeing the positive impact they will have on conservation efforts in Southeast Asia within and beyond the various offices and organizations they represent.



Photo (above): Participants at the coach training in Mongolia in November. Photo by Uuganbayar Munkhbat, WWF Mongolia.

Coach Training Builds Capacity for Conservation Planning in Mongolia

Story from [Narangerel Naranpurev](#)

In November 2023, a coach training was held at Gorkhi Terej National Park, Mongolia, for 29 participants from many different fields, such as specialists from protected areas and provincial environmental departments, experts, university teachers, staff from local and international conservation NGOs, and representatives of government agencies. This coach training was led by John Morrison (WWF), Robert Sutter (Enduring Conservation Outcomes, LLC), Uyanga Ariya (TNC), Narangerel Naranpurev (TNC), and Javzansuren Norvanchig (WWF). Narangerel and Javzansuren became coaches recently, and this training was a great opportunity for these new coaches to demonstrate that learning by doing creates real knowledge.

Training exercises used real examples from four places, including Toson Khulstai, Bayantsagaan Steppe, Ulz River, and Sutai Mountain Nature Reserves in Mongolia, and allowed some significant innovative ideas and results to be put into practice. The participants concluded that the entire training was provocative, well-organized, and valuable. After the training, many participants expressed that they are going to use the Conservation Standards in their fields. Quite a few participants had already been using the Conservation Standards in their work, but without having any formal training. This training gave them more awareness of common mistakes, key points for conservation coaching, and things to consider in the future to help teams advance their conservation efforts.

We highlight some participant's reflections below:

- *Bilguun Batkhuyag, Conservation Biologist at the Zoological Society of London:* "The CCNet Mongolia team announced a scholarship opportunity for young conservationists to participate in coach training a month ago. Happily, I was selected, and expenses were fully covered by the Dryland project (funded by GEF, co-implemented by UN-FAO and WWF). I have been working for several years in the conservation sector. I found the coach training to be incredibly insightful and engaging. The program provided valuable knowledge of conservation planning, the super detailed process, and coaching and facilitating skills that I believe will make a positive impact in my future professional career. Furthermore, coach training was instrumental in refining my project planning skills using the Conservation Standards. It provided a clear roadmap, allowing me to navigate the intricacies of conservation projects with precision and ensured that I approach each step in the right way for optimal results."
- *Oyunchimeg Namsrai, Lecturer at the National University of Mongolia:* "The training I participated in exceeded my expectations. The comprehensive content, engaging sessions, and knowledgeable instructors made it a significant learning experience. I realized that I need more practice using the Conservation Standards even though I have been using it for several years. Besides, I learned how to consider ecosystem services and human well-being targets in the process of planning. I've come to understand that a coach's primary attribute is the ability to listen attentively without causing any discomfort for those expressing themselves. I hope to use the knowledge gained from the training in my own research to improve the quality of consulting services and to teach others what I have learned. I feel well-equipped and confident to apply what I've learned in my professional endeavors."
- *Munguntsetseg Dorjpalam, Natural Resource Management Officer at Onon Balj National Park of Mongolia:* "The coach training proved transformative, enriching my understanding with invaluable insights like situation analysis improvement, defining key ecological attributes, and effective facilitation strategies. Moreover, the training not only enhanced my understanding of conservation planning, but also equipped me with practical tools such as Miradi share and climate change analysis and guidance to effectively use them for my future projects. The interactive exercises, break-out sessions, and real case scenarios made the learning experience exceptionally important. Additionally, sharing my Miradi experience with fellow participants was an honor. I am so grateful to the people who provided me the opportunity to participate this training. Thank you!"



Photo (above): Aerial image of the Pantanal region in South America. Photo by Andres Unterlasdtaetter, WWF-Bolivia.

Strengthening the Pantanal Ecoregional Action Plan with the Conservation Standards

Story from [Irina Montenegro](#) (WWF US) and [Alfonso Lobet](#) (WWF Bolivia)

Located in the heart of South America, the Pantanal is recognized as the largest tropical wetland on the planet. Occupying an area of approximately 170,000 square kilometers across Bolivia, Brazil, and Paraguay, the Pantanal provides habitats for more than 4,700 species of plants and animals, including jaguars, anteaters, tapirs, and other big mammals. At least 1.5 million people depend on the region for their water, food, and livelihoods, while millions downstream also benefit from its water supplies and flood control. Conversely, the Pantanal is affected by increasing hydropower dams and navigation projects, agriculture expansion, and fires, which contribute to deforestation and degradation of freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems.

WWF has been working in the Pantanal since 1998, and over these 25 years, its approach has adapted to changing circumstances, gradually evolving into a more impactful landscape approach. In 2021, we started a process to update the ecoregional action plan by using the Program and Project Management Standards (the WWF adaptation of the Conservation Standards) and considering the results of a midterm evaluation report. The process was highly participatory and incorporated the Conservation Standards climate-smart and Human well-being target approaches. As a result, the new ecoregional plan defines four conservation strategies that seek the recovery and maintenance of the Pantanal's connectivity, the protection and conservation of areas under a climate resilience approach, the promotion of measures to reduce deforestation, and the strengthening of advocacy and communication actions for the conservation of the Pantanal. This plan is currently the basis for national and regional funding proposals and has become a strategic roadmap to guide the work of WWF and its partners in the coming years.

For more information, contact [Irina Montenegro](#) and/or [Alfonso Llobet](#).

The following coaches were involved in this work: Irina Montenegro (WWF US and CCNet coach, Latin America) and Alfonso Llobet (WWF Bolivia and CCNet coach, Latin America).



Photo (above): Participants work during the WWF Program and Project Management Standards training. Photo by Irina Montenegro, WWF.

Program and Project Management Standards Training for WWF Operations Staff

Story from [Irina Montenegro](#) and [Alfonso Llobet](#)

In early October, participants from 16 country offices of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Network met at the WWF US headquarters in Washington, D.C., to attend the Country Office Unit Operations workshop. Country office staff from Operations, Planning and Monitoring, Human Resources, Communications, and Fundraising exchanged tools, processes, experiences, and lessons learned to support more integrated and effective work that delivers higher conservation impacts.

During the second day, we prepared a side session to provide fast training on the WWF Program and Project Management Standards, the WWF adaptation of the Conservation Standards, to promote shared understanding of the standards and more active participation from country office staff on different steps of the project management cycle. Country office staff need to become more familiar with tools and methodological approaches for designing, managing, and reporting conservation projects because they are usually involved in specific moments, but not the whole project management cycle. Around 30 people from offices in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the USA actively participated and became more familiar with the purpose, scope, and principles of the standards as well as their main steps. For example, groups practiced how to interpret a situational analysis and how to structure a theory of change.

At the beginning of the training, we asked participants to write on a paper what came to their minds when they heard about the Program and Project Management Standards, and we repeated the same exercise at the end of the session. We moved from a negative perception of the standards or no perception to a motivated, curious, and aware group that understands the importance of playing a more active role during any project management process.

The following coaches were involved in this effort: Irina Montenegro (WWF US and CCNet

coach, Latin America) and Alfonso Llobet (WWF and CCNet coach, Latin America).

This training was supported by the WWF US Country Office Unit.



Photo (above): Participants practice peer review for more robust strategies, using an adaptation of Edward de Bono's Six Thinking hats technique at the CbD training in Merida, Mexico, October 2023. Photo: Cristina Lasch, TNC/CCNet.

Conservation by Design Training for TNC Staff in Latin America

The Nature Conservancy is working on accessible ways to equip teams with the knowledge and skills needed to apply the Conservation by Design (CbD) in a consistent manner across all programs and geographies. To contribute to broader access across the organization, the CbD team is developing trainings and a suite of agile modules (in Spanish and English) and other tools. For some time, several The Nature Conservancy staff in Latin America had expressed the need for a CbD training in Spanish, and in the spirit of "One Conservancy," several CCNet coaches collaborated with the CbD team and regional Latin American and Mesoamerican staff to deliver a training in Merida, Mexico, in October. We were fortunate to be able to tap into existing materials from previous similar trainings. During three intense days, 40 conservation practitioners and support staff from Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and the USA learned about key concepts, tools, and facilitation techniques and then put them into practice using real case studies that represented different scales and topics. The aim was to give participants the basic confidence to guide and support teams through the CbD framework with a focus on systemic change, considering the context and available resources, and understanding how to adapt the use and facilitation of CbD while keeping things practical.

Training evaluations were very positive. All participants made a commitment to share their experiences and knowledge with others to strengthen our organization through the rollout of CbD and support our conservation efforts in Latin America.

This training was sponsored by The Nature Conservancy's Latin America Region with support from the CbD team and CCNet.

The trainers and facilitators were Daniela Lizano (CCNet coach, Latin America), Fernando Secaira (CCNet coach, Mexico), Marisol Mata (CbD global), Cristina Lasch (CCNet global).

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