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WWF Standards of Conservation Project and Programme Management

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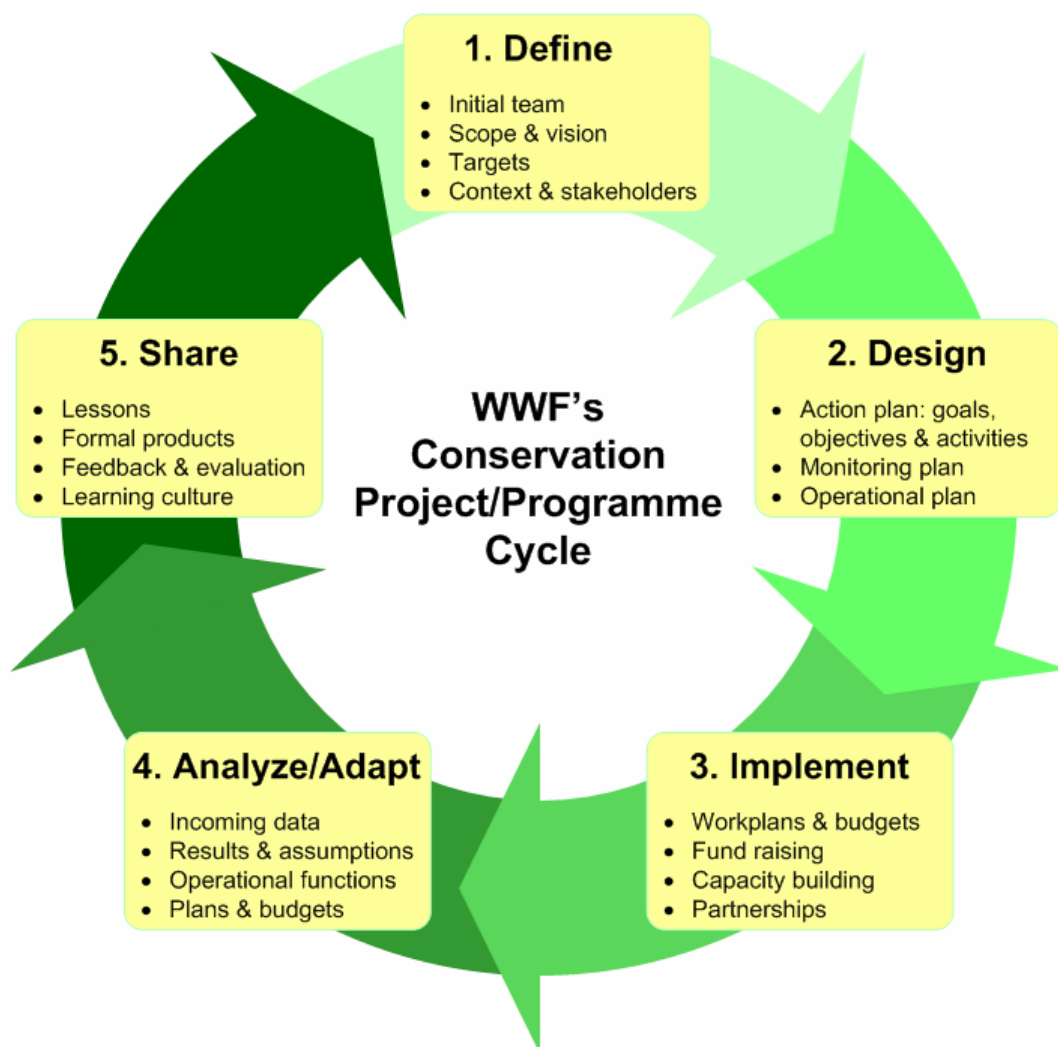


Table of Contents

Introduction	1
General Practices and Assumptions	2
0.1 Engage Stakeholders	2
0.2 Embrace Learning	3
Assumptions	3
1. Define	6
1.1 Initial Team Composition and Operations	6
1.2 Scope and Vision	6
1.3 Targets	7
1.4 Context and Stakeholders	8
2. Design	10
2.1 Action Plan: Goals, Objectives, and Activities	10
2.2 Monitoring Plan	11
2.3 Operational Plan	13
3. Implement	15
3.1 Workplans and Budgets	15
3.2 Fund Raising	15
3.3 Capacity Building	16
3.4 Partnerships	16
4. Analyze & Adapt	18
4.1 Manage Incoming Data on an Ongoing Basis	18
4.2 Analyze Project Results and Assumptions	18
4.3 Analyze Operational and Financial Functions/Performance	19
4.4 Adapt Your Plans and Budgets	19
5. Share	20
5.1 Lessons	20
5.2 Formal Communication Products	20
5.3 Feedback and Evaluations	21
5.4 Learning Culture	21
Iterate Through the Cycle	22
Acronyms Used in this Document	23
References for Additional Material and Guidance	23
Glossary	26
Criteria for Key Terms	31
Annex 1. Applying These Standards to Projects and Programmes	32
Annex 2. Summary of Standards of Practice and Outputs	34

This document contains an overview of the *WWF Network's Standards of Conservation Project and Programme Management*. These standards are the product of many inputs, field tests, and discussions and debates. Key sources from within the WWF Network include the WWF Field Operations Manual, the WWF-NL Handbook of Project Management, WWF-UK Guidelines, PCM Resource Book (Artemis), and the project-cycle management course at the WWF College. Key sources outside the Network include the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation*, The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) *Conservation Action Planning (CAP) Basic Practices*, and materials from Foundations of Success. These internal and external sources have contributed both to the evolution of the WWF Standards as well as to specific sections of this document.

This document has been approved by the WWF Programme Committee as an official part of the WWF Operations Manual. This document will be revised and improved over time. Click here to download the latest version of this document [from the WWF Intranet](#) or here to download it [from the WWF website](#). Address comments to Sheila O'Connor (soconnor@wwfint.org).

Introduction

This document provides an overview of the standards of practice for implementing conservation projects and programmes in the WWF Network.* These standards are meant to help conservation projects describe their long-term vision and key assumptions, develop effective activities, measure their success, and then to adapt, share, and learn over time – to practice adaptive management – in order to make projects more effective and efficient. These standards are rooted in a long history of project and programme planning and management in WWF, across other conservation organizations, and in other disciplines. They are not meant to be a rigid set of standards that every project must blindly follow, but rather a set of best practices that conservation practitioners can use (see Annex 1 or click here for more detail about [how these standards will be used by WWF](#)).¹

The purpose of this overview is to provide a comprehensive yet succinct introduction to the fundamental steps and practices embodied in the WWF standards of practice. It has been written to be accessible to a broad audience of different kinds of conservation practitioners. This overview is explicitly not meant to be a how-to guide for implementing these standards; comprehensive guidelines in the form of companion documents are also available, and a complete [Network Operations Manual](#) is planned²

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

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

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

* Projects are the basic units of conservation work. A programme is a group of projects which together aim to achieve a common vision. In the interest of simplicity, this document uses the term “project” to represent both projects and programmes since these standards of practice are designed to apply equally well to both.

Figure 1. WWF's Conservation Project/Programme Cycle



General Practices and Assumptions

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

0.1 Engage Stakeholders

In conducting your project, it is important at every step to make sure you identify, and as appropriate, engage key stakeholders, paying particular attention to indigenous, marginalized and overly powerful peoples. You will need to identify stakeholders, determine what roles they might play in both planning and implementation, and develop a strategy to ensure their participation. Implementing this strategy effectively will help ensure that these stakeholders both respond positively to your project's activities and help you implement your project both over the short-term, and ultimately, after the initial project ends (click here for [basic guidance on stakeholder analysis](#) and on [indigenous peoples](#)).³

0.2 Embrace Learning

At both project and organizational levels, it is important to develop an environment that is curious, questioning, and encourages risk-taking. It is also critical to document and archive your decisions at each step of the way. Not only does this give you the opportunity to analyze why things worked or did not work, but it also serves as a basis for others to understand the logic of your choices and provides the basic ingredients for sound knowledge management. By embracing learning and sharing information, you will open the door to bring in lessons from the outside to be incorporated where appropriate (click here for [basic guidance on embracing learning](#)⁴ within your project).

Assumptions

In addition, as you read through this document, keep in mind the following assumptions:

- ***Some level of global priority-setting has already taken place*** – The project and programme management standards outlined in this document will not help you define where you and your organization will work or what you want to conserve, or what broad threats you want to abate (the purpose of priority-setting exercises). Instead, they outline how you should design, implement, and evaluate your project activities once it is clear where – or on what broad issue – you wish to work. Global priority-setting is an essential precursor to these standards and should be completed before they are used. The Global Conservation Programme (GCP) including the Global Programmes, Ecoregion Action Programmes (EAPs) and Global Policy Issues (GPIs) have gone through priority-setting and provided the targets and milestones for much of WWF's Network efforts (click here for a [list of 59 priority ecoregions](#)).⁵
- ***This process takes place within a broader context*** – WWF projects almost always involve collaboration with multiple partners and associates including governments, inter-governmental agencies, NGOs, and other WWF offices. The standards presume that you know about and take into account other appropriate planning, implementation and monitoring work that could affect your project. They also assume that you check from time to time throughout the life of your project on the links to, relation with, and effects on/from these other key entities.
- ***These standards are useful to both new and existing projects*** – The standard practices outlined in this document are most obviously applied to a new project that is just starting to go through the steps in the project cycle. You can also use these practices, however, to retrofit an existing project by identifying gaps in the work that you have done to date.
- ***These standards are meant to be used iteratively*** – Your project team is not expected to produce perfect outputs the first time you go through each step in the project cycle. Indeed, project teams that try to achieve perfection are likely to get stuck in “planning paralysis.” Instead, the idea is to go quickly and efficiently through the steps, develop draft outputs, and then refine your work over time as you go through successive iterations of the cycle.
- ***These standards are fundamentally non-linear*** – Although the project cycle presents these standards in a linear, numbered sequence, most project teams will not go through this process in a step-by-step fashion. Instead, you should feel comfortable changing the

order of the steps, hopping around from step to step, and going back and revisiting earlier steps at any time in the process.

- ***These standards are not scale or site-specific*** – These standards are intended to apply to projects and programmes of all spatial and temporal scales ranging from small short-lived projects to large projects that may stretch across ecoregions, landscapes, or corridors over decades. In addition, these standards are meant to apply to both site-based projects focusing on a specific geographical area as well as thematic projects focusing on a species or threat such as climate change. Click here for [guidance and examples of how to use the standards for thematic projects](#).⁶
- ***These standards represent the “ideal”*** – A quick read of the standards may prove overwhelming at first – with a seemingly vast number of issues to consider and things to do. But these standards are meant to provide a comprehensive view of what comprises the ideal in project design, management, monitoring and learning. While meeting these standards should be a goal for a project, it is important to acknowledge that it may not be feasible – for a variety of reasons – to address each and every component of the standards.
- ***These standards must be tailored for each project*** – These standards are not meant to be “one-size-fits-all,” but instead are written in fairly general terms in order to provide project teams with the flexibility they need to adapt and modify the standards to their particular conditions. In particular, the level of detail that a project team goes into in each step of these standards will vary depending on the scope and complexity of their project. A small project with a CHF 5000 annual budget might go through the first iteration of the design step of these standards in a few hours (perhaps even combining some steps) whereas a large project with a CHF 3 million budget might take a few days or even months to complete their first iteration (see Annex 1 for more details).
- ***These standards will change over time*** – The current version of these standards are not meant to be the last word in how to do effective conservation. Instead, they are meant to capture the prevailing wisdom on what it takes to do conservation well under a variety of conditions. Your experiences and feedback will help improve these standards over time. Please also click here to download the [latest version of this document](#).⁷
- ***Aim for both sustainability and magnification of results*** – Most conservation projects and certainly any larger conservation programme should be designed with the ultimate goal of achieving *sustainability* of the conservation action or result. Our ultimate goal should be to reverse threats or achieve a sustainable population level of a key species and then move on to other issues and needs – in effect, to exit that particular project or programme either because it is successful or because we have enlisted one or more strategic partners who will carry that project forward. To that end, these standards are based upon ideas and principles for achieving sustainability through engaging strategic partners or developing sources of sustainable financing. Likewise, these standards are also designed to help promote *magnification* of the project’s impacts across a larger landscape by improving cross-project learning and enabling project teams to leverage global institutional change.
- ***Terminology must be consistent*** – There seems to be an endless debate among planners as to the relative meaning of technical terms such as goals, objectives, activities, targets,

milestones, outputs, and results. Every office, project, and even individual seems to have their own preferred set of terms. There is no right answer – the most important thing is that the members of your project team, and the people with whom you work, have a clear and common definition of whatever terms you choose to use. Over time, however, there are real advantages to having a standard glossary across the Network and beyond. To this end, technical terms in this document were carefully selected, underlined when first used, consistently used thereafter, and defined in the glossary at the end. The selection of specific terms for a given concept and the definitions for these terms are based on current usage of words by the WWF Network, other conservation organizations, and planners in other disciplines.

1. Define

This first step involves specifying the basic parameters for your project in preparation for the design work that will come in the next step. Specifically, it involves identifying who will initially be involved on the project team, articulating your project's geographic and/or thematic scope, and your vision of what you hope to achieve. It also includes making sense of the context in which your project is intending to work, including threats and opportunities, and key stakeholders.

1.1 Initial Team Composition and Operations

A project is ultimately designed and implemented by a specific group of individuals who comprise your project team. Team members typically include WWF staff as well as other key internal and external partners (click here for [basic guidance on defining team composition and operations](#)).⁸ One of the team members is typically designated as the project leader. The composition of this team may change as you move through the management cycle. The key, however, is to recognize and make use of existing skills and experience to ensure that the project moves forward with the best available knowledge. In addition to the project team, you may also need to identify one or more advisors to whom the core team can turn for honest feedback and counsel and who can champion your cause.

Once you have identified the core project team, you should develop a concept paper or charter that outlines how the project team will function (click here for an example of a [project concept form](#)).⁹ Specific points that this document should address include what team members will do, how they will make decisions, a rough timeline for project activities, who else needs to be engaged, informed, and involved, and what financial and staff resources are required to move through the project cycle.

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

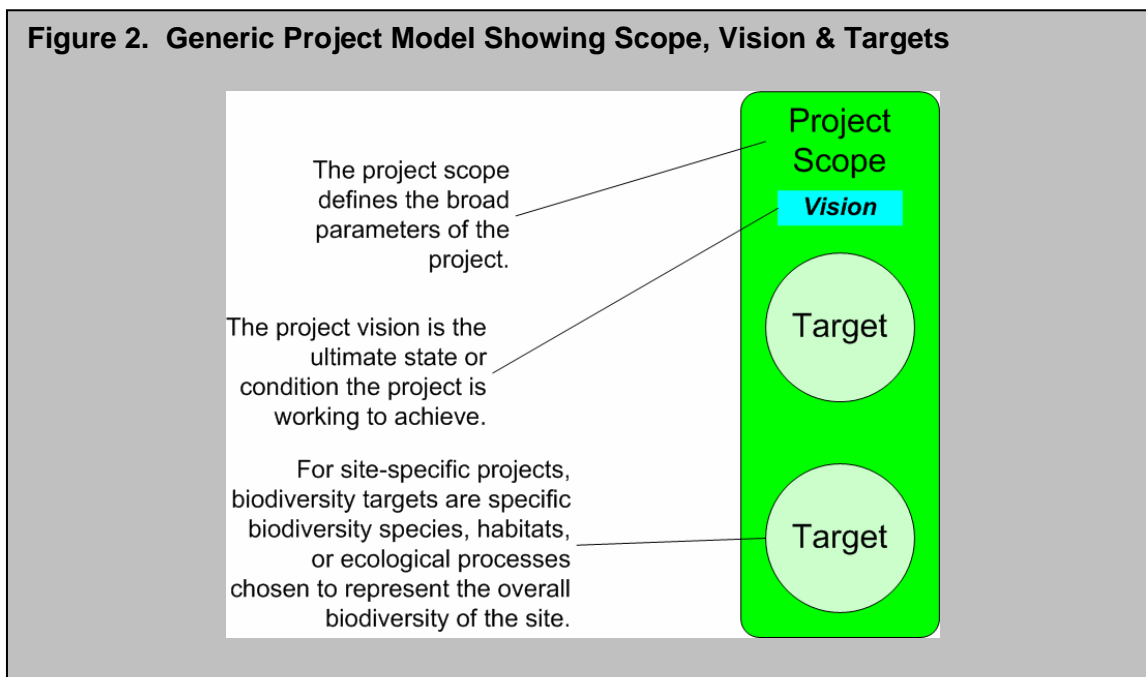
- ◆ *Selection of initial project team and designation of project leader.*
- ◆ *Concept paper for the project.*

1.2 Scope and Vision

Before you begin to think about what you will do (the activities you will take) you must have a good understanding of what you hope to accomplish. A project's scope defines the broad parameters of the project. Projects that are focused on biodiversity of a specific place will have a geographic scope or project area. Other projects will have a thematic scope (click here for [basic guidance on defining scope & vision](#)).¹⁰

In addition to defining the scope, it is also necessary to decide on a clear and common vision, a description of the desired state or ultimate condition that you are working to achieve (see Figure 2). A vision might include descriptions of biodiversity and/or maps of the area. Your vision can be summarized in a good vision statement, which meets the criteria of being *relatively general, visionary, and brief*. A project's vision should fit within the context of your organization's overall mission – in the case of WWF, with the three main axes of 1) biodiversity conservation, 2) sustainable natural resource management and 3) reduction of pollution and consumption. It should also fit within the scope of WWF's Global Conservation Programme.

Figure 2. Generic Project Model Showing Scope, Vision & Targets



Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

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

1.3 Targets

Although your project scope defines broadly what you will focus on, it is usually helpful to break this overall scope into more specific elements that you can use to focus your strategy development and selection of indicators of success (see Figure 2).

Site-specific projects generally select a limited number of biodiversity targets – specific species, habitats (ecological systems), and/or ecological processes that are chosen to represent and encompass the full suite of biodiversity in the project area (some people also term them conservation targets). In theory – and hopefully in practice – conservation of the biodiversity targets will ensure the conservation of all native biodiversity within the project site. Selection of biodiversity targets typically requires input from experts and analysis of spatial data (click here for [basic guidance on biodiversity targets](#)).¹¹

While thematic projects can also use biodiversity targets, they also will identify thematic targets (which can be either major threats or enabling conditions) that they focus on. As one example, a project focused on global warming might use average global temperature as a target (click here for [basic guidance on thematic targets](#)).¹²

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Selection of a limited number of targets for your project.*
- ◆ *A brief explanation of why these targets were chosen.*

1.4 Context and Stakeholders

This standard asks you to describe your current understanding of your project's context – both the biological environment and the social, economic, political, and institutional systems that affect your selected targets. This practice is one that is sometimes overlooked – at least explicitly – in conservation projects, yet it is one of the most important. By understanding the biological and human context, you will have a better chance of designing activities that will achieve your conservation goals and objectives. The challenge here is to make your logic explicit without spending too much time on trying to develop a perfect model of reality.

This standard involves conducting a situation analysis of the key factors affecting your targets including direct threats, indirect threats and opportunities, and enabling conditions (click here for [basic guidance on situation analysis](#)).¹³ These factors can range in scale from local to global. Each factor can typically be linked to one or more stakeholders – those individuals, groups, or institutions that have an interest in or will be affected by your project's activities. You need to consider both powerful and influential stakeholders, as well as those that might be disadvantaged or marginalized (click here for [basic guidance on stakeholder analysis](#)).¹⁴ Disadvantaged groups need to be considered not only in terms of how their actions affect project targets, but also in terms of how project activities may impact them, so that appropriate safeguards can be incorporated into project design. As you review stakeholders, also keep in mind which stakeholders could become important strategic partners that you could involve in action planning.

As part of your analysis of the situation, you should describe the relationships between targets, direct threats, opportunities, and stakeholders. This description can be in text form or in a conceptual model, a diagrammatic illustration of these relationships (see Figures 3 & 4 for generic and actual examples). A good model shows quite clearly the situation in which your project will take place and illustrates the cause-and effect relationships that you and your team assume exists within the project area. In other words, the model helps articulate the logic of your project, and to communicate the intentions and expected impacts of yours to other people outside of your project. Good models are also the result of a team effort and are as simple as possible while still including all necessary detail. It is also important to field test the model with key stakeholders and partners both inside and outside the project team to make sure that the model reflects their understanding of the situation (click here for [basic guidance on conceptual models](#)).¹⁵

As part of your analysis of the project's context, it is also important to prioritize the various factors that affect your targets so that you can concentrate your activities where they are most needed. In particular, you should try to determine which of your direct threats are critical threats – the ones that are most important to address. There are a number of tools that can be used to help in this prioritization process – one common tool involves rating each threat on criteria such as scope, severity, and urgency and then combining these individual ratings to produce an overall ranking of the threat for each target and the project as a whole (click here for [basic guidance on threat ranking](#)).¹⁶

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *An analysis and ranking of the critical direct threats affecting your targets.*
- ◆ *An analysis of the key indirect threats, opportunities, and stakeholders.*
- ◆ *A conceptual model that shows the cause-and-effect relationships among factors.*

Figure 3. Generic Conceptual Model Showing Project Context

See [basic guidance on conceptual models](#) for a detailed explanation.

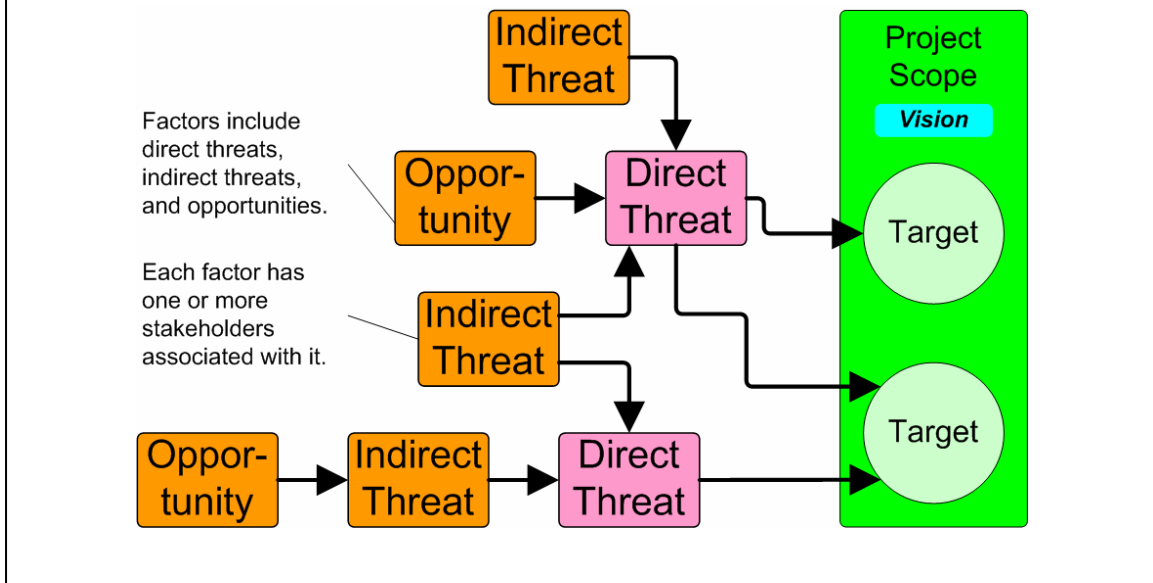
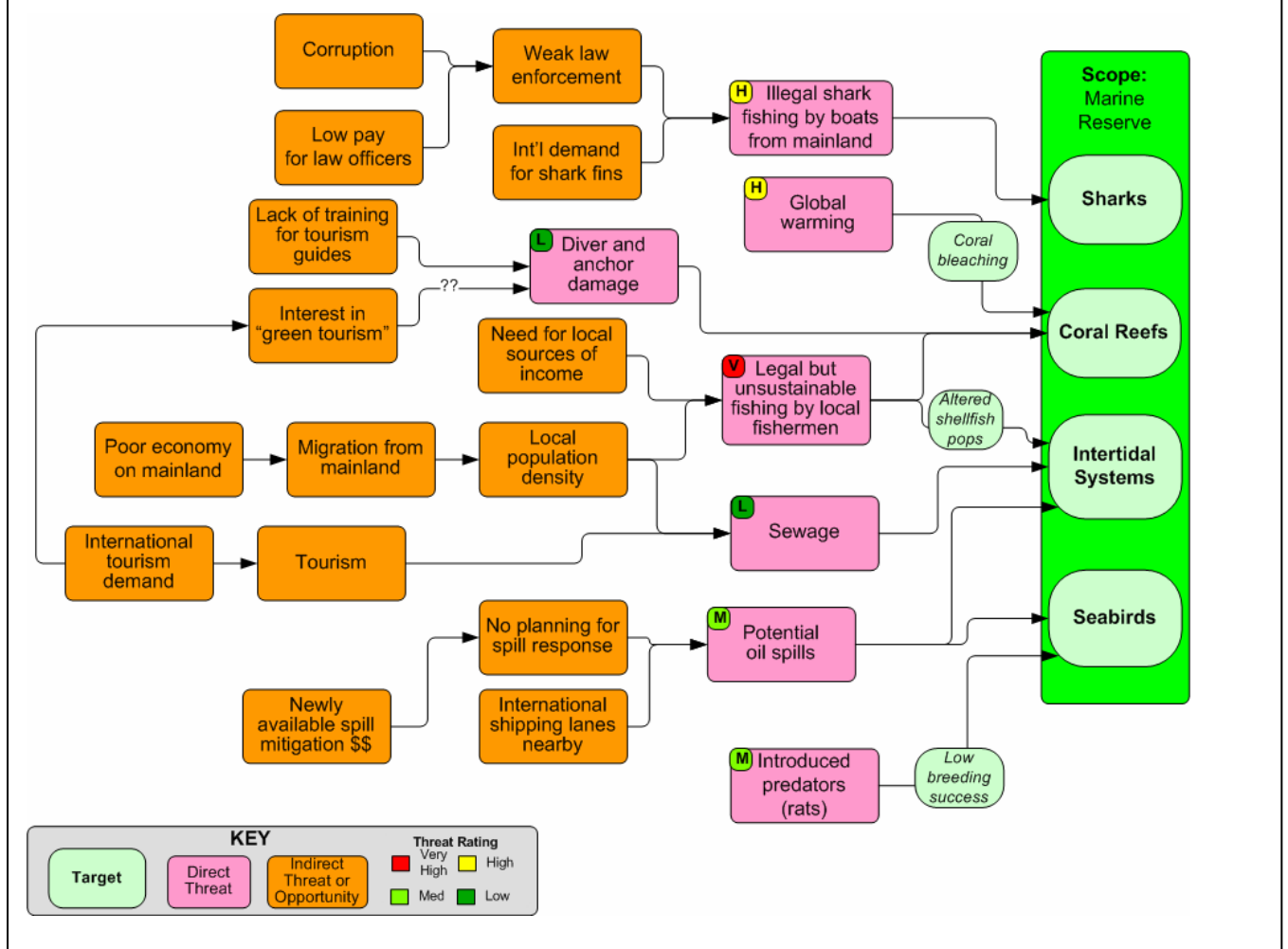


Figure 4. Example of a Conceptual Model

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



2. Design

Once you have described the basic parameters for your project, the next step is to design the specific interventions you will undertake to achieve conservation. In particular, this step involves specifying your *Action Plan* that you will use to set your project's goals, objectives and activities. It also includes developing the *Monitoring Plan* that you will use to track your progress and drafting your *Operational Plan* that outlines how your project will develop the financial, human, and other resources needed to last over the long-term. Finally, it involves compiling all your work to date in your *Strategic Plan*.

2.1 Action Plan: Goals, Objectives, and Activities

Developing a clear idea of what you would like to accomplish is the essential first part of putting together your action plan. As a starting point, you may want to revisit the vision for your project that you developed in Step 1.2 that describes what you ultimately would like to accomplish. Goals are linked to your project's targets and represent the desired status of the targets over the long-term – they are formal statements of the ultimate impacts you hope to achieve. A good goal meets the criteria of being *linked to targets, impact oriented, measurable, time limited, and specific*. Objectives are linked to specific threats and opportunities that your project has identified and specify the desired condition of these factors that you would like to achieve in the short and medium-term – they are formal statements of the outcomes necessary to attain your goals. A good objective meets the criteria of being *outcome oriented, measurable, time limited, specific, and practical*. Together, your goals and objectives represent what you need to accomplish, and as such, become the ultimate measure against which you will gauge the progress of your project (click here for [basic guidance on Action Plans](#)).¹⁷ You may also want to specify intermediate results that, as their name implies, represent the milestones you expect to accomplish en route to achieving your final goals and objectives.

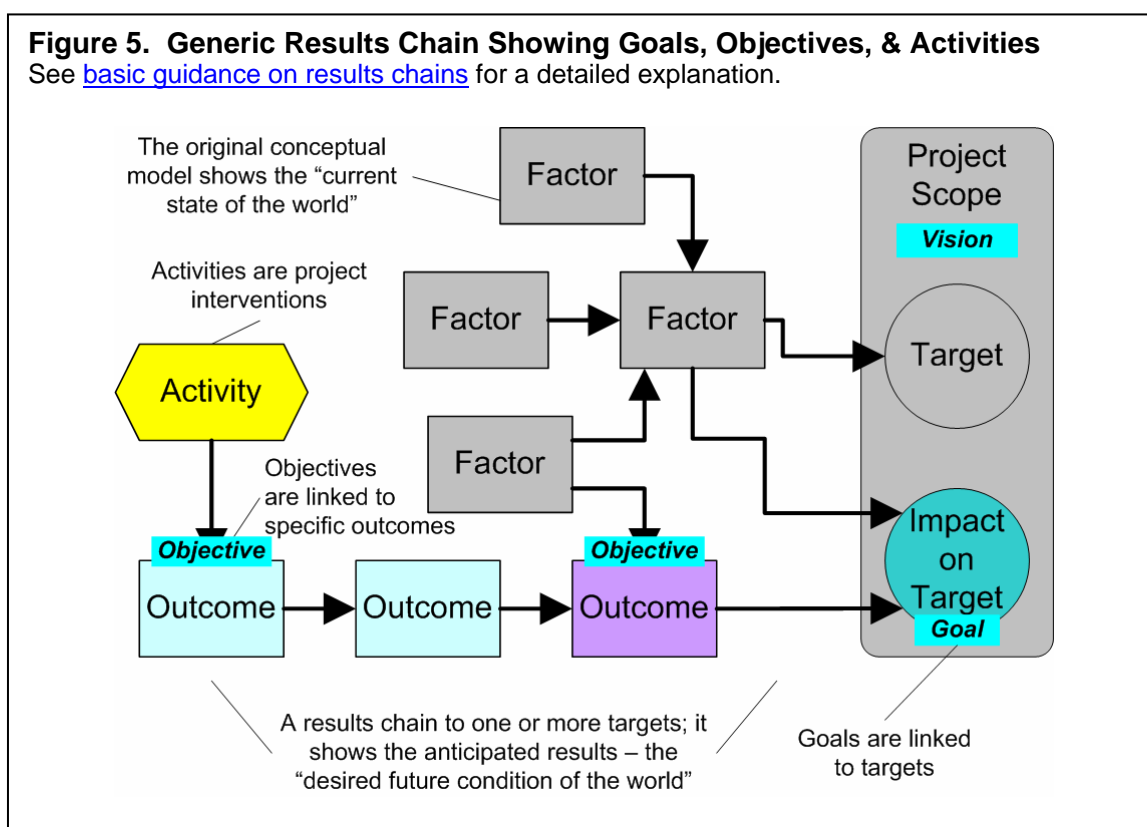
Based on the goal(s) and objectives developed, you can then determine activities – the prioritized interventions that you and your partners will undertake to reach these ends. Descriptions of these activities can range in scope from broad strategies to much more specific actions used to accomplish each strategy. Good activities meet the criteria of being *linked, focused, feasible, and appropriate*. Your challenge is to select the most appropriate and cost-effective activities that have the highest likelihood of achieving success (click here for [basic guidance on Action Plans](#)).¹⁴ These activities can range in scale from local to global, depending on the situation. It is also important to ensure that your activities complement other private and public sector programmes and are designed in conjunction with and meet the needs of local stakeholders. One way to build for sustainability of your project's activities is to engage one or more strategic partners who are influential and derive significant benefit from being involved and who will be willing to continue the project. Whether these partners will actually carry on this work is an assumption that you need to test over time.

The key to completing this step lies in making explicit the logical sequences that link your activities to your targets – your project's core assumptions. A results chain is a useful tool that provides a graphical depiction of these logical sequences (click here for [basic guidance on results chains](#)).¹⁸ Once you have decided on the activities that you will include in your project, you can convert relevant sections of your conceptual model into results chains that show your goal(s), objectives, and activities (see Figure 5). You should also capture the final versions of your goals, objectives, and activities and the logic behind them in your formal

Action Plan. A tabular logical framework (logframe) matrix should be used to help summarize and record your goals, objectives, and activities, as well as your monitoring indicators and methods (see Figure 6; click here for [basic guidance on logical framework analysis](#)).¹⁹

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Goals for all of your targets.*
- ◆ *Objectives for critical threats and other factors that your project will address.*
- ◆ *One or more activities for each conservation objective.*
- ◆ *Results chains or other formal descriptions of your core assumptions.*
- ◆ *Overall Action Plan that compiles your goals, objectives, and activities.*



2.2 Monitoring Plan

The first part of developing your *Monitoring Plan* involves specifying your information needs that you will monitor over time. Effective monitoring uses the minimum amount of financial and human resources to provide you with the minimum information needed to determine if your project is on track and what to do if you are not. All too often project teams either collect no information or too much information because they are unsure of what is needed. By focusing your monitoring efforts squarely on the results chains linking your vision, goals, objectives, and activities – the core assumptions that you have made in your project – you are more likely to collect only the information that will be useful to you as you manage your project (click here for [basic guidance on Monitoring Plans](#)).²⁰ Your logical framework and/or results chains should be useful here (see Figures 5 and 6).

Figure 6. Generic Logical Framework Matrix

See [basic guidance on logical framework analysis](#) for a detailed explanation.

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

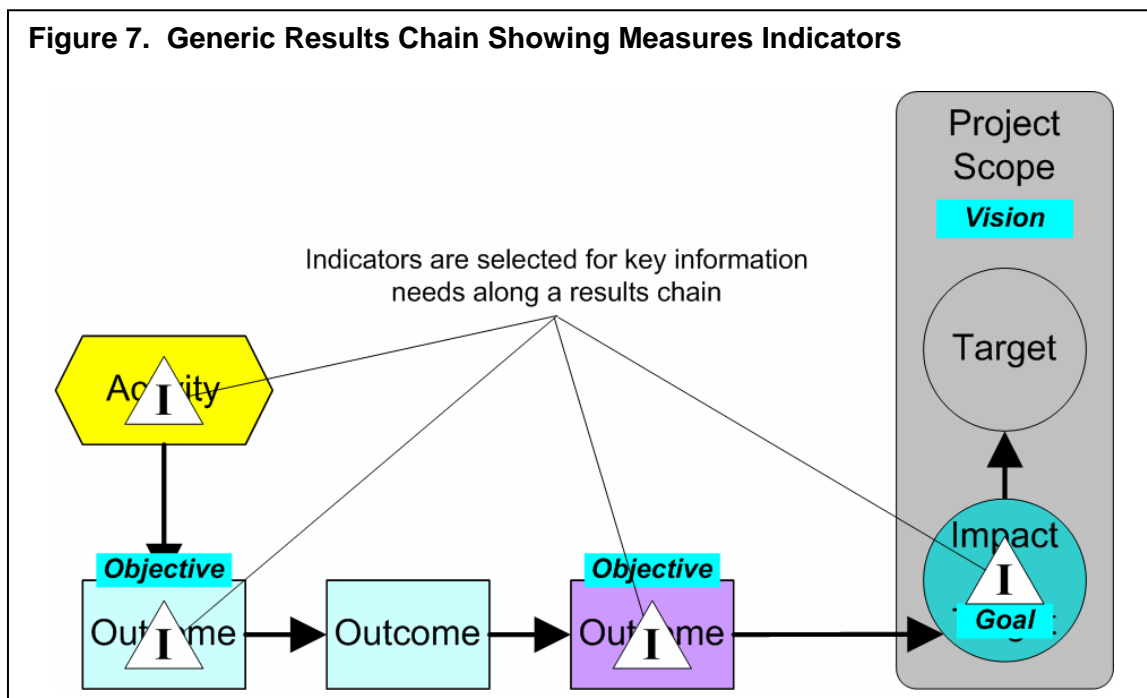
You may also want to identify information needs tied to the relevant targets and milestones of the Global Conservation Programme, and also show linkages to any relevant donor or country targets (e.g., those from Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers or from Millennium Development Goals). WWF is in the process of fine tuning its *Global Monitoring System*, which will become *WWF Track* – a relational database system that will allow for project level monitoring data storage and management that can then be rolled up to higher levels (click here for an [update on the status of WWF Track](#)).²¹

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

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

- ◆ *A list of the indicators your project will measure to track the effectiveness of each activity.*
- ◆ *Brief descriptions of the methods for collecting data for each indicator.*

Figure 7. Generic Results Chain Showing Measures Indicators



- ◆ *When, where, and by whom each kind of data will be collected.*
- ◆ *A description of how data will be stored and analyzed.*
- ◆ *A plan for regular updates to the WWF Track System.*

2.3 Operational Plan

Conservation projects are ultimately implemented by people and institutions. Even if you have the best action and monitoring plans in the world, they will be useless unless you also have the necessary financial, human, and other resources to implement these plans over the life of your project. Although you may not have all necessary resources in hand when you start your project, you should at least have an idea of what you need and how you will go about attaining them. You also need to assess the risks to your project and develop governance mechanisms. In other words, you need to have an *Operational Plan* for your project (click here for [basic guidance on operational plans](#)).²² Key components include:

- **Human & Other Resource Requirements** – A broad analysis of the human capacity and skills required to implement your project, and your current and potential sources of these resources (see Step 3.3 for more specific details about developing your human resources). Also, other resources and enabling conditions required to implement your project (such as partners, infrastructure, and a supportive legal framework).
- **Financial Requirements** – A broad analysis of the funding required to implement your project, and your current and potential sources of these funds (i.e. your anticipated income and expenditure). These analyses often look at both best and worst-case scenarios.
- **Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategy** – An analysis of what risk factors exist for your project and how they can be addressed.

- **Estimate of Project Lifespan and Exit Strategy** – A discussion of how long your project will last and how you will ensure sustainability of your project’s achievements.

The level of detail and formality of your operational plan will vary depending on the size and level of complexity of your project. Small projects may only briefly touch on each of these topics whereas large, complex ones might have an extensive and formal treatment of each. The best test of whether you should formally develop each component of an operational plan is budget; with any projects over 250K CHF/per year completing an Operational Plan is a standard requirement (click here for a [list of risk criteria](#) you can use to help assess to what extent your project will require formal plans and outputs).²³ However, all projects should have thought through the items included in an operational plan.

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

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

In addition, at the conclusion of Step 2, you should compile the work you did in Steps 1 and 2 into your overall *Strategic Plan* (click here for [examples of Strategic Plans](#)).²⁴ Specific components of this plan are shown in Box 1. The output here is:

- ◆ **Your overall Strategic Plan.**

Box 1. Components of a Strategic Plan

Products from Step 1

- Scope and Vision
- Targets
- Analysis of Project Situation (including conceptual model and prioritized threats)

Products from Step 2

- Action Plan (goals, objectives, and activities)
- Monitoring Plan
- Operational Plan

3. Implement

This is the most important step in the entire adaptive management cycle process. It is the time in which you put all of the planning efforts you conducted in the previous steps into action. The step involves developing and implementing specific workplans while ensuring sufficient resources, capacity, and partners.

3.1 Workplans and Budgets

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

The first part of this step is to take your overall plans and work with your project team and partners to develop much more specific short-term workplans covering the next few months or at most, year. These workplans take your overall action, monitoring, and operational plans and for each, specifies in much greater detail:

- **What** specific tasks are required to complete each planned activity, monitoring step, or operational function,
- **Who** will be responsible for helping to complete each task,
- **When** each task will need to be undertaken and the sequence of linked tasks, and
- **How** much money and other resources will be needed to complete each task.
- These workplans can be recorded in a table, Gantt chart, and/or project calendar. You should also estimate the costs for all tasks, which becomes the basis for the project budget (click here for [basic guidance for workplans and budgets](#), here for a [budget template](#), and here for [cost recovery guidelines](#))²⁵. Typically this will take place in the context of the office that oversight of the project (click here for [WWF-US procedures](#) and for [WWF International procedures](#) as applicable).²⁶

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Detailed short-term workplans for your project showing tasks, who will do them, and when.*
- ◆ *Gantt chart and/or calendar of project activities.*
- ◆ *Project budgets.*

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

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

3.2 Fund Raising

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

The starting point here is to look at your resource needs in the general project budget you developed in Step 2.4 and the specific budgets you develop in Step 3.1. For many projects, your most expensive resource needs will be staff time. In addition, you should consider what other major expenses such as physical infrastructure, vehicles, boats or machinery are needed. In addition, consider the related functions or logistical support that the project might need, ranging from monitoring and management expenses, to administrative or logistical support.

Once you have identified your resource needs and assessed what you currently have available, the next steps involve identifying potential funding sources, writing funding proposals, and meeting with potential donors. Click here for the [internal proposal template](#).²⁷

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

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

3.3 Capacity Building

Another key part of your strategic plan to implement early on is the human capacity development component of your operational plan. This work involves assessing and then building the capacity of your own staff, structure and systems, and that of your core partners as well. You need to feel confident that you and your partners will have enough people with the right skills, knowledge and availability to deliver the project and ensure its longer term sustainability. You also need to make sure that the support functions of your office will be able to take on the additional workload.

Each project will differ in the level and detail of needed capacity assessment and building, but in general they might include core programmatic skills, managerial abilities, financial management and accounting skills, and others (click here for [guidance on assessing and building capacity](#)).²⁸ From your assessments, you may decide that you or your partners need to conduct training, hire consultants or recruit and train new staff. Funding, people and the time to do this should be built into your operational plan. Your office's human resources staff can be a good source of support and advice in recruiting staff, conducting performance appraisals, and assisting people with their professional development (click here for a [human resources assessment checklist](#)).²⁹

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

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

3.4 Partnerships

Successful conservation depends on forging effective partnerships with key stakeholders. Most conservation projects will probably not have sufficient expertise or internal resources to

do all the work that needs to be done. Furthermore, most if not all projects need to ensure that the work that they start will continue after the initial project ends. To ensure sustainability of the work, you must mobilize effective participation and information-sharing with these partners both throughout the life of the project and after “the project” is over. Accordingly, at this point in the project cycle, you will need to revisit your team composition and structure to ensure that you have the right complement of people as staff, consultants, volunteers or other working arrangements that make the project possible and sustainable.

Building effective partnerships requires enormous effort throughout the project cycle. Key actions that can help ensure the development of good partnerships include:

- Review your stakeholder analysis from Step 1.4 and for each category of stakeholder, identify the most appropriate form and degree of involvement in project activities, and establish processes and structures needed to facilitate that involvement.
- Redefine the project team and roles and responsibilities as needed to make sure you include key stakeholders.
- Build into your project team functions an information-sharing strategy that ensures the proper information gets communicated to all current and potential partners.
- Review existing and/or create new partnership arrangements and governance structures as needed to ensure that all partners have an appropriate voice in how the project is managed and how decisions are made.
- Budget for the participation and information sharing needed to strengthen partnerships and ownership.

In addition, it may be appropriate to secure your key partners’ involvement in the project through more formal arrangements such as contracts, grants, memoranda of understanding, Programme Implementation Agreements (PIAs), or similar means (For templates for some of these arrangements, see [basic guidance on Partnerships, Governance and Managements Arrangements](#)).³⁰

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

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

4. Analyze & Adapt

This step involves managing your data as it comes in and regularly analyzing it to convert it into useful information. In particular, you need to analyze your project's results and core assumptions as well as operational and financial data and then adapt your workplans as necessary based on your findings. The amount of time needed to complete this step is often underestimated by project managers, leaving them with lots of data that they have collected, but have not analyzed or used. By making this a deliberate step, you should find it easier to observe and understand changes, solve problems, and make improvements to your project.

4.1 *Manage Incoming Data on an Ongoing Basis*

Analysis is a process of transforming raw data into useful information. Analysis should not happen at only one point in time during the life of the project. To continuously understand what is going on in your project – and to be able to change things in a timely fashion – it is essential to capture and analyze your monitoring data as part of routine project work. In particular, it is important to systematically check, clean, and code raw data as soon as you get it; store and back-up your data, and then analyze and discuss your data to check if you are on track (click here for [basic guidance on managing data](#)).³¹ This work should be done for both programmatic data as well as operational and financial data. You should also upload your data to *WWF Track* as discussed in Step 2.2.

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

- ◆ *Development and regular use of systems for storing and backing up project data.*
- ◆ *Uploads of data to WWF Track.*

4.2 *Analyze Project Results and Assumptions*

One of the most important aspects of adaptive management is that it allows you to systematically assess whether you are on track to achieve your stated goals and objectives. Your monitoring data should provide you with the information needed to see whether you have achieved your expected intermediate results and whether you are on track to achieve long-term success. In addition, adaptive management also allows you to determine why certain activities have succeeded or failed. Your monitoring data provide you with the opportunity to see whether the core assumptions you laid out in the planning steps above hold true in reality. By testing these core assumptions, you are in a better position to adapt and change your project activities accordingly (click here for [basic guidance on analysis](#)).³²

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

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

Depending on the type of data that you have and your information needs, these analyses can range from formal statistical studies to simple qualitative assessments. The most important

thing is that the right people be involved in and made aware of the results of your analyses. As a general rule, analyses should involve members of the project team. However, input from outside experts during the analyses of your monitoring results and thinking through from other perspectives can often be useful. Either way, a critical part of this analysis work involves communicating the results to your project team and key partners. In communicating within a team it is best to provide: clear management recommendations to all the right people based on your analysis, all necessary details to help interpret results, alternatives and contingencies based on the results, and regular reports to all team members (click here for the internal [technical report template](#)).³³

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

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

4.3 Analyze Operational and Financial Functions/Performance

In addition to analyzing your conservation results and core assumptions, it is also important to analyze your operational and financial data to make sure things are on track and that you are not going to run an operational deficit (click here for [basic guidance on analyzing operational and financial performance](#)³⁴ and here for the [financial report template](#).)³⁵ For example, periodic and full-term [forecasting](#) should be undertaken to ensure that changes in work plans are adequately translated into changes in financial needs, and vice versa (click here for [more information on forecasting](#)).³⁶

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

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

4.4 Adapt Your Plans and Budgets

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

All the planning that you did earlier was not meant to be a one-time event, never to be revisited or used again. Instead, in order to learn over time and to continue to improve the effectiveness of your project, you must revise your project parameters and core assumptions, conservation action plan, monitoring plan, work plans and budgets, and operational plan. Therefore, you may need to update all sections of your strategic plan to reflect what you have learned. As you make changes, you should also document the rationale behind them so that others will understand what you learned and why you made these changes. Click here for basic guidance on [adapting your plans and budgets](#)³⁷.

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

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

5. Share

The final step in the management cycle involves sharing lessons and formal products with key internal and external audiences. It also involves giving and receiving feedback, conducting evaluations and audits, and promoting a learning culture.

5.1 Lessons

As you go through the process described in these standards, you should make sure you harvest the lessons that your project team is learning on a regular basis. Lessons can take the form of formal statistical results or anecdotal stories and can focus on something as large as your core project assumptions or something as specific as a new and improved way of tracking project expenses. One of the keys to harvesting lessons is to keep track of learning questions that emerge as you go through the project management process and then try to answer these questions when data become available to do so. Another key is to provide time and incentives to do this work. Harvesting lessons requires a balance between art and science – and will require patience and making time in any work plan for these tasks. Click here for [basic guidance on sharing lessons](#).³⁸

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

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

5.2 Formal Communication Products

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

In order to create documents that a variety of audiences will understand, internalize and use, you must understand how they typically receive messages, and what they would be interested in learning. Developing a clear communication and dissemination strategy provides you with a systematic way of identifying your audiences most effectively. For example, many projects distinguish between their internal audiences (the project staff, partners and other stakeholders) and their external audiences (donors, other practitioners). Next, identify the lessons you wish to communicate to these priority audiences, determine the best format to reach each key audience, and then develop and distribute your communication products. Communication products can encompass many different forms ranging from formal academic papers to stories and videos. It is important to evaluate each product to see if it worked to communicate your messages as intended and to learn what you might do to improve similar efforts in the future.

Finally, it is worth noting that sharing documents does not just mean providing them to other people. It also means obtaining and using documents from other people yourself. Some of the best sources of lessons are the experiences of others. Click here for basic guidance on [formal communications strategy and products](#).³⁹

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

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

5.3 Feedback and Evaluations

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

It is also important to build in more formal feedback mechanisms into your project's lifecycle. Two common kinds of formal mechanisms are evaluations, which assess a project against its own stated goals and objectives, and audits, which assess a project against an external set of standards, such as the ones outlined in this document. Both evaluations and audits can be conducted at various phases of the project cycle. They can be conducted either internally or externally. Internal evaluations and audits, which are done by project team members and close partners, have the advantages of being relatively easy and cheap to conduct and that the people involved in the assessment can make direct use of the findings. External evaluations and audits, which are done by outside parties, have the advantage of providing an outside and unbiased perspective to the project team (click here for [basic guidance⁴⁰ on feedback, evaluations and audits](#) and here to see standard [terms of reference for audits and evaluations](#)).⁴¹

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

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

5.4 Performance and Learning Culture

The last standard of practice in the cycle involves creating a performance and learning culture within your project team and partners, across your organization, and among conservation practitioners around the world. Too effectively apply these standards, you need to work in a project environment that promotes learning and adaptation over time. This process is not an

easy one. It requires leaders and donors who understand the need to reallocate scarce resources from immediate action to the long-term work of adaptive management. It often requires enabling practitioners to take some chances and question the conventional wisdom related to specific conservation tools and strategies. It requires providing project teams with the institutional security and context that affords them the knowledge that innovation and questioning assumptions are valued in their organizations. And it requires a commitment to share both successes and failures with other practitioners around the world – to create true communities of practice. Click here for [basic guidance on performance and learning culture](#).⁴²

Typical outputs for this standard practice include:

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

Iterate Through the Cycle

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

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

Acronyms Used in this Document

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

References for Additional Material and Guidance

The majority of these references are held in the Network Standards folders on Connect at [Home > Documents > Network Standards > Programmes](#) (or Operations) (for direct access to most of the folders listed below, you can also type the following web address into your browser, substituting the 5 digit folder code shown below for the xxxxx):

<https://intranet.panda.org/documents/folder.cfm?uFolderID=xxxxx>

To have access to these hyperlinked documents, you need to be registered in Connect. If you have not yet registered in Connect, please contact the People & Places Administrator at: connect@wwfint.org.

¹ An overview of how these standards will be used. [Folder ID = 60993](#).

² The overall website containing guidance material. [Folder ID = 59121](#).

³ Guidance on stakeholder analysis. [Folder ID = 60977](#). For indigenous peoples. [Folder ID= 61983](#)

⁴ Basic guidance on embracing learning. [FolderID=76427](#)

⁵ A list of priority ecoregions. [Folder ID = 59463](#) or go to: [Home > Documents > Programmes > Programme Tools > Project planning and evaluation > Global Monitoring System \(GMS\) > GMS FY05 Reporting > Ecoregion Programmes](#)

⁶ Guidance and example for thematic projects. [Folder ID = 61131](#).

⁷ Latest version of this document. [Folder ID = 60993](#).

⁸ Basic guidance on team composition and operations. [Folder ID = 60970](#).

⁹ Example of project concept form. [Folder ID = 60970](#).

¹⁰ Basic guidance on project scope & vision. [Folder ID = 60971](#).

¹¹ Basic guidance on biodiversity targets. [Folder ID = 60976](#).

¹² Basic guidance on thematic targets. [Folder ID = 61131](#)

¹³ Basic guidance on situation analysis. [Folder ID = 60977](#).

¹⁴ Basic guidance on stakeholder analysis. [Folder ID = 60977](#).

- ¹⁵ Basic guidance on conceptual models. [Folder ID = 60995](#).
- ¹⁶ Basic guidance on threat ranking. [Folder ID = 60977](#).
- ¹⁷ Basic guidance on Action Plans: Goals, objectives and activities. [Folder ID = 60978](#).
- ¹⁸ Basic guidance on results chains. [Folder ID = 60995](#).
- ¹⁹ Basic guidance on framework analysis. [Folder ID = 60995](#).
- ²⁰ Basic guidance on Monitoring Plans. [Folder ID = 60979](#).
- ²¹ An update on WWF Track. [Folder ID = 61149](#).
- ²² Basic guidance on operational plans. [Folder ID = 60980](#).
- ²³ Risk criteria for projects that need a formal plan. [Folder ID = 60980](#).
- ²⁴ For an example of a conservation action plan format, see EAP Practitioners Guide, pp 91-93 http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/ecoregions/publications/publication.cfm?uNewsID=19194&uLangId=1 or Sharing Across Boundaries-Conservation Plan. Both are WWF-US Publications. See also: [Home](#) > [Documents](#) > [Network Standards](#) > [Programmes](#) > [2. Design](#) > [2.3 Operational plan](#)
- ²⁵ Basic guidance on workplans and budgets. [FolderID=60981](#) Budget template: [FolderID=52864](#) Cost recovery guidelines: [FolderID=59003](#)
- ²⁶ Those projects that have WWF-US as their home office should refer to the *US Policies and Procedures Handbook* at <https://intranet.wwfus.org/policy/tableofcontents/index.htm>. Users will need an ID & password which they can obtain from Joy Patterson at WWF-US. Those projects with WWF International as their home office should go to: <https://intranet.panda.org/documents/folder.cfm?uFolderID=1192>.
- ²⁷ Internal proposal template. [FolderID=60994](#).
- ²⁸ Guidelines for capacity assessment. [FolderID=52503](#).
The *Organizational Assessment Process* tool itself.
<https://intranet.panda.org/documents/document.cfm?uFolderID=52507&uDocID=54049>.
- ²⁹ A checklist for human resource assessment. [FolderID=56300&uDocID=59140](#)
<https://intranet.panda.org/documents/document.cfm?uFolderID=56300&uDocID=59140>.
- ³⁰ Templates for some of these partnership arrangements. [Folder ID = 59141](#).
- ³¹ Basic guidance on managing data. [Folder ID = 60985](#).
- ³² Basic guidance on analysis. [Folder ID = 60986](#).
- ³³ Network Standard technical report template. [Folder ID = 60994](#).
- ³⁴ Basic guidance on basic guidance on analyzing operational and financial performance
<https://intranet.panda.org/documents/folder.cfm?uFolderID=60987>
- ³⁵ Financial report templates. [Folder ID = 52860](#).
- ³⁶ Information on financial forecasting. [Folder ID = 52861](#).
- ³⁷ Basic guidance on adapting your plans and budgets
<https://intranet.panda.org/documents/folder.cfm?uFolder=60988>
- ³⁸ Basic guidance on sharing lessons
<https://intranet.panda.org/documents/folder.cfm?uFolderID=60989>
- ³⁹ Basic guidance on formal communications strategy and products
<https://intranet.panda.org/documents/folder.cfm?uFolderID=60990>

⁴⁰ Basic guidance on feedback, evaluations and audits

<https://intranet.panda.org/documents/folder.cfm?uFolder=60991>

⁴¹ A standard set of Terms of Reference for an evaluation. [Folder ID = 60994](#).

⁴² Basic guidance on performance and learning culture

<https://intranet.panda.org/documents/folder.cfm?uFolder=60992>

Glossary

There is an endless debate among planners as to the relative meaning of technical terms such as goals, objectives, activities, targets, milestones, outputs, and results. Every office, project, and even individual seems to have their own preferred set of terms. And things become even more confusing when terminology gets translated across different human languages – for example in English, a *goal* is broader than an *objective* whereas in Spanish, an *objetivo* is broader than a *meta*. There is no right answer – the most important thing is that the members of your project team, and the people you work with, have a clear and common definition of whatever terms you choose to use.

Over time, however, there are real advantages to having a standard glossary across the Network and beyond. To this end, technical terms in this document were carefully selected, underlined when first used, consistently used thereafter, and defined in this glossary. The selection of specific terms for a given concept and the definitions for these terms are based on current usage of words by the WWF Network, other conservation organizations, and planners in other disciplines. Click here for a [broader glossary of terms](#) across the WWF Network.

Action Plan – A description of a project’s goals, objectives, and activities that will be undertaken to abate identified threats and make use of opportunities. For EAPs, the action or conservation plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to conserve and restore the biodiversity of an ecoregion over several decades. A WWF action plan outlines what WWF’s contribution is to a joint project’s overall action plan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conservation Target – A synonym for biodiversity target.

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

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

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

Evaluation – An assessment of a project or programme in relation to its own previously stated goals and objectives. Compare to audit.

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

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

Goal – A formal statement detailing a desired impact of a project, such as the desired future status of a target. A good goal meets the criteria of being *linked to targets*, *impact oriented*, *measurable*, *time limited*, and *specific*. This is a shift from the traditional definition of the term “goal” which is more akin to vision statement in this document.

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

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

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

Intermediate Result – A specific benchmark or milestone that a project is working to achieve en route to accomplishing a final goal or objective (in this case, “intermediate” typically refers to a temporal dimension).

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

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

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

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

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

Objective – A formal statement detailing a desired outcome of a project such as reducing a critical threat. A good objective meets the criteria of being: *outcome oriented*, *measurable*, *time limited*, *specific*, and *practical*. If the project is well conceptualized and designed, realization of a project’s objectives should lead to the fulfillment of the project’s goals and ultimately its vision. In some previous WWF planning systems, objectives were sometimes called “targets.” Compare to vision and goal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Result – The desired future state of a target or factor. Results include *impacts* which are linked to targets, *outcomes* which are linked to threats and opportunities, and *outputs* which are linked to activities. See Box 1 in the [introduction to results chains](#) for more explanation.

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

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

Scope – The broad geographic or thematic focus of a project.

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

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

Strategy – A broad course of action that includes one or more objectives and the activities required to accomplish each objective.

Target – Shorthand for biodiversity/conservation target. Note that in earlier WWF lexicons, this term was also used as a synonym for objective.

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

Thematic Target – The focus of a non-biodiversity oriented project. For example, average global temperature for a project dealing with global warming. Compare with biodiversity target.

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

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

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

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

WWF Track – A WWF Network-wide relational database system under development that will allow for project level monitoring data storage and management.

Criteria for Key Terms

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

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

Goal: A formal statement detailing a desired impact of a project, such as the desired future status of a target.

- **Linked to Targets** – Directly associated with one or more of your biodiversity targets
- **Impact Oriented** – Represents the desired future status of the target over the long-term
- **Measurable** – Definable in relation to some standard scale (numbers, percentage, fractions, or all/nothing states)
- **Time Limited** – Achievable within a specific period of time, generally 10 or more years
- **Specific** – Clearly defined so that all people involved in the project have the same understanding of what the terms in the goal mean

Objective: A formal statement detailing a desired outcome of a project.

- **Outcome Oriented** – Represents necessary changes in critical threat and opportunity factors that affect one or more biodiversity targets or project goals
- **Measurable** – Definable in relation to some standard scale (numbers, percentage, fractions, or all/nothing states)
- **Time Limited** – Achievable within a specific period of time, generally 3-10 years
- **Specific** – Clearly defined so that all people involved in the project have the same understanding of what the terms in the objective mean
- **Practical** – Achievable and appropriate within the context of the project site, and in light of the political, social and financial context

Activity: A specific action or set of tasks undertaken by project staff and/or partners to reach one or more objectives.

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

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

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

Annex 1. Applying These Standards to Projects and Programmes

Defining Projects and Programmes

The basic units of conservation work are projects and programmes. They are defined as follows:

- **Project** – A set of actions undertaken by a defined group of practitioners – including managers, researchers, community members, or other stakeholders – to achieve defined goals and objectives. Projects are usually short-term, have a defined completion date, focus on one location, and have a limited number of partner organizations. They tend to deal with either field or policy work but not both. Small projects have a budget of <100,000 CHF per year while medium projects have a budget of between 100,000 and 250,000 CHF per year, and large projects have budgets > 250,000 per year.
- **Programme** – A distinct group of linked and jointly-managed projects which together aim to achieve a common broad vision, or a distinct group of related and jointly-managed projects that are defined under the umbrella of a set of targets, goals and objectives. A conservation programme is typically much larger in scale and more complex than a project. A typical programme involves at least one of the following: multiple countries, multiple partner organizations to implement the work, complexity and scale in terms of desired results, or more than one significant donor. Programmes are usually large budget (>1 million CHF lifetime) and long-term, and may not have a discrete end date. They often address both direct and indirect threats and can link fieldwork, policy and often other elements such as capacity building. In general in WWF and in GAA donors there is a trend towards the “programmatic approach.”

In the interest of simplicity, this document uses the term “project” to represent both projects and programmes since these standards of practice are designed to apply equally well to both.

Examples of Projects vs. Programmes

Project	Programme
Reforestation of Chitwan National Park buffer in Nepal, funded by a \$300,000 grant from USAID and executed by WWF.	Large-scale reforestation as part of a multi-million dollar initiative in the Terai Arc landscape, which covers parts of Nepal, India, and Bhutan.
Sustainable fisheries analysis for a protected area in coastal Mozambique, funded and executed by WWF.	Sustainable fisheries analysis for the East African Marine region (coastal waters of Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique), funded by UNEP, DFID, and USAID and executed by WWF.
Raising AIDS awareness in 3 villages in Namibia, funded by the Gates Foundation and executed by WWF.	Raising AIDS awareness across several districts of Namibia, funded by a \$1.5 million grant from the Gates Foundation, and executed by WWF, UNDP, and Namibia's Ministry of Health.

Expectations of Different Sized Projects and Programmes

All WWF projects, programmes and offices should have working knowledge of the WWF Standards, and should walk through each step as part of their regular management routine. You should use the guidance available and be able to show that you have done so. The way you apply each step, including which tools you decide to apply, may vary from project to project. However in an effort to make it clear to practitioners what is “compulsory”, the summary table below clarifies general expectations.

Type (annual budget)	Small Project (<100k CHF)	Project (100-250k CHF)	Large Project or Programme (>250k CHF)
Standards Overview	Yes, apply simply	Yes (+ GAA Proposal Development Standard if you seek GAA funds)	Yes (+ GAA Proposal Development Standard if you seek GAA funds)
Templates	Simple Concept, Workplan and Budget Technical Report (TPR) Quarterly Financial Report and Explanatory Notes (R3) Forecasting Full Term Forecasting	Concept (recommended) Proposal Technical Report (TPR) Quarterly Financial Report and Explanatory Notes (R3) Forecasting Full Term Forecasting	Concept (recommended) Proposal Technical Report (TPR) Quarterly Financial Report and Explanatory Notes (R3) Forecasting Full Term Forecasting Evaluation
Guidelines and Tools	Few/ selected	Some guidelines and tools should be used and application should be kept simple Strategic plan is required (Action Plan, Monitoring Plan and Operational Plan) - best summarized using proposal template	Most guidelines and tools should be used Programmes should be able to show evidence that they are applying each step of the standards (i.e. producing the defined Outputs for each step).

Notes:

- For simplicity, the categorization of projects and programmes above is summarized by the single criterion of annual budget.
- For a very small one-off project, say less than 40,000 CHF in value, use of these templates may be inappropriate. For example, a simple listing of tasks required and outputs expected may be more appropriate. Alternatively the Concept note can still be applied but the content could be simplified.
- The internal proposal template can be used to summarise most of the key outputs required from a Strategic Plan.
- For some of the Standards tools, whilst they are very useful there is currently limited experience of them in the WWF Network (e.g. Conceptual Models, Results Chains, Financial Models). At this time they may be seen as “Recommended Best Practices.” They will be applied as “Standards” as training and capacity-building activities for the Standards are delivered.
- Some variation in the budget thresholds applied in WWF offices may be appropriate in order to keep communication simple (and due to variation in the value of currency).

Annex 2. Summary of Standards of Practice and Outputs

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

WWF Conservation Project and Programme Management Process

0. General Practices

0.1 Engage Stakeholders

0.2 Embrace Learning

1. Define...

1.1 Initial Team Composition and Operations

- ◆ Selection of initial project team and designation of project leader
- ◆ Concept paper for the project

1.2 Scope and Vision

- ◆ A brief description of the project's scope
- ◆ If appropriate, a map of the project area (GIS file or hand sketch)
- ◆ A vision and vision statement for the project

1.3 Targets

- ◆ Selection of a limited number of targets for your project
- ◆ A brief explanation of why these targets were chosen

1.4 Context and Stakeholders

- ◆ An analysis and ranking of the critical direct threats affecting your targets
- ◆ An analysis of the key indirect threats, opportunities, and stakeholders
- ◆ A conceptual model that shows the cause-and-effect relationships among factors

2. Design...

2.1 Action Plan: Goals, Objectives and Activities

- ◆ Goals for all of your targets
- ◆ Objectives for critical threats and other factors that your project will address
- ◆ One or more activities for each conservation objective
- ◆ Results chains or other formal descriptions of your core assumptions
- ◆ *Overall Action Plan* that compiles goals, objectives, and activities

2.2 Monitoring Plan

- ◆ A list of the indicators your project will measure to track the effectiveness of each activity
- ◆ Brief descriptions of the methods for collecting data for each indicator
- ◆ When, where, and by whom each kind of data will be collected
- ◆ A description of how data will be stored and analyzed
- ◆ A plan for regular updates to the WWF Track System

2.3 Operational Plan

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

3. Implement...

3.1 Workplans and Budgets

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

3.2 Fund Raising

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

3.3 Capacity Building

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

3.4 Partnerships

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

4. Analyze & Adapt...

4.1 Manage Incoming Data on an Ongoing Basis

- ◆ Development and regular use of systems for storing and backing up project data
- ◆ Uploads of data to WWF Track

4.2 Analyze Project Results and Assumptions

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

4.3 Analyze Operation and Financial Functions/Performance

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

4.4 Adapt Your Plans and Budgets

- ◆ Revised project documents and work plans

5. Share...

5.1 Lessons

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

5.2 Formal Communication Products

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

5.3 Feedback and Evaluations

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

5.4 Performance and Learning Culture

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

Iterate Through the Cycle