

Charter Declaration of the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP)

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Statement of Purpose of CMP

The purpose of this charter is to describe the agreement among the members of the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP).¹ It describes the membership of CMP, the work we do in broad terms, and how we communicate and make decisions. This charter lays out our vision, the ways in which we will work together, and the principles for engagement that we have mutually developed and freely adopted. While this charter is not legally binding, we see it as a social contract among the members of CMP.

CMP is a partnership of conservation NGOs, government agencies, and funders that seek better ways to design, manage, and measure the impacts of their conservation actions. CMP members come together to work on issues related to impact assessment and accountability because we believe that, collectively, we have a greater chance of designing and implementing effective monitoring and evaluation systems and ultimately, enhancing program and project design and implementation. We believe that CMP serves as a dynamic and active catalyst for promoting innovation in adaptive management² and results based management³ in conservation. We have formed CMP with a mission to capture and convey conditions needed for successful biodiversity conservation and to resolve the conservation community's most intractable problems related to adaptive management. By participating in CMP, member organizations seek to capitalize on their individual and collective experience to avoid duplication of effort, to bypass tried, but failed approaches, and to quickly identify and adopt better practices.

The mission of CMP is to advance the practice of conservation by developing, testing, and promoting principles and tools to credibly assess and improve the effectiveness of conservation actions. Each organization within CMP has biodiversity conservation as one of its primary goals, is focused on achieving tangible conservation results, and is working to improve approaches to

¹ "Members" refers to institutions in CMP; each member institution has one staff member who serves as primary representative to CMP.

² "Adaptive management" is the design, management, and monitoring of conservation projects to test assumptions, adapt, and learn.

³ CMP promotes innovation in adaptive management and results based management, however in order to be more concise, the term adaptive management is the one used throughout this document.

project⁴ design, management, and assessment. In order to achieve our mission, we will abide by the following working principles and core values:

Working Principles

We understand that in order to achieve lasting success, the conservation community must come together in a collaborative manner to tackle some of the underlying barriers that we currently face. The Conservation Measures Partnership is firmly rooted in open collaboration and sharing because we believe that we can collectively enhance results, improve impacts, and accelerate learning by transcending often-present institutional barriers.

We collaborate on improving the practice of adaptive management because we see it as an essential approach to help conservation practitioners improve the effectiveness of their work. We believe that adaptive management should not be used to detect and punish mistakes, but rather to help practitioners test their assumptions and learn from both their successes and failures. We believe that an effective adaptive management approach will be:

- **Aligned with Organizational Goals** – An effective approach will help an organization meet its overall goals.
- **Globally Applicable** – An effective approach will be broadly applicable to projects and programs at all scales and in all situations. Furthermore, we will strive to have compatible approaches across different organizations and donors so as to minimize the burden on field projects.
- **Scientifically Credible** – An effective approach will be informed by state-of-the-art scientific knowledge and thinking.
- **Functional** – An effective approach will be efficient and cost-effective and will not place an unsustainable demand for resources on the organizations that use it.
- **Simple to Understand and Transparent** – An effective approach is one that is more easily used by practitioners. In addition, the results delivered through the approach should be described in such a way that they are easy to understand and used by various audiences including local stakeholders, practitioners, managers, donors, and others.

Core Values

To facilitate our work in this partnership, we will honor the following core values:

- **Commitment to Learning** – We are all committed to improving the practice of conservation by sharing our experiences and learning together. To this end, we will work to test new concepts and approaches. We are interested in sharing not only success stories but also lessons learned from efforts that did not turn out as planned.
- **Trust** – Working together makes us stronger than working apart from one another and enables us to avoid needless duplication of effort, thus making us all more efficient in achieving our personal and organizational goals. We understand that for CMP to function as

⁴ A project is any set of actions undertaken by any group of managers, researchers, or local stakeholders interested in achieving certain defined goals and objectives.

the catalytic force we envision, we must trust our fellow members of the partnership and assume they will act with the best interest of the group in mind.

- **Integrity** – CMP must function with great respect, honesty and clarity of purpose and we know that it is important to maintain patience as we grapple with complex issues and diverse perspectives.

Our Work

The member organizations of CMP came together to pool their efforts and capitalize on their collective experience in order to recommend approaches that reliably assess and improve the effectiveness of conservation investments. To do this, we have developed a set of mutually acceptable standards for designing, implementing, assessing, and auditing conservation projects. These standards – *the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation* – form the basis of adaptive management for all the organizations that are members of CMP.

We have designed the *Open Standards* to serve as both a guide to developing effective conservation projects and a framework against which all projects can be measured. As such, they provide conservation practitioners, implementing organizations, and donors alike explicit and transparent criteria for measuring quality in conservation.

To fulfill our mission, the members of CMP endeavor to:

- Develop, apply, evaluate, continually refine, and promote the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation*.
- Develop and test frameworks, approaches, and tools based on the *Open Standards* – including Miradi, adaptive management software for conservation projects – to measure the impact and effectiveness of conservation interventions.
- Provide or facilitate training and coaching opportunities for those organizations wishing to apply the *Open Standards*.
- Use the *Open Standards* as a basis for promoting cross project and cross organizational learning so that we can advance the state of knowledge of conservation.
- Use these standards as a framework for conducting conservation audits or peer reviews of on-the-ground projects within and across CMP member organizations.
- Communicate regularly with the broader conservation practitioner and donor communities to share findings and innovations in conservation measures, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Facilitate the provision and analysis of data on impacts and effectiveness through global and regional networks.
- Collectively fundraise for implementing, evaluating, communicating, and training on best practices and tools for improving the practice of conservation.

In addition to the actions listed above, CMP will undertake other activities it deems important as it moves forward.

Membership

CMP requires the active engagement of its membership. It is not a passive network of institutions that occasionally meets to discuss relevant issues. Instead, for CMP to function effectively, it requires the involvement of individuals who have a clear vision of what they want to achieve and who work together in a productive and respectful manner. As such, while specific institutional involvement is important, the individual who represents each institution is just as important. Membership in CMP should be such that it maintains CMP's focus and promotes a sense of ownership among a group of similar organizations trying to accomplish similar goals and objectives.

Members

CMP seeks to involve like-minded organizations from around the world. To this end, full CMP membership is made up of not-for-profit/non-government organizations (NGOs), private foundations, government agencies, and donor organizations. In addition, we have created a special non-voting membership category for related conservation consortia that we believe bring added value to CMP.⁵ Current criteria for full membership in CMP include the following (all must be met):

- Conservation of biodiversity is an important part of the mission of the organization.
- The organization directly implements or assists in the implementation of conservation actions and/or initiatives.
- The organization has demonstrated interest in project monitoring, evaluation, auditing, or adaptive management through programs and/or analysis on these subjects.
- The organization promotes and ascribes to an approach to conducting its work that is based on creating partnerships and alliances.
- The organization commits to open and shared learning with the other members of CMP.
- An experienced and capable staff member of each organization is to be designated by the organization's senior management as a representative to CMP. Each organization must also designate an alternate, or second representative, who is welcome to participate fully in CMP activities. (However, each member organization has only one vote in all CMP affairs.)
- The organization commits to allocating resources such that it may host an event, allow regular and committed participation of a member, contribute to general costs of CMP, and other activities.

Obligations of Membership

Specific obligations of member organizations include:

- **Apply the Open Standards** – CMP members agree to design, manage, monitor, and evaluate their conservation actions in compliance with the *CMP Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation*.

⁵ CMP can invite related conservation consortia to participate as non-voting members. These consortium members can participate in all CMP-sponsored activities but are not required to pay dues. All other membership obligations apply for consortia members. Individual institutional members of participating consortia may, however, be full members of CMP.

- **Attend meetings** – Members are required to attend periodic meetings of CMP on a regular basis.
- **Do the work** – Members are responsible for engaging in and completing the work that CMP has designated for itself.
- **Develop proposals** – When necessary, member organizations will develop and promote proposals to fund those activities that cannot be covered by the contributions of the participating member organizations.
- **Provide working capital** – Member organizations will cover the costs associated with their participation – including staff time and expenses. They will also pay annual dues in the amount of \$2500 to support core and coordination costs associated with managing the operations of CMP and to use as potential matching funds for any grants where this is needed. On occasion, members may be asked by the governing Board to contribute to funding additional special activities. In addition, the Board has the option of modifying this membership requirement for an individual organization as it deems warranted.

Benefits of Membership

Benefits of membership include:

- **Having a say in the course and direction of CMP** – Current members will set policy and determine what areas of interest to focus on.
- **Determination of the activities undertaken by CMP** – Once policy is set, the members will decide what activities will be undertaken by CMP.
- **Participation in all activities organized by CMP** – Current members will have the option to participate in any and all of the activities developed by CMP for the group.
- **Joint authorship of CMP products** – When appropriate, products that are developed and published by CMP will be produced under joint authorship.
- **Input to the development of CMP products** – CMP members will enjoy first rights to the materials and products resulting from CMP activities. CMP members will also be able to participate in the pretesting of draft products.

At the discretion of the CMP Board, non-member individuals may be invited to participate in CMP activities, including attending CMP regular meetings. These individuals are not considered full members, do not have a vote in CMP matters, and are not eligible to serve as CMP Board members.

Determination of Membership

Membership is open to any organization that meets the criteria for membership. Final acceptance of a new organization for membership will be determined by the existing full membership, based on a recommendation by the CMP Board. Membership in CMP is not based solely on institutional factors. As such, interested organizations must put forward candidate representatives to the CMP Board that will uphold the values of CMP and contribute actively and significantly to CMP activities. Failure to do so will preclude an organization from participating in CMP. Acceptance of an organization and its representatives to CMP is at the discretion of the existing CMP members.

Potential new members can request membership in CMP by contacting one of the existing Board members with a brief letter describing why the group would like to join and who the individual(s) representing the group will be. Once vetted by the Board to determine if the requesting institution meets the criteria for full membership, the request will be passed on to the CMP general membership for final confirmation.

A member institution can voluntarily terminate its membership in CMP by giving written notice to the Board. In the unlikely event that it becomes necessary to revoke membership, the Board will undertake an inquiry, solicit input from the general membership as appropriate, and decide on the status of the membership in question. In order for membership to be rescinded, a unanimous vote by the Board is required (excluding the member in question if it holds a Board seat).

Governance

The Conservation Measures Partnership is governed by a Board and is elected from and by the membership of CMP. The Board will be responsible for the following duties:

- **Draft and propose policy** – The Board suggests new policy to the full membership for its review and approval.
- **Propose activities** – The Board takes advice from the full membership to suggest new directions in activities that CMP might undertake.
- **Select and manage coordinator** – The Board is responsible for selecting one or more of the members to serve as the coordinator/facilitator for CMP. The Board develops an MOU with the coordinator and supervises the coordinator.
- **Develop the annual budget** – In collaboration with the coordinator, the Board develops, approves, and manages the annual budget.
- **Seek funding and oversee finances** – The Board is primarily responsible for seeking funding for CMP activities.
- **Represent CMP and provide external exposure** – On occasion, Board members are required to represent CMP at meetings, conferences, and other venues.
- **Act as liaison with other organizations and initiatives** – Board members represent CMP and work with other parties.
- **Make recommendations for membership** – The Board receives requests for membership in CMP and recommends potential members to existing membership for final approval.

The Board is comprised of three to five CMP members and no organization can hold more than one seat on the Board. To the extent possible, the Board should represent the major CMP constituencies. Board members are elected by a majority vote of all CMP member organizations in good standing. The current Board will solicit interest from the full CMP membership for serving on the future Board. Each organization has one vote for each open seat on the Board. Board members will serve a term of two (2) years; the terms may be staggered so that, insofar as is possible, approximately one-half (½) of the Board members will be elected to full terms each year. Board members may be reelected to multiple terms. The Board has the flexibility to decide its own structure and officer positions.

Board members are committed to managing CMP in a way that is productive, collegial, and efficient. To this end, while we wish to maintain a sense of informality to our interactions, we will strive to bring sufficient structure and process to our activities to ensure we meet our ambitious goals.

How we govern ourselves is guided, in great part, by the general working principles and core values that we outlined above. Certain policy decisions and oversight of day-to-day activities will be carried out by the Board, ideally using a consensus-based decision making process. If consensus within the Board on a particular issue is impossible, then it is taken to the general membership for a vote that requires a simple majority of all members. Each member organization will have only one vote. In addition, some decisions are exclusively the right and responsibility of the general membership. These include:

- **Amendments to the charter** – In order to amend the CMP charter, 2/3 of the general membership must agree to the change.
- **Changes to Membership** – Changes to the way members are approved and final approval of new members are the right and responsibility of the general members.
- **Approval of new CMP initiatives** – Any partnership or funding request proposed in the name of CMP must be approved by the general membership.
- **Ratification of coordinator recommended by Board** – Once recommended by the Board, full members approve the coordinator.
- **Confirmation of location and timing of meetings** – General membership is consulted (by the Board) in order to decide on the appropriate dates and venues of in-person meetings.

It is our sincere hope that the relaxed and informal nature of the CMP Board, the working principles, and the core values provide a fabric for gentle democratic governance and that formal voting procedure will rarely be needed.

Property Rights, Intellectual and Real

The success of CMP is ultimately based on the partners' willingness to share approaches, training, data, analyses, and other products. To this end, it is critical that we have clearly defined guidelines for sharing and using one another's intellectual property and for providing proper credit to the intellectual property that we mutually develop. Some basic principles for managing intellectual property include:

1. Products produced by a specific organization remain the property of that organization, unless otherwise stated in advance.
2. Products that are produced or substantially modified through joint work between two or more institutions under the auspices of CMP will belong to all the institutions that were involved in producing it. This ownership will be joint and non-exclusive; all parties will have the same rights to use and distribute the products.

As a general rule, we will endeavor to make our products available to all interested non-profit organizations that have goals that are compatible with ours. To this end, we will utilize licensing language developed by the Creative Commons <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>. This licensing stipulates that other non-profit organizations can use our material, but they must attribute it to us and they must share whatever they create with the broader community as well.

Authorship of specific products will have to be worked out on a case-by-case basis. The members of CMP have made a strong commitment to discuss and resolve this topic as early as possible in the development of any given product.

All CMP members will be credited equally in all work produced under the auspices of CMP. For example, either no group's logo will be used, or all groups' logos will be used. However, any organization has the right to refuse having its name or logo used on any CMP product.

Amendments

Amendments to this charter can be made with 2/3 approval of the CMP membership.

Annex 1: Description and Operations

Given the dispersed nature of the organizations that make up CMP, much of our interaction and communications may take place virtually via phone and e-mail. Generally, we will strive to have at least one annual in-person meeting of all membership to discuss new initiatives, set policy, develop workplans, and undertake specific initiatives; these meetings will be called by the Board. In addition, voting and other decision-making may take place via email as needed.

Coordination

The CMP Board will nominate one or more members of the partnership to serve as a coordinator/facilitator of the work of the overall group, who are then approved by the full membership. If needed, CMP may look also to contract coordination services. The specific nature of this relationship with the coordinator will be spelled out in a scope of work and memorandum of understanding that will be agreed upon by the CMP Board and the coordinator. Specific functions that the coordinator will undertake include:

- **Develop and manage an annual budget** – Develop a draft annual budget for approval by the CMP board.
- **Organize meetings and conference calls** – Determine dates for meetings, work with members to find venues, create draft agendas for the meetings, track results of the meeting.
- **Assist in developing and implementing initiatives** – Work with designated CMP members to develop and implement specific initiatives.
- **Establish and maintain website** – Develop and maintain the CMP website.
- **Coordinate the development of funding proposals** – Work with designated CMP members to develop and write funding proposals and work with donors to secure funding.
- **Receive and manage funds** – Work with the Board to bill and collect dues and extraordinary funding requests from CMP members and to manage all other CMP income.
- **Represent CMP at appropriate functions** – Attend meetings and workshops and represent CMP.

Threshold for CMP Initiatives

In addition to serving as a forum where members can gather to discuss issues related to the design, management, and measurement of the impacts of their conservation actions, CMP actively engages in developing new tools and products. As such, on occasion, CMP will form working groups of various members to propose and launch new initiatives. In order for an initiative to be officially endorsed by CMP, it must fulfill the following requirements:

- **Comprised of at least three CMP member organizations** – All new initiatives must include, at a minimum, three CMP member organizations.
- **Vetted by the Board** – The Board serves as the primary vetting body for new initiatives to be considered by CMP. Once the Board deems a concept clear and relevant enough for full review, it will pass the concept proposal on to the general membership.

- **Approved by the general membership** – All new initiatives must be approved by the general membership by a simple majority vote in order to be fully and officially endorsed by CMP.
- **Reported on regularly** – All official CMP initiatives must report on progress, management, finances, and any other relevant issue at least once a year at the in-personal general meeting. In addition, the CMP Board has the right to request and receive an update on each initiative at its discretion.

Rights of official CMP endorsement include:

- **Management of the initiative according to the proposal** – Coordinators of the initiative may conduct the business of the initiative within the framework of what was endorsed by CMP.
- **Use of the CMP name and logo** – The initiative may use the CMP name and logo on all relevant communications materials.
- **Fundraising** – Coordinators of the initiative may fundraise for the initiative in the name of CMP.

The CMP Board has the authority to terminate endorsement of any initiative at any time for any cause.

Financial Management

Financial management of CMP is the responsibility of the Board. The appointed coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day management of the CMP budget under supervision by the Board. The management and distribution of core funds, generated by membership dues and other sources of income, is the responsibility of the Board. The general terms of the use of and approach to the management of these funds must be proposed to and approved by the general membership on an annual basis in the form of an annual budget.