

Measuring Our Effectiveness

Our Commitment to Advance Conservation

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Part I: Consensus Statement

Our Challenge

The biodiversity conservation community is tackling immense and complex environmental problems. The stakes are high. People around the world are counting on us; they trust us, they work alongside us, and they are giving us significant resources to act effectively to save the planet. But we have a problem – we don't have a fully functional system to assess the effectiveness of our actions. It is difficult, right now, to say consistently what is working, what could be improved, and when a change in approach is needed. And that is unacceptable.

Without more rigorous measurement of effectiveness and disciplined recording of our efforts, how will we know if we are progressing as rapidly as needed to achieve our conservation goals? How will we become more efficient? How will we learn from one another? And how will we be able to demonstrate our achievements to build public and political will to expand our resources to really meet the challenges we face? This problem is bigger than any one leader or organization, and that is why we are coming together to develop a shared plan of action. It will be difficult to more rigorously and openly grade ourselves, but the stakes are high and we must act.

Our Vision

By 2015, global conservation efforts will be more efficient and effective because we will know how to leverage or replicate what works and to avoid what doesn't based upon credible measurement of our effectiveness and the open sharing of the lessons we learn.

Our Commitment

To realize our vision, we commit our respective organizations to:

- **State our desired results in terms of achievements, not actions.** Effort alone is not sufficient to succeed. We will specify measurable desired results both for the short-term (e.g., funds raised, laws enacted) and long-term (e.g., threats abated, species status improved).
- **State how our efforts will lead to our desired results.** Just as a scientist states a clear hypothesis before designing an experiment to test it, we will articulate and share the "theories of change" behind our actions before implementing them.
- **Track our progress toward achieving desired results.** We will not wait until the end of an action to evaluate it. Instead, we will systematically assess short and long-term indicators to track the effectiveness of our actions, investing in measures appropriate to the risks we are managing.
- **Adapt our strategies based on what we've learned.** Simply measuring effectiveness doesn't fix anything. We will use our data and analyses to guide us toward doing more of what works, and less of what doesn't.
- **Share our results honestly and transparently.** We are not going to succeed every time, but if we are honest in our appraisals of our efforts, we will learn every time. And if we openly share our assessments of effectiveness with each other and with the public, we will increase broad learning and transparency, ultimately advancing the work of the biodiversity conservation community as a whole.

We also commit to reconvening in one year to assess our progress against these commitments, share lessons learned, and continue the process of building a field committed to rigorous effectiveness measurement and learning.

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Part II: Agreed Joint Actions

(Editor's note: this is a 'food for thought' list and will be amended via discussion at the Summit)

To achieve the aims outlined in the consensus statement, *Measuring Our Effectiveness: Our Commitment to Advance Conservation*, we agree to work together over the coming months to:

- **Publicly confirm our organizational intentions to better measure and to share our results widely** (e.g., through our web sites, in journals and in other publications).
- **Adopt common, broad standards** for project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, that make it easier for us to report on and share what we learn.
- **Initiate a number of pilot partnerships and initiatives** that will lead to, for example:
 - Shared, broad standards for grant applications and reporting that promote greater rigor in project design (including measures planning), reduce transaction costs, and enable joint learning;
 - Peer review processes in which we review and learn from each others' effectiveness measurement efforts;
 - Shared technological platforms and data standards for information collection and dissemination; and
 - Commitments to fund and conduct assessments of the costs and benefits of these changes in the field and build the necessary evidence for conservation practitioners and donors alike to value this work and allocate effort and funding accordingly.