

Crop Wild Relatives – A manual of *in situ* conservation ©

Planning for CWR conservation and partnership building

Guidance on planning partnerships or collaborations in order to ensure the effective coordination and implementation of the CWR in situ conservation planning process.

THE PROBLEM

Conservation is the result of an intense planning process which requires coordination, collaboration, prioritization and communication among national, regional and international stakeholders. Biodiversity managers often underestimate the importance of, and commitment required for, this process. Poor planning and consideration may lead to a failure to achieve the expected project goals.

THE SOLUTION

Effective *planning* and *partnerships* can harness the enthusiasm, skills and resources of stakeholders and lay the foundation for successful *in situ* conservation.

CONTEXT FOR PLANNING - WHAT IS REQUIRED?

Most CWR *in situ* conservation projects have been supported by grants from agencies such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and with governmental approval and some degree of financial or in-kind support.

These projects fall within the traditional project implementation cycle and usually have both a limited time-frame and specific geographic focus. Grants must follow the objectives, goals and requirements of the sponsoring (or donor) agency. FAO and the EU have also funded CWR *in situ* conservation projects and GEF programs gather additional support from UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank.

Projects of this nature require an international steering committee to provide guidance and oversight. Collaborating with international partners provides a much need opportunity to attract technical expertise and co-financing, a compulsory requirement for GEF projects.

What is a partnership?

A partnership is *relationship in which people or organizations combine resources to carry out a specific set of activities*. Partners work together for a common purpose and for shared benefit.

Partnerships should offer effective coordination, minimize duplication and make the best use of available resources. They tend to be based upon informal, collaborative agreements or formal contracts such as Memoranda of Understanding (MOU). Planning and implementation of partnerships should involve wide consultation, effective communication and, ideally, control of local decision-making on activities and resources.



Bioversity/D. Hunter

Before embarking on partnership consider:

1. What level of participation is required?
2. What dangers/risks are involved?
3. What are the potential benefits?

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NATIONAL PLANNING

A **lead agency** or organization needs to be identified with a mandate and capacity to plan and coordinate CWR conservation activities. A **national focal point** will also need to be determined within this agency. The national focal point will be responsible for articulating the goals, objectives and resources of the project and communicating with relevant stakeholders. He/she will also be required to spend significant time consulting with relevant actors and donors in an effort to publicize the project or programme.

It is necessary to establish a **National Steering Committee** with the overall responsibility for national planning and decision-making. The committee should include members from relevant stakeholder groups and establish a detailed terms of reference. Formal agreements may be required depending on the national context. The Committee will be well-placed to balance the priorities and concerns of all stakeholders, who are likely to put pressure on the national focal point to meet their specific demands. The National Steering Committee should also have links and be in communication with other national biodiversity planning and reporting committees in order to generate attention and support for CWR conservation. It may be necessary to develop **sub-committees** to plan and coordinate specific activities based on themes or geographic locations.

The benefits of planning

1. Decision making is based on a clear understanding among all relevant stakeholders of the project, its goals and objectives and the resources available.
2. Roles and responsibilities assigned and agreed.
3. Improved use of financial, staff and organizational resources.
4. Increased transparency and accountability.
5. Improved communication.
6. Being better placed to take advantage of opportunities.
7. Enhanced commitment and ownership.

WHOSE PRIORITY COUNTS?

The task of prioritizing target CWR species for conservation action is both important and challenging and requires extensive consultation and negotiation with a wide range of stakeholders and institutions. Partners will need to agree on a methodology to ensure that relevant data is made available and to safeguard stakeholder and institutional commitment for follow-up actions. Each agency will most likely have its preferred species and, therefore, the related expertise, but this must be balanced against other criteria.

As part of the UNEP/GEF CWR Project, in **Armenia, Bolivia, Sri Lanka** and **Uzbekistan** the process of prioritization sometimes took up to two months and involved a total of 97 experts from 27 different national organizations, such as government departments, research institutes, universities, genebanks, herbaria, botanic gardens, indigenous peoples' organizations and non-governmental organizations.

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WILL A PARTNERSHIP WORK?

To assess if the context is favourable to partnership the following checklist questions can be posed:

- Where is the drive or motivation for this partnership coming from?
- How do you expect the partnership to address the problem?
- Will the partners be able to achieve more together than they would working on their own?
- Is the partnership based on partners' differences rather than their similarities?
- What are the main strengths that each partner brings to the partnership?
- Are there gaps in strengths or skills?
- What do partners expect or fear from the partnership?
- What can the partnership do to avoid, reduce or deal with these fears?
- Are there any existing problems or conflicts between partners?
- Will the partnership build a sense of local ownership?
- Will the partnership help sustain CWR *in situ* conservation actions?

The most serious shortfall of a project can be the failure to appreciate, until late in the planning process, the importance of the conservation components or sequence in which they need to be conducted and what *in situ* conservation of target species (as opposed to area conservation) really entails.

A **Conservation Committee** should be established at an early stage to discuss these issues. A global project should also establish a **Technical Advisory Committee** to clarify concerns and an **Inception Workshop** should be held at the commencement of the project to determine a common understanding of the steps required.

Things to consider when facilitating partnerships:

- Common interests and goals;
- Reputation nationally and internationally;
- Level of expertise;
- Past track record, including past achievements/problems;
- Proposed partner already working in similar area;
- Clear objectives of what to achieve;
- What is in it for the partners;
- Their power relations with other sectors and actors;
- Experience and attitudes towards other NGOs, government departments;
- Their receptivity to public opinion;

The UNEP/GEF CWR Project

The UNEP/GEF CWR Project consisted of a partnership that included nearly 60 national and international agencies. Planning, implementation and monitoring was conducted through a series of local and national committees, coordinated and guided by Bioversity International through an International Steering Committee made up of representatives from all participant countries and international organizations. A Technical Advisory Committee provided overall technical direction. Partnerships at the national level brought together academia, government departments, and protected area administrations, local and indigenous groups, NGOs, etc. The partnership encouraged each country to consult widely and negotiate with a range of stakeholders to reach a consensus.

As a result, CWR species from 36 different genera were prioritized for action and more than 310 CWR species were Red List assessed according to IUCN guidelines.

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Challenges in planning and partnerships:

A number of challenges exist in the process of planning and establishing partnerships in a project- or donor-driven context, with a focus on disbursement of funds and achievement of milestones and outputs for CWR *in situ* conservation.

A key challenge is the difficulty this process presents in terms of the long-term nature of CWR *in situ* conservation, the need for organizational capacity development and for mainstreaming CWR conservation into relevant national programmes. Considerable time is necessary for both project planning and preparation and the success (or failure) of the project may not be evident for 5 to 10 years, or even longer, after activities have been conducted. Funding, however, tends to be time-sensitive and limited to 3-5 years, without the possibility of renewal.

The long-term nature of CWR conservation is also the reason why activities should be implemented by the national government and state actors. The mainstreaming of CWR conservation into relevant national programmes is necessary to facilitate sustainability. Partnerships can play a key role in this long-term process by helping to identify financial needs and explore avenues for further funds and technical commitment.

It is critical to convey the long-term nature of CWR in situ conservation in the project proposal to sponsors.

Additional challenges include:

- The absence of a tradition of collaboration between the agriculture, forestry, biodiversity and conservation sectors;
- Addressing a diverse range of activities simultaneously (developing national action and management plans, data-collection, species prioritization, community participation, education and public awareness);
- Managing and working with a wide range of stakeholders sharing different opinions and perspectives (government agencies, NGOs, academia, private sector, national and regional networks, donors, and local and indigenous communities).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Conservation Action Planning (CAP) Handbook, developed by The Nature Conservancy - <http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/cbdgateway/cap/practices/index.html>

Biodiversity Conservation: A Guide for USAID Staff and Partners - http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADE258.pdf

Effective Engagement website, Department of Sustainability & Environment, Australia - <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/wcmn203.nsf/Home+Page/8A461F99E54B17EBCA2570340016F3A9?open>

Partnerships Online Guide - www.partnerships.org.uk/

The Partnering Toolbook by Ros Tennyson; produced by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) & the International Atomic Energy Agency - www.iblf.org/resources/general.jsp?id=49