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A **FRAMEWORK** for Monitoring, Evaluating, and Learning from Conservation Enterprises

A recent assessment by the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Forestry and Biodiversity Office found about 25 percent of activities implemented with biodiversity funds each year include support for conservation enterprises (CE). However, a systematic review by Roe et al. (2015) found little reported evidence that alternative livelihoods (including CEs) contributed to conservation outcomes. USAID's CE Collaborative Learning Group has since developed several syntheses and assessments to better understand the conditions that influence desired conservation outcomes, as well as a proposed framework for monitoring and evaluating conservation enterprise investments.

PURPOSE OF FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this framework is to inform the full cycle adaptive management of USAID programs (for Mission staff and implementing partners) through monitoring, evaluating, and learning from outcomes along the generalized theory of change (see Figure 1). The results of this framework will provide USAID programs the information needed to more effectively manage biodiversity programs and demonstrate desired outcomes. Use of the framework will also help USAID and their partners more systematically generate, document, and share lessons from different activities implementing this strategic approach.

PHOTO: UAXACTUN, GUATEMALA: Sulma Yaneth Suntecún Alvarez graduated from high school in Uaxactun and is now attending Asociación Ak'Tenamit in Livingston, Izabal, studying tourism. She returns and works sorting xate during her vacations to earn extra money. By setting up their own community-based sorting and processing 'bodega' for xate, the community of Uaxactun has converted a very low-value resource to a more value-added one. More importantly, it has created an opportunity for a majority of the families in the community to earn a better base income.
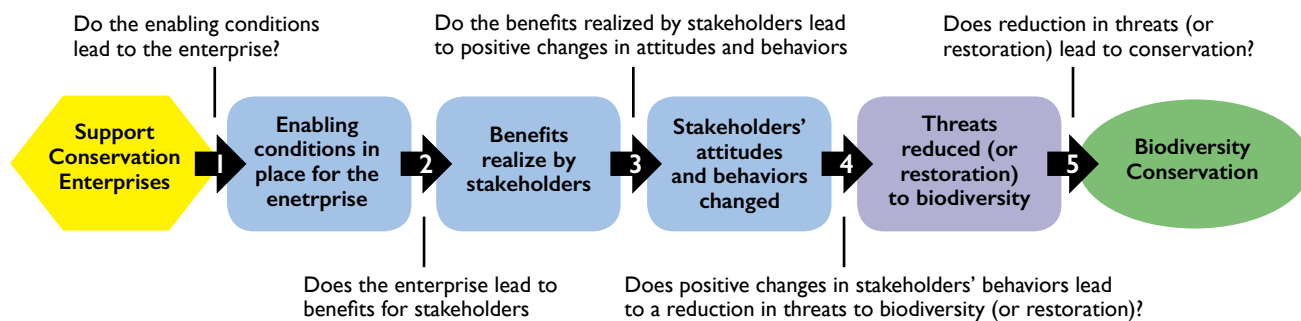Photo by Jason Houston for USAID.

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Figure 1. The CE Collaborative Learning Group uses a generalized theory of change as its framework for learning.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Outcome in the theory of change	Recommendations for what and how to measure effectiveness toward the outcome	
	WHAT TO MEASURE	HOW TO MEASURE
OUTCOME 1: The enabling conditions are in place for a sustainable business with desired levels of participation by targeted stakeholders	1.1 Period of time targeted stakeholders have received external assistance (financial and technical) in enterprise development	Tracking by implementing partners and/or a third-party evaluator
	1.2 Period of time participants in the enterprise have been providing goods and/or services	
	1.3 Level of participation by targeted stakeholders in the enterprise with rights to use resources and authority to enforce sustainable management under plan/agreement with the government and/or product certification program	
	1.4 Extent to which the stakeholders have secure rights to resources (land/resource tenure) and other supportive policies for enterprise development	Survey and/or focal group discussions with targeted stakeholders, both participants and non-participants in the enterprise; key informant interviews with government authorities and others supporting the enabling conditions for enterprise participation; business capacity and governance assessment tools
	1.5 Extent to which governance, organization, and management are in place, including that the enterprise: • is aligned with needs and aspirations of different stakeholders (e.g., differences in gender-related preferences) • has an ownership and management structure (e.g., individual, group) that encourages participation • has strong local leadership • complies with any government requirements • has stakeholders who have needed financial management skills and technical skills to produce goods and provide services (e.g., compliance with product certification standards)	
	1.6 Extent to which the enterprise is a viable business model, including that the enterprise has: • a strong market demand for goods and/or services and stakeholders have access to those markets • profit potential (e.g., adds value to products) • stakeholders with access to needed credit and/or capital • a sustainable source of inputs necessary to produce enterprise goods and services • access to equipment necessary to develop, process, and/or distribute enterprise goods and services • the necessary infrastructure in place to meet production and transportation needs • planned for potential external disturbances (e.g., natural disasters, changes in markets)	
	1.7 Extent to which the enterprise has supportive business alliances/partnerships with value chain actors (e.g., to assist with ongoing capacity needs, aggregation, value addition, and linkages to markets)	
	1.8 Extent to which other conditions positively or negatively influence desired levels of participation by targeted stakeholders	

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	WHAT TO MEASURE	**HOW TO MEASURE**
OUTCOME 2: Enterprises provide benefits to stakeholders	2.1 Livelihood **benefits** from different sources, including the enterprise, accrued to each targeted stakeholder group, described by the following aspects: sources of benefits; types of benefits, both monetary and non-monetary; amount; frequency; timing; and distribution of benefits among participants	Survey and/or focal group discussions with targeted stakeholders, both participants and non-participants in the enterprise
OUTCOME 3: Enterprise benefits motivate and enable the desired conservation attitudes and behaviors of stakeholders	3.1 Extent to which the desired **conservation behaviors** (including sustainable practices/resource use and excluding others from unsustainable practices) are practiced by targeted stakeholder groups participating in the enterprises per plans/agreements with government and/or product certification program	Key informant interviews with implementing partners and/or government officials; survey and/or field observation of practices of targeted stakeholders, both enterprise participants and non-participants
	3.2 Extent to which **community awareness and law enforcement** support the desired behaviors of targeted stakeholder groups participating in enterprises per plans/agreements with government and/or product certification program	
	3.3 Extent to which **benefit-sharing mechanisms** are perceived as fair and promote the desired conservation attitudes and behaviors by different stakeholders per plans/agreements with government and/or product certification program	Survey and/or focal group discussions with targeted stakeholders, both participants and non-participants in the enterprise
	3.4 Extent to which different aspects of enterprise benefits (from 2.1) are **motivating and enabling** the desired conservation behaviors per plans/agreements with government and/or product certification program	
OUTCOME 4: The conservation behaviors of enterprise stakeholders contribute to the achievement of desired threat reduction to, or restoration of, the biodiversity focal interests	4.1 Change in the status of **threats to biodiversity** focal interests within the site over time per plans/agreements with government and/or product certification program	Monitoring records (compiled by government or others) on the incidents of threats
	4.2 Extent to which **conservation behaviors of enterprise participants are contributing to achieving desired threat reduction** to, or restoration of, the biodiversity focal interests within the site per plans/agreements with government and/or product certification program	Key informant interviews with implementing partners and government officials responsible for the site, and auditors of certification programs; records for the detection, arrest, and prosecution for illegal activities*
	4.3 Extent to which the **scale of enterprise participation** by targeted stakeholder groups contributes to desired threat reduction within the site per plan/agreement with government and/or product certification program	
	4.4 Extent to which community awareness building and law enforcement are sufficient to reduce threats at the site by **non-enterprise participants** per plan/agreement with government and/or product certification program	
OUTCOME 5: Threat reduction or restoration contributes to an improvement in the status of biodiversity focal interests.	5.1 Change in the status of **conservation focal interests** (species and ecosystems) within the site over time per plans/agreements with government and/or product certification program	Data collection on the conditions of biodiversity focal interests (e.g., field surveys, analysis of remote sensing data)

* See Measuring Efforts to Combat Wildlife Crime: A Toolkit for Improving Action and Accountability for example indicators.

USE OF THE FRAMEWORK

This framework provides guidance for the development of custom indicators to measure the extent to which desired outcomes toward biodiversity conservation are achieved by supporting CE. This general guidance on what outcomes to measure will need to be tailored to the context and specific theory of change for each program. Programs may also need to track associated standard indicators for USAID reporting purposes. There may be other indicators (for example, related to gender) that may also be relevant to a specific program.

Some of the outcomes along the theory of change may not be fully achieved during a single or even multiple USAID funding cycles. Programs are encouraged to measure outcomes over the longer term. For example, the framework might be used by the government or other local partners working with communities to continually assess the outcomes and needs for adaptive management and additional support.

Data collection designs and methods (i.e., units of measurement, baselines, sampling) will depend on the specific information need identified, the type of question being addressed, and the time and resources available. For example, if a program team wants to know whether specific program outcomes can be attributed to the support they provided, this question would lend itself to an experimental or quasi-experimental design in an impact evaluation per the USAID Evaluation Policy.

KEY CONCEPTS USED IN THE FRAMEWORK

The framework uses "targeted stakeholders" to mean that engagement in enterprise participation is focused on the "right" people, in other words, those motivated and enabled to contribute to threat reduction as a result of benefiting from enterprises. "Conservation behaviors" are specific to the context, but examples might include ceasing to engage in illegal activities (e.g., poaching, clearing forest), more sustainably using resources (e.g., harvesting of non-timber forest products or fish), providing services that help reduce the effort of government (e.g., patrolling, fire control), and/or excluding others from unsustainable use. This framework assumes that a precursor of enterprise support is that targeted stakeholders have the rights to use resources and the authority to enforce sustainable management (e.g., exclude others from unsustainable use) under a formal plan or agreement monitored and enforced by the government and possibly by another third-party under a product certification program, such as the Forest Stewardship Council.

PHILIPPINES: Elizabeth Palcay does final quality control checks and finishes packaging hibiscus jelly. As part of their enterprise development programs, the Kalihan Educational Foundation (KEF) runs a small operation that makes jams, jellies, and other prepared foods.
Photo by Jason Houston for USAID.

USEFUL REFERENCES

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HAVE SUGGESTIONS OR NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

We would appreciate your feedback on this framework and how it may be useful in your programming. Also, please let us know if any additional information or technical assistance would be useful.

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