



Public-Private Partnerships to Address Global Biodiversity Threats: A Learning Evaluation

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COVER PHOTO: Women making Lokta bark paper rhododendron flowers for Aveda at Himalayan Bio Trade Pvt. Ltd. Kathmandu, Nepal. Photo Credit: Jason Houston for USAID

BACK COVER PHOTO: USAID support for seascape conservation in Glover's Reef, Belize, contributed to a more than 40 percent increase in endangered Nassau grouper numbers in one year. Photo Credit: Enric Sala, WCS

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ACRONYMS

ACI	Airports Council International
CWT	Combating Wildlife Trafficking
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
eCDT	Electronic Catch Documentation and Traceability
EIA	Environmental Investigation Agency
EU	European Union
FLA	Forest Legality Alliance
FLI	Forest Legality Initiative
GDST	Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability
GTA	Global Tuna Alliance
IATA	International Air Transport Association
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated
IWPA	International Wood Products Association
KII	Key Informant Interview
PSE	Private Sector Engagement
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ROUTES	Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species
SALT	Seafood Alliance for Legality and Traceability
SIMP	Seafood Import Monitoring Program
U.S.	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WRI	World Resources Institute



INTRODUCTION

Background

Building coalitions or partnerships of government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector stakeholders is a key strategy of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) approach to further its development objectives and sustain investments and outcomes, including in biodiversity, environmental resilience, and natural resource management. While there has been significant examination and learning around the role of such partnerships in terms of conservation enterprises and related outcomes (e.g., [The Nature of Conservation Enterprises](#)), there are few examinations of activities focused on the role of public-private partnerships across global supply chains to prevent biodiversity loss. This learning evaluation captures a snapshot of USAID's approach to supporting coordination for conservation outcomes through an examination of three sectoral partnerships: the Forest Legality Alliance (FLA), Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES), and the Seafood Alliance for Legality and Traceability (SALT).

The purpose of the evaluation is to understand how, or in what circumstances, public-private partnerships that engage global supply chains facilitate achievement of biodiversity conservation milestones and outcomes and to identify how to develop and manage partnerships in a way that encourages meaningful engagement from a broad range of stakeholders. The specific objectives of this evaluation are to:

1. Examine themes across public-private partnership engagement, processes, and results;
2. Understand public-private partnership outcomes and identify how USAID's approach has contributed to those outcomes; and
3. Generate recommendations to inform future biodiversity and public-private partnership investments.

In addition to providing lessons learned for future biodiversity programming, this evaluation also discusses how these public-private partnerships demonstrated key aspects of sustainable engagement and thus will add to the growing literature on public-private partnership in international development.

Methodology

This evaluation employs an explanatory case study approach that draws upon the systematic examination of qualitative data to produce both within-case and cross-case analyses. The three case studies, chosen by USAID's Biodiversity Division, are activities that engage the private sector across global supply chains to address global drivers of biodiversity loss.

The purpose of conducting both a cross-case and within-case analysis is to highlight the difference and similarities across the three partnerships, with the aim of learning what aspects of the public-private coalition-building process may be generalizable and potentially replicable to achieve similar outcomes. While each case is unique in terms of the nature of the conservation outcome addressed and the types of partners engaged, the impetus for and process of building the partnerships shared similar traits. Each partnership engaged a mix of government, NGO, and private sector stakeholders to advance conservation outcomes, including developing partnership goals and objectives collaboratively. Each partnership was aware of earlier partnerships and either formally or informally built upon the models and lessons learned by its predecessors; in particular, USAID's FLA point of contact worked with the USAID team designing SALT to expressly share lessons and ideas. Finally, SALT was about halfway through implementation during this evaluation, while ROUTES was just wrapping up and FLA completed; this means that there may not have been enough time for SALT and ROUTES to achieve their longer-term outcomes.

Three themes consisting of five questions guide this evaluation:

1. Partnership Rationale
 - a. Why did the activities choose to engage the particular mix of stakeholders it did?
2. Partnership Process
 - a. During the design and implementation of the activities, what were the:
 - i. opportunities and challenges the partnership faced?
 - ii. contextual factors that affected the partnership?
 - iii. value-adds of USAID's engagement?
3. Partnership Results
 - a. To what extent did the activities identify and achieve their public-private partnership and biodiversity conservation targets or objectives? What unanticipated outcomes emerged from the coalition-building process? What features or aspects of the private sector engagement (PSE) process influenced results?
 - b. Did the activities contribute to observable changes to industry behavior? If so, how? If not, why not?
 - c. How did the partnerships contribute to United States or foreign government actions, including any policy-related outcomes or broader engagement or understanding between policy makers and private sector stakeholders?

Drawing upon an inductive approach to conduct both the within-case and cross-case data collection and analysis, the Evaluation Team:

- Collected and analyzed activity documents provided by USAID, including annual reports; monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plans and reports; pause and reflect notes; and other relevant material;
- Conducted and analyzed video key informant interviews (KIIs) with stakeholders knowledgeable about PSE efforts and activity outcomes; and
- Triangulated data across the KIIs and documents to develop key findings and conclusions.

The evaluation team conducted the KIIs, which included 16 individuals drawn from USAID implementing partners, NGOs, and private sector partners, from June to August 2021 (see Table 1). The interview protocols included a mix of open- and close-ended questions. The open-ended questions were designed to solicit responses about processes and outcomes and to allow respondents to inductively identify the broadest possible range of influential factors, aspects, and results. The close-ended questions focused on factors, aspects, and outcomes deductively identified by the evaluation team and USAID as theoretically relevant, as identified by activities' theories of change and results framework and the document review.

Table 1. Key Informants by Organization Type

Activity	Type of Organization	Number of Key Informants
FLA	Implementing Partner (NGO)	3
	Industry	2
	Sub-total	5
ROUTES	Implementing Partner (NGO)	5
	Industry	2
	Sub-total	7
SALT	Implementing Partner (NGO)	2
	Foundation	3
	Sub-total	5
Total		17

The team developed a protocol for identifying and summarizing relevant information from the document review, such as data describing a key process or substantiating an outcome, to allow for efficient triangulation across the documents and the interview data. The team coded the interview data using Atlas.ti to generate thematic findings. For the cross-case analysis, the evaluation team compared key findings across the within-case analyses of FLA, ROUTES, and SALT cases to identify recurring themes related to the evaluation questions.



The Asociación Forestal Integral Cruce la Colorada sawmill in Carmelita sustainably harvests mahogany and other timber from its community forest concession. Credit: Jason Houston for USAID

CASE STUDY FINDINGS

Case Study I: Forest Legality Alliance (FLA)

Background

In 2008, the United States Government (USG) expanded the Lacey Act, a century-old law prohibiting trading of illegal fauna, to cover the trade of illegal plants, including trees and their derivatives such as timber and paper. Recognizing the challenges the Act's expansion posed for timber supply chain actors, the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) teamed up to propose the FLA as a Global Development Alliance. WRI and EIA's interest centered around their intent to form and grow a multi-stakeholder alliance, which initially included Staples, IKEA, NewPage, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, and several trade associations, including the American Forest & Paper Association and the Retail Industry Leaders Association. USAID funded a cooperative agreement with WRI and EIA as the implementing partners, and WRI and EIA secured financial and in-kind support during the life of the partnership (September 2009–September 2016).

FLA's goal was to reduce the demand for illegal forest products and build the capacity of the private sector to meet the demand for legal wood and paper products. FLA's efforts centered around four objectives:¹

1. Build and sustain an inclusive and dynamic alliance of supply chain actors and stakeholders that is capable of achieving the Alliance's other objectives.
2. Demonstrate that compliance with the provisions of consumer country laws, including the Lacey Act, is feasible and cost-effective, and identify practical ways to remove any unintended burdens from importers and producers, including artisans and small-scale suppliers in developing countries.
3. Equip forest product supply chain participants and stakeholders with practical tools for exercising due care and keeping illegally harvested forest products out of the market.
4. Educate stakeholders, including supply chain companies and forest-dependent communities, about new consumer (import) country trade policies designed to reduce demand for illegal wood and new tools available for ensuring legality of forest product supplies.

¹ For more information about the current work, see <https://forestlegality.org/about>.

Partnership Rationale

SUMMARY: FLA engaged a large and diverse array of industry stakeholders, conservation leaders, government agencies, and service providers to examine, pilot, and share effective approaches for enhancing legal compliance in the forest product trade throughout the supply chain and demonstrate the feasibility of legal trade under the Lacey Act (2008) to ensure its success. Private sector partners were motivated to engage with FLA to help shape industry responses to the Lacey Act and to learn how to avoid violating its provisions.

FINDINGS: Before FLA's creation, there was no singular forum in which NGOs, private sector stakeholders, and government agencies could meet to discuss compliance with timber laws in consumer countries and the impacts of evolving regulations on diverse businesses that deal with wood and paper. Recognizing this gap, and both the need to help industry stakeholders comply with the Lacey Act and government agencies to effectively implement regulations in such a widely diverse sector, FLA created a "broad tent" of partners to find, test, support, and implement solutions. According to several key informants, partners praised FLA's open and dynamic approach to the partnership, noting that the inclusion of both small and large firms—and stakeholders from both producer and consumer countries—helped break down communication barriers. FLA provided a forum for stakeholders representing different parts of the timber supply chain to express their concerns and identify ways to respond to Lacey and similar laws. Government agencies responsible for developing regulations and enforcing laws such as the Lacey Act and European Union (EU) timber regulations were able to learn about the practical issues of compliance faced by industry, such as the challenge of identifying individual species in products made from composite materials.

To help define the partnership's objectives and activities, FLA convened an Industry Advisory Group that included eight private sector partners, six of which were industry associations. Engaging associations like the International Wood Products Association (IWPA) early on with FLA's governance structure provided direct communication access to the association's members, particularly importers on the "front lines" of legality issues. Engaging industry associations as core partners also allowed WRI and EIA to lean on industry leaders to "sell" the benefits of FLA engagement to association members, according to a key informant. For industry associations like IWPA, FLA engagement provided an opportunity to amplify industry voices within the partnership, and shape discussions around what the Lacey Act would look like in practice for its members.

Some individual companies engaged with FLA to understand how to comply with the Lacey Act and avoid the consequences of unintentionally violating its provisions, while others were interested in capitalizing on Lacey by offering services such as forest product certification and wood identification and origin forensics. For companies like Taylor Guitars, the high-profile U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation and subsequent criminal enforcement agreement with Gibson Guitars for Lacey Act violations provided a clear and urgent motivation for FLA engagement.

Partnership Process

SUMMARY: FLA overcame initial skepticism among members with historically adversarial relationships through its focus on inclusive decision-making processes, shared goals, and frequent engagement and collaboration. These processes helped transform relationships and create a community of trust among FLA members.

FINDINGS: In ensuring a diverse and inclusive membership, FLA encountered inherent tensions between how NGOs, private sector supply chain actors, and government agencies approach reducing the demand for illegal wood products. According to a key informant, initially there was hesitancy about inviting IWPA to join FLA, given IWPA's explicit concerns about certain aspects of the Lacey Act amendments; however, USAID pushed for IWPA's inclusion, given its role as an industry association representing over 300 small and medium businesses that import tropical wood from biodiverse forests. Further, several key informants noted that EIA's role as a core member of the secretariat created skepticism among the private sector that FLA would provide an open forum and safe space for discussion, given EIA's central role in lobbying for the Lacey Act amendments and that EIA's undercover investigations sometimes led to "naming and shaming" of companies engaging in illegal practices. While EIA's leadership role may have incentivized engagement—companies feared suffering reputational harm if they did not join FLA as a way of demonstrating willingness to comply with the Lacey Act—it created an early barrier to trust.

The presence of EIA in the partnership from the start created some challenges building trust with the private sector, given EIA's positioning with industry. WRI had already developed good relationships with private sector partners; during the co-creation process, private sector partners were not only given a seat at the table, but also were fully involved in co-creating the objectives and implementing activities. Key informants suggested that inclusive decision-making processes

helped convince private sector stakeholders that WRI and USAID took their concerns seriously, particularly industry reluctance to voice concerns when NGOs were present for fear of reprisal.

FLA's focus on shared goals further broke down barriers between members. Both implementing partner (IP) and private sector key informants noted the value of FLA in creating a forum that did not previously exist and focusing it around actionable methods to ensure compliance. FLA's solutions-oriented approach helped NGOs and industry recognize they had shared goals around illegal timber and incentivized partners to collaborate in practical ways. As an equal governing partner alongside WRI and EIA, USAID provided clarity around USG objectives and what it hoped to achieve through FLA.

FLA's semi-annual convening of stakeholders provided an opportunity for frequent collaboration, which in turn helped build trust among members. The convenings disseminated crucial information and led to the development of tools that helped different supply chain actors in addressing requirements of the Lacey Act, as well as other legislation like the European Union Timber Regulation. Working together in the convenings reinforced that members were working toward the same goal, aligned members around practical solutions, and helped NGOs avoid duplicating one another's work.

The convenings also provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships and develop trust between the private sector and government stakeholders. For example, one key informant noted that members were able to see the DOJ in a non-adversarial role when it appeared on a panel with EIA and IWPA. Stakeholders lauded USAID for its willingness and ability to further connect FLA stakeholders to USG interagency partners through an interagency working group focused on forest legality issues, which allowed the private sector to gain access and establish direct ties to DOJ, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Globally, FLA's outreach provided a channel for EU and Australian authorities to engage with private sector partners, as these policymakers were developing their own sets of regulations.

Within a few years of FLA's launch, several key informants suggested that private sector stakeholders began to consider FLA a "safe space" for industry. Relationships marked by tension had become less adversarial and more collaborative. IWPA became a fully engaged partner, taking on responsibility for developing and delivering training around Lacey Act compliance to their constituent companies. Private sector stakeholders accepted EIA's participation as a key partner in the alliance, although EIA chose not to continue on in a Secretariat role after the initial USAID cooperative agreement ended in 2014. Trust was reinforced by FLA's inclusionary practice of keeping companies in the fold.

Partnership Results

SUMMARY: FLA successfully built its intended inclusive and dynamic partnership of supply chain actors and stakeholders and has sustained this alliance beyond the end of USAID funding. The active collaboration and trusted partnerships generated through FLA led to the development of well-used and well-regarded tools and knowledge products and new partnerships. These relationships, tools, and products are a lasting legacy of FLA, as they continue to help private sector partners operationalize best practices to achieve Lacey Act compliance and help producer countries develop internal policies to improve tracing and other regulations.²

FINDINGS: Following the end of the USAID cooperative agreement in 2016, FLA transitioned into the Forest Legality Initiative (FLI), led by WRI, and expanded the Initiative's focus to include other countries' timber trade regulations as well as the Lacey Act. This global focus has helped keep FLA's members engaged through FLI. Commenting on the value of having FLA continue on as FLI, one key informant said that to lose the FLA network "would have terrible consequences for the industry and the environment."

By 2016, FLA had brought to the table more than 130 private sector companies, NGOs, and government agency partners and leveraged \$20 million dollars in resources. One of FLA's lasting legacies is the relationships and spin-off partnerships that developed from the convening of stakeholders. For example, despite being prosecuted under the Lacey Act for illegal importation of hardwood, Lumber Liquidators entered into a business agreement with a wood forensic services company it met through FLA to help improve its supply chain management and future compliance with Lacey.

FLA equipped supply chain stakeholders with practical tools and knowledge products for achieving compliance by creating and updating www.forestlegality.org; creating a Risk Tool to provide an overview of forest management and

² Additional details on engagement results are captured in FLA's Final Report, which will soon be available on USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse at <https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/home/Default.aspx>.

governance issues, including profiles on 24 countries and 67 species; developing a Declaration Wizard to help users complete a mandatory U.S. Customs form; creating and disseminating three supply-chain management case studies³ to demonstrate that compliance with Lacey was feasible; and creating and disseminating copies of a Legality Guide in five languages. FLA shared information about the Lacey Act and related laws to more than 8,000 participants through outreach events. FLA also partnered with IWPA to create a compliance training course, which is still ongoing. While the FLA was in existence, it facilitated consultations with the U.S. Government to ensure the factual accuracy of the content and supported more than 1,800 hours of the IWPA wood trade compliance training. Industry actors were highly motivated to access FLA's knowledge products and tools and participate in IWPA training after seeing the negative repercussions for Gibson Guitars and Lumber Liquidators of being out of compliance. Further, Lumber Liquidators, as an IWPA member, was involved in creating training content, extracting and sharing lessons from their experience. FLA made over 50 recommendations on best practices for private sector actors to operationalize demand-side legality regulations, collaborated with the Global Timber Forum to assess the compliance needs of 21 industry associations, and partnered with DNA4Tech and New Mexico State University to advance wood identification methods. By demystifying the regulations, FLA moved industry from "scared" of the Lacey Act in 2009 to "less scared" of it in 2016, based on FLA member surveys.

FLA, with in-country partners, helped actors in producer countries like Brazil, Mexico, and Peru develop internal policies and procedures to improve tracing processes. By replicating the semi-annual convenings in Brazil and Mexico, the FLA provided a platform for industry, civil society organizations, and government officials to openly discuss legality matters and building trust and facilitating spaces for collaboration. In Peru, for example, FLA supported a diagnostic timber trade analysis that identified potential opportunities for engagement, including conducting a forest product traceability case study, holding a traceability technologies workshop, and advancing private sector training that builds on the IWPA wood trade compliance training. [Peru's challenges in fighting illegal logging](#) illustrate the key contextual factors, such as corruption, land tenure insecurity, weak industry associations, and inhospitable regulatory and policy environments, that will continue to affect FLI's engagement with producer countries. Key informants noted that these factors, along with a lack of reliable data, have also made it difficult to identify the linkages between FLA's engagement and longer-term biodiversity outcomes.

³The case studies are available at <https://www.wri.org/case-study-ikeas-response-lacey-act-due-care-systems-composite-materials-china>, <https://www.wri.org/research/tuning>, and <https://www.wri.org/research/untangling-paper-chain>.



African white rhinoceros. Credit: Adobe Stock

Case Study II: Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES)

Background

As part of the USAID-funded Wildlife Trafficking, Response, Assessment, and Priority Setting (Wildlife-TRAPS) activity, the biodiversity conservation NGO TRAFFIC organized a January 2015 collaborative action planning workshop focused on identifying priorities along transportation supply chains to help counter illegal wildlife trade. Building upon the priority actions identified during the workshop, USAID initiated a Broad Agency Announcement to solicit proposals for a partnership agreement. The result of the Broad Agency Announcement process was ROUTES, a six-year public-private partnership (October 2015–December 2021) designed to provide the private sector with tools, frameworks, and resources enabling them to transform Combating Wildlife Trafficking (CWT) commitments in the air transport sector into action.

The goal of the USAID ROUTES Partnership is to disrupt illegal wildlife trafficking globally by reducing the use of legal transportation supply chains. ROUTES aims to achieve this goal through five objectives:⁴

1. Improve the data and analytics on wildlife trafficking within passenger and cargo supply chains for evidence-based, focused action;
2. Engage corporate leadership to collaborate to combat wildlife trafficking;
3. Improve the ability of transportation personnel to assist law enforcement in combating wildlife trafficking;
4. Integrate wildlife trafficking into relevant industry standards and protocols; and
5. Increase communications and data-sharing between the transport sector and law enforcement.

Partnership Rationale

SUMMARY: To guide the partnership’s co-creation process, ROUTES initially engaged a small group of stakeholders to disrupt wildlife trafficking in transport supply chains. Private sector partners, responding to increased public pressure to take action on CWT, looked to ROUTES for guidance on how to translate commitments like the Buckingham Palace Declaration into concrete actions. The early involvement of airline and airport industry associations facilitated ROUTES’ engagement with the aviation industry.

⁴ For details, see <https://routespartnership.org/about-routes/objectives>.

FINDINGS: As part of the Broad Agency Announcement process, USAID identified a core team of interested NGOs, government agencies, and private sector stakeholders to engage in the ROUTES co-creation process, including the Center for Advanced Defense Studies, International Air Transport Association (IATA), TRAFFIC, WWF, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A broader partnership body composed of industry and conservation organizations also participates in and supports ROUTES to provide expertise as needed. For the NGOs and government agencies, engagement in ROUTES through co-creation and implementation provided a potential opportunity to advance CWT goals through dialogue and partnerships with private sector companies that comprise key links in the wildlife trade supply chain.

For IATA, which was ROUTES' only founding private sector stakeholder, part of the motivation to develop and engage with ROUTES was the increased public pressure on airlines to take action to combat wildlife trafficking following several high-profile incidents, including the Cecil the Lion killing in July 2015. Airlines had “contradictory demands placed on them. Different conservationists and the public were saying to do one thing or the other, so [airlines] needed a third party [that] could establish a standard [by which airlines] could abide,” according to a key informant. As the industry association representing airlines, IATA recognized its members needed a neutral arbiter like ROUTES to provide guidance, resources, and tools on how to operationalize best practices in CWT.

Six months after the ROUTES partnership agreement began, the Transport Taskforce of the United for Wildlife collaborative launched the Buckingham Palace Declaration, which [outlines 11 commitments](#) related to fighting illegal wildlife trafficking. The Buckingham Palace Declaration was a significant driving force in motivating private sector stakeholders to engage with ROUTES, with early signatories among the first companies to join the partnership. Among these stakeholders was the industry association Airports Council International (ACI), which joined ROUTES as a way to facilitate its shift from commitments on paper to undertaking concrete actions to combat wildlife trafficking.

With both IATA and ACI as core team members, ROUTES was able to more easily engage with the individual airlines and airports that comprise their memberships. ROUTES also considered engaging other stakeholders in the supply chain, including those in the maritime industry, given that maritime transport comprises a significant portion of wildlife trafficking routes. However, early scoping found that the air transport industry was a higher priority plus the maritime transport industry was too large and complex to be included as an “add-on”. ROUTES therefore focused its engagement on the aviation sector.

Partnership Process

SUMMARY: ROUTES evolved from a partnership that suffered from some stakeholder friction and delays to one in which government, conservation, and private sector actors collaboratively led efforts to advance CWT goals. USAID aided this shift by hiring an external facilitator at the start and fostering a collaborative atmosphere, which helped frame discussions and actions around the needs and concerns of private sector partners. Continued strong and diplomatic management by the partnership lead ensured smooth cooperation and resolution of any conflicts throughout the duration of ROUTES.

FINDINGS: The inclusion of both IATA and ACI as part of the ROUTES core team facilitated engagement with individual airlines and airports, but it also introduced friction into ROUTES' co-creation process. Several key informants noted that IATA and ACI had a strained relationship due to contentious issues that arose from the need to protect their respective memberships, and historical tensions arising from the fact that airlines must pay rent to airports. Tensions also arose between the private sector and NGOs; NGOs sometimes misjudged the potential impact of proposed ROUTES actions. These conflicts were compounded by the lengthy co-creation and sub-award processes, as well as differing operating systems between public and private partners, which sometimes caused delays to approvals and outputs.

Recognizing the need to create a shared understanding among stakeholders to ensure coordination from the start, USAID suggested bringing in a trusted outside facilitator to mediate discussions around thorny issues. The facilitator helped stakeholders reframe opportunities for advancing CWT in the aviation industry in light of airline and airport concerns. A key informant noted that airlines were opposed to the idea that they take legal actions related to wildlife trafficking directly, due to concerns about their liability. The facilitator reframed the discussion to ask how airlines could help disrupt wildlife trafficking without taking direct legal action themselves, which led to a consensus among airlines that they would help law enforcement combat wildlife crimes in their carriages. The process of facilitation also helped IATA and ACI understand the others' motivations and recognize they faced common issues. For example, IATA and

ACI shared aggregated revenue and passenger traffic data with ROUTES partners to help NGOs better understand the aviation industry's losses during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resulting need for both airlines and airports to focus on survival and recovery rather than CWT engagement.

While facilitation was a key factor in creating trust among ROUTES partners, key informants emphasized that USAID's overarching collaborative approach helped deepen and broaden the partnership by fostering an open forum for discussion. During the co-creation process, both USAID and TRAFFIC encouraged adaptation and innovation to help stakeholders reach a consensus on CWT priorities. One key informant noted that "USAID proved that donor agencies can help facilitate understanding between actors, create space for trying things out, and ultimately pursue options that could become pivotal in the fight against wildlife traffickers." USAID was especially helpful in broadening the partnership and generating greater interest and momentum for combating wildlife trafficking among other USG agencies.

Over time, the collaborative processes governing ROUTES engendered greater communication between partners, deepened private sector engagement, and helped clarify private sector needs around CWT activities. The relationship between IATA and ACI became more communicative and collaborative, a change that has significant ripple effects given their role as "key gateways" to individual airlines and airports, according to a key informant. The industry associations have used their task forces and regional mechanisms to ensure members have access to ROUTES guidance and materials and to target training and other activities at airlines and airports in wildlife trafficking hotspots. IATA and ACI helped drive the uptake of training by industry, enabling more companies to access the training by adapting materials to their online platforms and certification schemes.

Partnership Results

SUMMARY: ROUTES' engagement with IATA and ACI has led to sustainable, private sector-led CWT activities across the aviation industry. The participation of aviation industry associations as integral partners expanded ROUTES' reach, contributing to a shift in corporate attitudes toward CWT, an increase in aviation companies' adoption of wildlife trafficking standards and protocols, and the development of key linkages between industry and law enforcement.⁵

FINDINGS: Through the process of working together toward a shared goal under ROUTES, IATA and ACI have moved into a collaborative relationship, as evidenced by a recent submission of a joint working paper to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), recommending ICAO member states adopt policies to counter illegal wildlife trade. It should be noted that IATA and ACI did not include ROUTES USG partners in the preparation of this working paper, which was noted as a missed opportunity at collaboration and a challenge throughout the partnership of seeing USG entities as partners rather than solely donors. IATA and ACI also collaborated on the dissemination of joint webinars and the co-ownership of a training program. Several stakeholders noted that the shift to IATA, ACI, and their members "owning" the training will be crucial for sustaining actions and maintaining momentum on CWT after the end of the ROUTES partnership. IATA and ACI stakeholders plan to continue supporting their members with relevant CWT resources through their task forces on wildlife trafficking and collaborating when appropriate opportunities arise.

As early and supportive partners, IATA and ACI were integral to helping ROUTES make progress toward its objective of engaging corporate leadership to collaborate in combatting wildlife trafficking. Over the past six years, corporate attitudes toward wildlife trafficking dramatically shifted, moving from "a soft [public relations] commitment to actually becoming a corporate concern," according to one stakeholder. By 2019, 62 airlines signed the Buckingham Palace Declaration, a more than tenfold increase from the six airlines that first signed in 2016, and all 270+ IATA member airlines have committed to countering wildlife crime. These shifts in leaders' attitudes have encouraged participation across airlines, with individual staff at airlines and airports appearing in spotlight videos to explain why they care about wildlife and what actions their companies are taking to combat wildlife trafficking. The pandemic further fostered corporate engagement, as COVID-19 highlighted the linkage between animal-borne viruses and wildlife trafficking. Airline leaders were more willing to invest in CWT if it meant potentially avoiding future pandemics, given that COVID-19 was nearly an "extinction-level" event for the aviation industry, according to a key informant.

ROUTES engagement resulted in more than 20 airlines developing CWT protocols and policies, which one private sector stakeholder said would not have happened without ROUTES. Most recently, IATA's Environmental Assessment (IEnvA) program certified first Qatar Airways, then South Africa Airways, Air Canada, and Finnair's policies as demonstrating commitment to combating wildlife trafficking. In terms of airports, ACI developed a handbook, videos, webinars, and a Buckingham Palace Declaration guidance document, to facilitate adoption of CWT protocols and

⁵ Additional details on engagement results are captured in ROUTES' Annual Reports, available at <https://routespartnership.org/about-routes/annual-reports>.

policies. ACI Europe included a focus on preventing wildlife trafficking in its sustainability strategy, which Amsterdam's Schiphol airport is adopting as part of its own sustainability strategy. Companies have also adopted IATA and ACI training into their policies, with some moving to a train-the-trainer model as well.

Training has helped raise awareness among airline and airport staff around how the aviation industry can work with law enforcement to intercept and report illegal wildlife trafficking. One positive indicator of progress at the local level is recent coordination between Kenya Airways and Kenyan law enforcement on anti-wildlife trafficking measures, according to a key informant. At the strategic level, ROUTES partners, including USAID, IATA, TRAFFIC, and ACI, are working to develop automated wildlife detection algorithms for X-ray screening systems at airports. If successful, this use of artificial intelligence would allow screening staff to flag instances of wildlife trafficking safely and quickly to law enforcement at airports.

While ROUTES has made significant progress toward its objectives and demonstrated observable changes, including wildlife seizures resulting from air transport staff reports to law enforcement, stakeholders suggested it was premature to link these achievements to longer-term biodiversity conservation-related outcomes. ROUTES leadership anticipated that biodiversity outcomes like reduced wildlife crime would be observed only after the term of the ROUTES partnership and were therefore outside of the ROUTES manageable interest, as illustrated in the partnership's results chain.



Fishermen in Mexico.
Credit: Ivana Fertziger

Case Study III: Seafood Alliance for Legality and Traceability (SALT)

Background

In November 2016, USAID began several months of Global Development Alliance consultations with the Walton Family, David and Lucile Packard, and Gordon and Betty Moore Foundations to explore the development of a FLA-type partnership for supporting traceability in seafood supply chains to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Bolstered by industrial, technological, and policy developments, such as the 2016 Seafood Import Monitoring Program requiring U.S. importers to provide seafood traceability data, these consultations led to the SALT partnership.

The goal of SALT's five-year cooperative agreement (September 2017–September 2023), implemented by the NGO FishWise, is to improve transparency in how the seafood industry and governments collect, share, verify, and ultimately use data for sustainable and socially responsible fisheries. SALT's activities are centered around four key objectives:⁶

1. Expand accessible, interoperable, and electronic catch documentation and traceability (eCDT) for wild-capture fisheries and aquaculture;
2. Increase the capacity of seafood-producing countries to adopt electronic catch documentation and traceability systems to strengthen fisheries management and verify fisheries data;
3. Increase incentives and capacities for the seafood industry to adopt electronic traceability to ensure the legality of wild-caught fisheries products in their supply chains; and
4. Identify ways in which the implementation of electronic catch documentation and traceability can support human and labor rights for all seafood workers, food security, livelihoods, and well-being.

Partnership Rationale

SUMMARY: By engaging with a small group of like-minded partners, USAID has been able to leverage the foundations' and implementing partner's existing relationships to capture and disseminate knowledge. For the foundations, joining with USAID expanded the reach of existing programs, thereby potentially increasing their impact. Because SALT engaged private-sector partners and leaders both in the co-creation process and in the Advisory Committee, the partnership was able to engage a broader base of stakeholders, including seafood producing country governments and industries, and build trust among all members.

⁶ For details, see <https://www.saltraceability.org/what-is-salt/our-focus/>.

FINDINGS: USAID and its foundation partners formed a Coordination Committee to guide SALT through its co-creation process and provide strategic leadership during the partnership. For USAID, working with the foundations allows SALT to draw upon its existing knowledge base of eCDT efforts and share best practices with the wider SALT network.

From the foundations' perspective, engagement in SALT increased the potential for achieving traceable seafood supply chains. The Moore Foundation, for example, had been focusing on traceability and wanted to coordinate with other foundations as part of a "big push" to get the norm of traceability adopted. The Packard Foundation, which along with the Moore Foundation is engaged as a strategic rather than financial partner, wanted to help leverage USG relationships with seafood-producing country governments to foster enabling policy environments. The Walton Family Foundation was interested in influencing fishing industry strategies for improving the use of digital data and engaged in SALT as a financial partner.

In addition to the SALT Coordination Committee, SALT convened a larger Advisory Committee of government, industry, philanthropy, and civil society partners to provide expertise and prioritize high-value areas for SALT engagement. During implementation, the Advisory Committee has played a critical role in expanding stakeholder participation in SALT, facilitating dialogue with key partners and helping SALT to develop trust among members.

Partnership Process

SUMMARY: SALT's co-creation process and governance structure have fostered collaboration among its partners and facilitated adaptive management, which helped SALT pivot during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of July 2021, SALT was struggling with limited engagement from key partners, including seafood-producing country governments and industry stakeholders; however, SALT continues to build momentum with additional governments and other new partners joining since that time.

FINDINGS: During its first year, SALT convened a series of co-creation workshops for the Americas, Europe and Africa, and Asia. Participants included stakeholders from 187 organizations representing 37 countries to ensure the process of defining seafood traceability problems and identifying collaborative solutions represented the views of diverse stakeholders across the globe. While the year-long co-creation process was critical to getting the stakeholder buy-in necessary for collaborative action, several key informants suggested that the length of the process was too long, leading to a perception among some partners that SALT was more talk than action. It was also challenging to incentivize industry participation in the co-design process because these potential partners wanted to understand SALT's benefits in relation to their own goals before SALT was designed. There were also concerns around whether SALT was duplicative of existing mechanisms like the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) and the Global Tuna Alliance (GTA), which sometimes made it challenging for the foundations to convince colleagues of the value-add of engagement with SALT. While USAID was lauded for its instrumental role in setting the vision for SALT by identifying initial goals and outcomes, a key informant suggested that some partners expressed confusion about implementation of SALT's main objectives due to their broad scope.

Following the co-creation process, the Coordination Committee finalized SALT's 2–5 Year Strategy and Year 2 Annual Work Plan with the support of the Advisory Committee. Key informants lauded the clear communication and collaborative division of labor within this governance structure, noting that partners coordinate with each other in a non-competitive spirit, strategically dividing the work based on their different areas of expertise. In particular, despite their positioning within the USAID cooperative agreement structure, the foundations do not seek to dominate decision-making within SALT. While this creates space for other voices, one stakeholder noted that the foundation partners' more "hands-off" approach relative to USAID sometimes limits their contributions to the partnership.

In terms of engagement with the larger community, SALT's willingness to adapt its strategies has facilitated relationship building across a network of stakeholders. Feedback from Advisory Committee partners allows SALT to keep approaches grounded in reality and innovate as needed. In some seafood-producing countries, for example, SALT adapted its plans of direct outreach to relevant industry partners and policymakers, instead drawing on partners' advice to lean on NGOs to facilitate engagement. While industry stakeholder groups comprise a small fraction of the wider SALT network compared with NGO or government entities, this adaptive management has created promising connections, such as the one between experts in Peru and Indonesia regarding the development of a traceability system.

SALT's flexibility was a key reason it was able to pivot its activities during the pandemic. Initially, as the pandemic created systemic global disruptions, SALT was unable to engage with industry stakeholders face-to-face, including planned attendance at the Seafood North America Expo in March 2020. SALT responded to this challenge by pivoting to online activities and conducting specialized sessions about the pandemic. While communication with some companies was delayed, overall SALT's deliverable timetable was unaffected. Over time, the virtual engagement space allowed for more participation in SALT and may have unexpectedly accelerated the shift toward electronic traceability, according to a key informant.

While virtual meetings increased participation during the pandemic generally, as of July 2021, stakeholders from seafood-producing countries, including governments, fishers, NGOs, and local industry, still had limited capacity for engagement with SALT. According to a key informant, this is in part because some stakeholders undervalue eCDT as a way to mitigate business risks and ensure regulation compliance, although the pandemic has also slowed responses to SALT outreach. SALT Advisory Committee invitations were extended to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Peru, for example, but SALT had not yet received a response from these governments by July 2021.⁷

Partnership Results

SUMMARY: SALT's efforts contributed to strengthened relationships and increased communication among partners, but it is challenging to establish a plausible linkage between knowledge diffusion and uptake and changes in industry behavior due to a lack of information. SALT has made inroads related to establishing productive relationships with government actors, which may in turn lead to policy changes and actions, but SALT's manageable interest does not anticipate seeing longer-term biodiversity outcomes during the partnership's period of performance.⁸

FINDINGS: Since its inception, SALT has grown to more than 1,000 participants globally, and key informants suggested that SALT's efforts contributed to strengthened relationships and increased communication amongst NGO, foundation, government, and industry actors. The SALT partnership helped FishWise better align its work to improve retailers' purchasing practices with the work of the foundations to improve global fisheries governance. From the foundation perspective, the partnership opened up significant opportunities to dialogue and partner with USAID on similar efforts.

SALT's engagement with industry stakeholder groups has increased over time, and seafood suppliers, processors, retailers, and fishers now account for 10 percent of the wider SALT network. SALT has strengthened alliances with key industry associations, drafting a Memorandum of Understanding with GDST to align their efforts to engage governments, and collaborating on various activities with the GTA, resulting in GTA featuring SALT tools and resources in their Traceability Toolkit.

SALT has made observable progress toward product development and dissemination, with stakeholders from 70 organizations sharing 160 of their resources on SALT's platform. However, it is challenging to establish a plausible linkage between knowledge diffusion and uptake and changes in industry and government behavior due to a lack of information flow. Industry and private sector actors have been reluctant to share proprietary information or industry secrets, such as changes to internal processes, procedures, or policies. In addition, knowledge diffusion and uptake often go unreported, which may result in underreporting of SALT's engagement results. As one stakeholder noted, the lack of linkages between industry and government outcomes and SALT's efforts could be because people are "absorbing SALT's generated outputs without knowing the source, which happens a lot in the seafood and NGO communities."

While acknowledging this dearth of evidence, key informants also highlighted some examples suggestive of SALT's contribution to industry behavior. For example, one foundation key informant noted that they will use learning from SALT to inform further strategies for grantmaking. Another informant pointed to a case where Yayasan Masyarakat dan Perikanan Indonesia (MDPI, an Indonesian NGO) used SALT resources to conduct a co-creation workshop with Indonesian partners, which in turn led to the adoption of eCDT technologies in the Indonesian tuna supply chain.

There are several examples that suggest SALT has made inroads related to establishing productive relationships with government actors, which may in turn lead to policy changes and actions. In terms of its knowledge-sharing accomplishments, SALT has presented its collaboratively developed [Comprehensive Traceability Principles](#) and associated Pathway (which have been translated into four languages) to 500 individuals, including 70 government officials. SALT

⁷ By spring of 2022, however, the Philippines accepted the invitation.

⁸ Additional details on engagement results are captured in SALT's Annual Report, available at <https://www.salttraceability.org/resource/salt-year4-annual-report/>.

and USAID worked with Peru to make sure its traceability data were compliant with government requirements and the Comprehensive Traceability Principles. One stakeholder noted Peru has drawn upon SALT's [Pathway to the Principles](#) product to balance out its technological focus with “the need for participatory processes to make people feel involved.”

There have also been ongoing efforts that key informants expect will lead Tanzania and Vietnam to adopt the Comprehensive Traceability Principles into their policies in the next year, and reporting documents noted that SALT identified opportunities for engagement with Mexico and Ecuador to advance traceability systems. SALT has helped governments understand what good traceability data systems look like, and its efforts on seafood-consuming country government-to-government contact building has helped strengthen constituencies and connect policy-making bodies in the United States, Japan, and the EU. SALT is monitoring policy shifts within the EU and Japan around seafood traceability and providing relevant information to industry and seafood-producing country audiences. Foundation key informants suggested they expect SALT's efforts to contribute to uptake of traceability systems, which will allow interested stakeholders to get a better sense of seafood origins.

How this in turn will lead to biodiversity conservation-related outcomes can only be observed beyond the life of SALT and is therefore outside of the alliance's manageable interests, as noted in SALT's results chain.



The Forest Services' Community Enterprise (FORESCOM) was founded because of the joint effort of eleven community forestry concessions of the Maya Biosphere Reserve in Petén, Guatemala. FORESCOM offers certified wood products as well as technical and marketing services to local community partner organizations. Credit: Jason Houston for USAID

DISCUSSION

Cross-Cutting Themes

The case study findings reveal that FLA, ROUTES, and SALT shared several opportunities and challenges in engaging broad coalitions of stakeholders during the development and expansion of the partnerships. Below are four lessons drawn from the case studies that are useful for USAID and its partners to consider.

Collaborative practices build trust, but co-creation processes are lengthy. FLA, ROUTES, and SALT succeeded in creating environments where diverse groups of stakeholders from the private, public, and civil sectors felt comfortable openly discussing potentially contentious issues, like private sector compliance with global biodiversity legislation. “Neutral” implementing partner leadership, like WRI’s role in FLA, encouraged inclusive discussions that focused on learning and implementation of practical solutions and tools, and discouraged divisive practices like “naming and shaming” companies struggling with compliance. ROUTES’ use of an external facilitator, which helped two key industry associations move past a historically strained relationship, is a best practice that built trust and led to positive outcomes. SALT’s process of drawing upon Advisory Committee insights fostered adaptation that ensured its products and practices reflected stakeholders constraints and needs. Across all the partnerships, the co-creation process was crucial for ensuring goals, objectives, and activities reflected the diversity of stakeholder needs, fostered inclusion, and set the stage for future collaboration. However, all three partnerships took approximately a year to create, a timeframe that stakeholders widely considered too lengthy. Informants argued that activities could start earlier or the co-creation process could be sped up.

Private sector stakeholders value tools that ease compliance. The partnerships’ inclusive co-creation process and collaborative discussions led to the creation of resources and tools private sector stakeholders praised for their practical application. By understanding and adapting to the positioning, constraints and needs of the private sector, FLA, ROUTES, and SALT were able to develop products that focused on the how-tos of compliance and implementation, aligning USAID’s longer-term biodiversity conservation goals with the private sector’s shorter-term interests of maintaining profits and reducing risk. For FLA’s partners, the Risk Tool, Compliance Wizard, and other resources helped companies come into compliance with the Lacey Act and avoid potential investigation and prosecution for violating its provisions. For ROUTES, the realization that liability was a significant concern for airlines and airports led to the development of training resources to help staff engage with law enforcement to combat wildlife trafficking as well as

tools to build greater communication between the private sector and law enforcement. SALT's most-used resource, the Pathway to the Principles, is a practical step-by-step approach that guides seafood-producing country governments and the private sector on how to adopt eCDT.

Industry associations' adoption of partnership tools promotes sustainable uptake. In some cases, industry associations have adopted partnership tools and resources and encouraged continued use among their members, which provides an opportunity for broader uptake and sustained use beyond the life of the original partnerships. FLI maintains these tools for partners, and IWPA continues to provide members with training developed from FLA resources. IATA and ACI's adoption of CWT training materials for their members, and IATA's embedding training with its larger professional certification systems, point to the sustained use of ROUTES resources. While SALT's engagement with industry associations is ongoing, the inclusion of SALT tools and resources in the 2020 GTA Traceability Toolkit is a hopeful sign of increased diffusion and potential uptake across GTA's partners.

External events catalyze partnerships. External events provided a catalyst for developing FLA and SALT and, in the case of FLA and ROUTES, also proved a strong motivation for private sector partners to join the partnerships. The changes to the Lacey Act, which prompted FLA's development, posed a major burden for companies with minimal capacity to navigate compliance issues. Joining FLA provided them with a forum to discuss Lacey and with the tools and resources to help them avoid the legal consequences Gibson Guitars and Lumber Liquidator faced. The Buckingham Palace Declaration generated significant interest in ROUTES among airlines and airports wanting to demonstrate concrete actions to support their expressions of political will. The pandemic further highlighted the urgency of addressing wildlife trafficking, fostering increased corporate engagement in ROUTES. The USG's Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP) served as a catalyst for SALT, and while the proportion of industry partners has been more limited, SALT's engagement with seafood-producing countries has increased over time.

Broader Implications for USAID Public-Private Partnership Context

Previous to this learning evaluation, USAID commissioned a Private Sector Perspective Study, which explored and codified the aspects of USAID's public-private partnerships that enable sustained engagement over time.⁹ This evaluation's findings align with the three domains of functional partnerships outlined by the Perspective Study, which are explored in more depth below.

The first domain of functional partnerships is that of purpose—organizations' motivations to participate in partnerships. These may be categorized broadly as pragmatic, focusing on operational issues related to the organization's existence, and principled, centering issues related to the organization's moral drive. Across FLA, ROUTES, and SALT, USAID and NGO partners approached partnerships with a principled motivation, driven by altruistic aims related to improving conservation outcomes. While industry partners noted some principled rationales for partnership engagement, their motivations were overwhelmingly pragmatic. More industry partners were willing to engage in ROUTES, for example, once the COVID-19 pandemic made it clear that wildlife trafficking was a threat to the aviation industry. For FLA's private sector partners, the urgent need to comply with the Lacey Act provisions was a strong pragmatic rationale driving engagement. Pragmatic concerns also played a role in industry's limited engagement in the SALT co-design, as industry representatives struggled to make a direct link between their work and an alliance that had not yet been designed.

The second domain of functional partnerships is qualities of relationship that enable partnerships to function well, including:

1. *Structural* components, such as mutuality, division of authority, and organizational mechanisms, which are crucial in the formation of partnerships;
2. *Behavioral* components, such as communication, decision-making, and compromise, which enable partnerships to execute on their scope; and
3. *Cognitive* components, such as accountability, trust, and transparency, which are important for partnership members to evaluate the partnership and continually engage.

All three relationship qualities were present in FLA, ROUTES, and SALT, based on feedback received from diverse stakeholders across the private, NGO, and government sectors. Each of the three partnerships used a collaborative, inclusive co-creation process (behavioral, cognitive) to establish its scope, objectives, and governance mechanisms


⁹ Jennifer Sdunzik et al., [Literature Review on Private Sector Engagement: A Generalizable Framework](#), (Washington, D.C.: USAID LASER PULSE, 2021).

and processes (structural). During implementation, cognitive components, particularly trust, were developed and strengthened through the use of behavioral components like collective decision-making and communication processes. For example, ROUTES' use of an outside facilitator during key decision-making convenings opened up communication channels between IATA and ACI, enabling their relationship to shift from contentious to collaborative. For FLA, a leadership transition within IWPA shifted the organization's attitude toward Lacey Act compliance from opposition to compromise, which opened space for the organization to eventually champion the provision of industry-wide compliance training. For SALT, iteration of inclusive processes during product design has facilitated product diffusion and uptake, as in the case of the Comprehensive Traceability Principles.

The third domain that influences how private sector entities engage in partnerships is the context in which the partnership takes place. For this evaluation's case studies, three sets of contextual factors enabled or impeded partnership functioning:

1. The policy environment has the potential to facilitate and encourage private sector partnership participation or to challenge and dissuade involvement. The Lacey Act amendment, Buckingham Palace Declaration, and SIMP created a need for industry to align practices with new requirements and commitments, which in turn motivated companies to join FLA and ROUTES to draw upon their resources and support. In contrast, weak regulatory environments and a lack of public accountability can make it difficult to engage industry partners. This was the case with ROUTES' challenges in bringing privately held maritime transporters into the partnership and initially affected SALT's efforts to engage Japan-based fishing companies, though Japan has subsequently adopted new seafood regulations.
2. Windows of opportunity like the Lacey Act amendment, Buckingham Palace Declaration, and SIMP create openings that entice private sector actors to join partnerships. For ROUTES in particular, the killing of Cecil the Lion and the zoonotic nature of COVID-19 raised the public profile of wildlife trafficking, making it timely for the aviation industry to engage on the issue.
3. Lastly, the data environment can influence partnership sustainability. For ROUTES, Center for Advanced Defense Studies' analysis of open-source data made clear where wildlife trafficking was taking place, creating a shared basis from which to develop the partnership's areas of focus. However, one informant suggested that for industry partners to justify continuing to invest time and resources in partnering on CWT, law enforcement partners need to share privately held seizure data so airlines and airports can connect their training and awareness-raising activities to CWT outcomes; however, other informants suggest there are ways to share data relevant to decision-making without compromising seizure data. FLA and SALT stakeholders also noted that a lack of data impeded efforts to connect similar activities to higher-level biodiversity outcomes.

Thus FLA, ROUTES, and SALT demonstrate the attributes of sustainable partnerships. FLA's efforts have been sustained for five years through the FLI, and the adoption of ROUTES resources into industry policies and training certifications suggests continuation through the private sector. SALT's activities are ongoing, but it has already demonstrated indications of sustainability, such as diffusion of its resources through organizations like the GTA and adoption of the Comprehensive Traceability Principles into country policies.



Artisanal fishermen from four neighboring Indigenous communities in Peruvian Amazon participate in assessing their fisheries' resources. Credit: Gustavo Carrasco / USAID Pro-Bosques

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The cross-case analysis identified several lessons around engaging a broad range of stakeholders during the development and expansion of partnership. Drawing on these lessons, USAID could consider the following opportunities to strengthen future partnerships:

- *Develop co-creation guidance that sets realistic expectations with partners and reduces delays as much as possible.* The co-creation workshops for SALT spanned the better part of a calendar year to ensure sufficient buy-in and representation across a large group of globally dispersed stakeholders. The normalization of virtual meetings could help shorten the co-creation timeline, as regional workshops could be held closer together or more participants could meet in fewer larger workshops.
- *Work with “neutral” implementing partners or external facilitators to generate trust early in partnership formation.* Both ROUTES and SALT lauded the efforts of CollaborateUp! in facilitating co-creation workshops, so ensuring the presence of similar organizations could benefit other partnerships as well.
- *Seek to engage industry associations early on, and encourage their ownership of efforts.* Industry associations were crucial for overcoming concerns around collaborative actions across individual (often competitor) companies and boosted sustained commitment by internally adopting policies and embedding training into their own structures. Ensuring that such associations have a key role during co-creation and within the governance structure of future partnerships could reap the same benefits. Moreover, associations may be more flexible about engaging in co-creation despite the fact that bottom-line benefits are not yet clear, whereas individual companies may not be as willing to join before the partnerships are well-formed.
- *Capitalize on external events to catalyze partnerships.* The Lacey Act, SIMP, and Buckingham Palace Declaration were major catalysts driving the creation of FLA and SALT, and participation in ROUTES, respectively. USAID should continue to analyze global, regional, and national changes related to public commitments, policies, and legislation around biodiversity to help identify future windows of opportunity, and convene discussions with key stakeholders to determine whether the change warrants co-creation of a new partnership or reinvigoration of existing ones. For example, high-level attention to large-scale illegal fishing off the Galapagos Islands could be leveraged to spur SALT partners to deepen engagement and commitment.
- *Support actions that help create more robust data environments.* Longer-term, USAID should seize opportunities to support efforts that will increase the amount of relevant data available to its partners, such as the current ROUTES effort to develop automated wildlife detection algorithms. In the short- to medium-term, USAID can support partners' development of MEL and knowledge management processes that help identify uptake and application of tools, resources, and industry behavior change. The ability to demonstrate these linkages would allow existing partners to take credit for wins, making engagement an attractive prospect for new partners.

Overall, USAID has built three strong partnerships that have contributed to advancing the goals of the Biodiversity Division in combating illegal logging and deforestation, wildlife trafficking, and IUU fishing. FLA, ROUTES, and SALT provide critical lessons for how to harness opportunities and overcome challenges when developing and implementing collaborative partnerships that include a diverse range of private sector, NGO, and government stakeholders across complex global supply chains.

ANNEX: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Key Informant Interview Protocol (Implementing Partners)

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us. This interview is part of work underway for an evaluation conducted by the USAID Biodiversity Division-funded Measuring Impact II Activity intended to generate lessons learned on PSE in USAID biodiversity programming. The evaluation will focus on questions such as what works and doesn't work for engaging the private sector, and what positive, negative, and unexpected policy and biodiversity outcomes have emerged from PSE. We are interviewing implementing partners and private sector partners for three USAID-funded programs, including yours.

Interview Process and Confidentiality

This interview should take approximately 60–75 minutes. We very much appreciate your time! So that we can be sensitive to your time, are you available for the full 75 minutes or is there a certain time we need to have the interview completed by?

Your responses will be kept confidential but we may reference your type of organization (e.g., implementing partner, private sector partner) or your type of role in a project (manager, MEL, technical specialist, etc.).

If we would like to include a quote from you in our final report, we will ask your permission before we use it.

Lastly, we will take notes throughout the interview in a Google doc that will be accessible only by the research team and yourself. Following the interview, we'll clean up the notes and share them with you. Please feel free to add any insights you forgot to mention during the interview, rephrase, or remove anything sensitive.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Questions

OVERVIEW

1. Please describe your organization's role and work within the context of the alliance/partnership. Tell us about the alliance and why you joined, how it went/is going, what you think about it.

PSE PROCESS

2. What is the role or purpose of the private sector actors involved in the alliance/partnership? What was the rationale for involving these particular private sector partners?
3. Could you please describe how the alliance is governed, including decision-making and management processes?
4. What have been some of the positive aspects of working with the private sector? What have been some of the challenges?

5. Were/are there global or country-level factors that affected which private sector institutions or individuals you engaged with or how you engaged with them?
6. Are there other partners in the alliance that have a unique role or contribution? Please tell us about that.

USAID ROLE

7. What was USAID's role or purpose in the alliance/partnership?
8. What value has USAID's involvement added? What challenges have resulted from USAID's involvement?

OUTCOMES

9. What changes or outcomes has the alliance's work contributed to?
 - a. [*probing*] More specifically, are you aware of any:
 - i. Policy changes? [If yes, probe about which stakeholders]
 - ii. Changes in engagement among policymakers and private sector stakeholders?
 - iii. Biodiversity conservation status?
10. Were there any outcomes or consequences that you did not anticipate?
11. [*If not already covered in the interview*] Were there any aspects of the alliance's decision-making or management processes that were helpful, or unhelpful for achieving the outcomes you've mentioned? Please describe.
12. [*If not already covered in the interview*] Were there any challenges with private sector engagement that have impacted your ability to accomplish outcomes?

CONCLUSION

13. Is there anything else you would like to mention that we have not discussed?
14. We have XX stakeholders from your team on our list to potentially interview. Do you feel we would gain additional details on your activity's private sector engagement objectives and outcomes that we haven't learned in this interview with you?

Thank you for your time!

Key Informant Interview Protocol (Private Sector Partners)

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us. This interview is part of work underway for an evaluation conducted by the USAID Biodiversity Division-funded Measuring Impact II Activity intended to generate lessons learned on engaging the private sector in USAID biodiversity programming. The evaluation will focus on questions such as what works and doesn't work for engaging the private sector and what positive, negative, and unexpected policy and biodiversity outcomes have emerged from private sector engagement. We are interviewing implementing partners and private sector partners for three USAID-funded programs, including yours.

Interview Process and Confidentiality

This interview should take approximately 30–45 minutes; we very much appreciate your time! So that we can be sensitive to your time, are you available for the full 45 minutes, or is there a certain time we need to have the interview completed by?

Your responses will be kept confidential but we may reference your type of organization (e.g., implementing partner, private sector partner), or your type of role in a project (manager, MEL, technical specialist, etc.). We also recognize that we may ask some questions that could verge into sensitive areas for your organization. As we discuss, if there is anything you'd like to tell us strictly on background, let us know and we will avoid taking notes on those topics.

If we would like to include a quote from you in our final report, we will ask your permission before we use it.

Lastly, we will take notes throughout the interview in a Google doc that will be accessible only by the research team and yourself. Following the interview, we'll clean up the notes and share them with you. Please feel free to add any insights you forgot to mention during the interview, rephrase, or remove anything sensitive.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Questions

OVERVIEW

1. Please describe your organization's work, and your role, within the context of the alliance/partnership. Tell us about why your organization joined, how it went/is going, what you think about it.

PSE PROCESS

2. What have been some of the positive aspects of how the alliance/partnership is governed (i.e., decision-making and management processes)? What have been some of the challenges?
3. What have been some of the positive aspects of working with the other members of the alliance/partnership? What have been some of the challenges?
4. Were or are there any factors that have affected how you engage with the alliance/partnership and its members?

USAID ROLE

5. As a private sector entity, what have you learned about engaging with the USAID that you think USAID should know about?
 - a. *[prompt as needed]* Were there aspects of USAID's involvement in the alliance/partnership that were particularly helpful? What challenges related to USAID's involvement?

OUTCOMES

6. What changes or outcomes do you think the alliance/partnership's work has contributed to with respect to your business and the industry as a whole?

[prompt and reorder questions as needed]

- Has it resulted in any changes to your company's corporate policies, business practices, or commitments?
 - Has it resulted in any changes to corporate policies, business practices, or commitments among your business association members? *[if needed, probe about which association members]*
 - Has it influenced industry-wide policies or practices?
 - Have you noted any changes within your sector in terms of environmental awareness and related actions as a result of the alliance/partnership?
 - Have you observed any changes in engagement among policymakers and private sector stakeholders as a result of the alliance/partnership?
7. Do you plan to carry on with any changes you've made from the alliance/partnership after it ends?
 8. What would you like to see in future alliances/partnerships like these?
 - *[prompt as needed]*: What aspects of the alliance/partnership do you think contributed to the outcomes you've mentioned?

CONCLUSION

9. Is there anything else you would like to mention that we have not discussed?
10. Do you have any colleagues from your organization or any other private sector organizations you've worked with in this alliance/partnership whom you think we would benefit from talking to?

Thank you for your time!



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