Lessons Learned from the
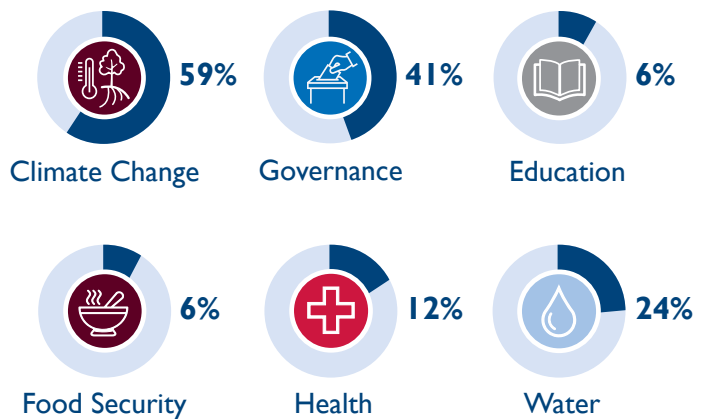**USAID Biodiversity Integration
Case Study Competition**

Introduction

Integration of biodiversity objectives and considerations with other development sectors has the potential to increase the sustainability of USAID programming, amplify results, and save costs. The collection of 17 cases from the 2019 USAID Biodiversity Integration Case Study Competition illustrates how biodiversity conservation is critically linked to the journey to self-reliance—by reducing extreme poverty, increasing food security, improving human health, managing climate impacts, building resilience to recurrent crises, and achieving many other development objectives. Together, the cases provide a snapshot of how USAID missions and implementing partners conceptualize, design, and implement cross-sectoral integration.
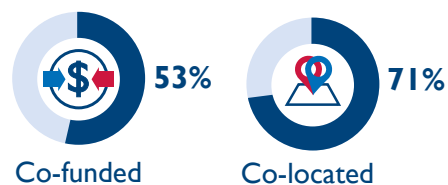
This synthesis shares lessons learned on biodiversity integration from across the 17 cases. Each case described a USAID project or activity, lessons learned, and common tools used to advance integrated programming. The cases represented examples of biodiversity integration with climate change; democracy, human rights, and governance; education; food security; health; and water. The sectors most commonly integrated with biodiversity were climate change, represented in 11 out of 17 cases, and democracy, human rights, and governance, represented in seven out of 17 cases. The cases spanned a range of geographies, funding streams, and approaches to integration.

The synthesis aims to share guidance for USAID technical and program office staff interested in design, implementation, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning of activities that integrate biodiversity objectives and considerations.

FIGURE 1: **Cases by sector (n = 17)**

| Climate Change | Governance | Education |
| 59% | 41% | 6% |

| Food Security | Health | Water |
| 6% | 12% | 24% |

FIGURE 2: **Cases by integration approach**

| Co-funded | Co-located |
| 53% | 71% |

Intentional Design and Planning
- Start integration during the planning cycle and identify key people who will develop and support the process.
- Integrate purposefully, from the start.

Evidence-based Decision-making and Adaptive Management
- Employ technical and political analyses to inform integrated approaches.
- Use assessments and geographic information systems to identify geographic areas for integration.
- Use evidence to inform adaptive management decisions and ensure integration efforts are on track.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)
- Document how integrated approaches generate other sector benefits.
- Be realistic about time and resource constraints for MEL.
- Develop and employ MEL tools to assess benefits across sectors.
- Recognize the varying ways different sectors approach monitoring and evaluation.
- Include learning questions from the start.

Knowledge Management
- Document experiences.
- Share the results of integrated activities across sectors to enhance understanding.
- Raise awareness of the benefits of using cross-sectoral indicators.

Inclusive, Open Processes and Transparent Decision-making
- Remain open to learning from team members.
- Be transparent about challenges and gaps.
- Embrace flexibility and be open to innovation.

Collaboration with Internal and External Experts
- Collaborate from the beginning.
- Identify areas where outside expertise can complement mission expertise.
- Encourage field visits.

Mission Leadership and Staff Champions
- Engage mission leadership.
- Identify and empower champions.

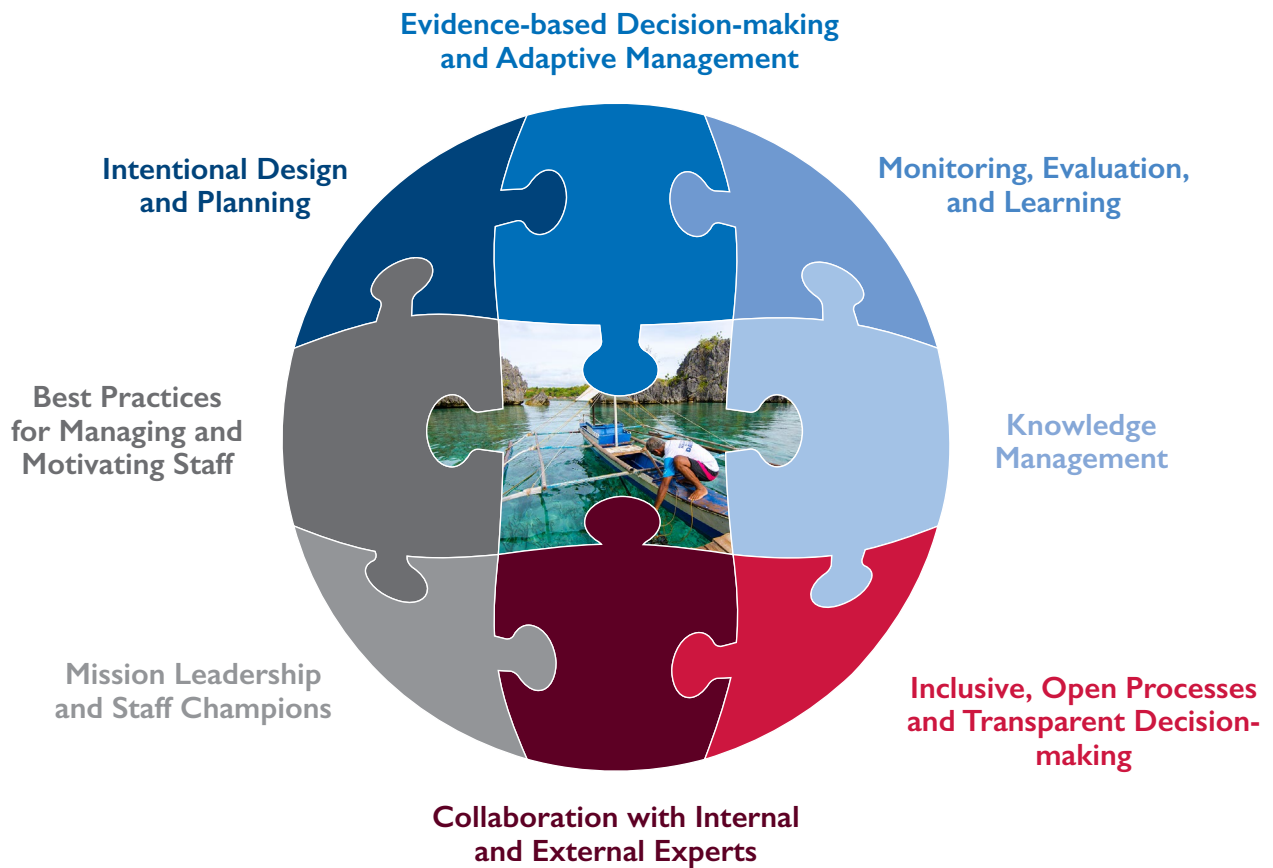## Best Practices for Managing and Motivating Staff
- Hold cross-sectoral orientation sessions.
- Ensure technical staff understand how integrated components amplify their own sector results.
- Identify the different skills and resource needed to be effective.
- Recognize and leverage individual strengths.

Conservation through Public Health founder, Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka. Photo by Jo-Anne McArthur.

FIGURE 3: **Key factors to successfully integrating biodiversity in USAID projects and activities**

Evidence-based Decision-making and Adaptive Management

Intentional Design and Planning

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Best Practices for Managing and Motivating Staff

Knowledge Management

Mission Leadership and Staff Champions

Inclusive, Open Processes and Transparent Decision-making

Collaboration with Internal and External Experts

Intentional Design and Planning

Biodiversity integration is most commonly the result of a deliberate design, with staff specifically dedicated to the process.

Lesson: Start integration during the planning cycle and identify key people who will develop and support the process.

Amazonia Verde
USAID|Peru

The USAID/Peru Amazonia Verde team first ensured the Mission Director's support and buy-in and then formed groups to lead each phase of the design. USAID/Peru spent two years developing the Amazonia Verde Project Appraisal Document, with some key staff spending approximately 50 percent of their time on the process.


Lesson: Integrate purposefully, from the start.

Protect Wildlife
USAID|Philippines

To show how integrating interventions from different sectors could contribute to common results with cross-sectoral benefits, USAID/Philippines began with a situation model and robust theory of change for its Protect Wildlife activity. USAID/Philippines communicated the theory of change to stakeholders as early as possible to increase understanding of the activity from the beginning and facilitate buy-in of the integrated approach.

The community in Waitamela Village Sula Islands, North Maluku Province, Indonesia actively provided inputs related to zoning plans for their respective marine protected area as part of the USAID Sustainable Ecosystems Advanced activity. Photo by USAID Sustainable Ecosystems Advanced activity.
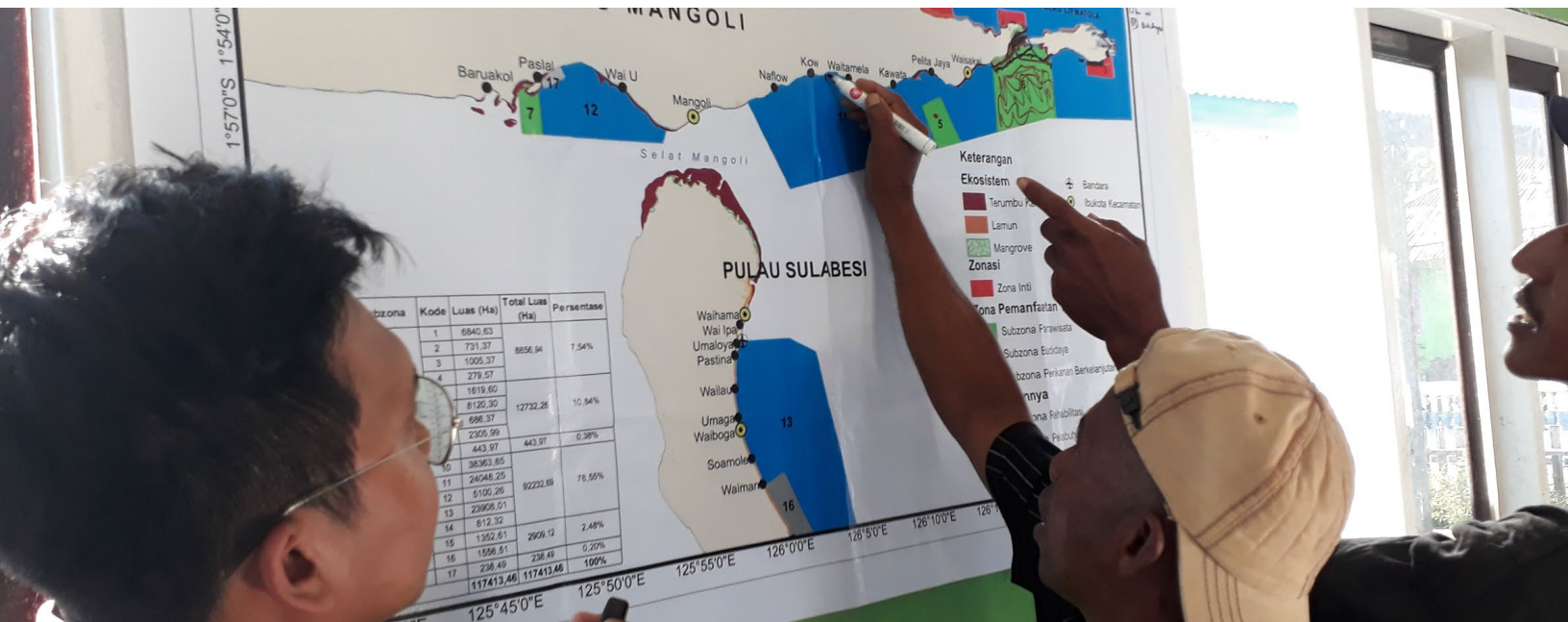
Co-funded   Single-funded w/Co-benefits   Co-located   Biodiversity   Climate Change   Economic Growth   Education   Food Security   Governance   Health   Water

Evidence-based Decision-making and Adaptive Management

Gathering and analyzing evidence is critical for deciding whether, how, and where to integrate.

Lesson: Employ technical and political analyses to inform integrated approaches.

ECOFISH
USAID|Philippines

The USAID/Philippines ECOFISH activity invested in clear, verifiable science to develop consensus-based solutions to overfishing and used this evidence to convince medium-scale commercial fishers, small-scale fishers, local government units, the private sector, and other key stakeholders of the importance of a closed season. ECOFISH staff concluded that providing continuous reporting of monitoring results to technical groups and other stakeholders can enable evidence-based decision-making and promote adaptive management.

Amazonia Verde (Peru)
CARPE (Central Africa)

The USAID/Peru Amazonia Verde and the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) teams both used technical and political analyses to inform their integrated approaches to biodiversity conservation.

Guatemala Biodiversity Project
LESTARI (Indonesia)
SCIOA (Peru)

The USAID/Guatemala Biodiversity Project, the USAID/Indonesia LESTARI activity, and the USAID/Peru Strengthening the Capacity of Indigenous Organizations in the Amazon (SCIOA) activity used political economy analyses to promote evidence-based decision-making.

Lesson: Use assessments and geographic information systems to identify geographic areas for integration.

Climate Risk Reduction
USAID|Dominican Republic

USAID/Dominican Republic used a climate risk management assessment to examine opportunities to address climate change in its existing biodiversity programming.

West Africa Biodiversity
and Climate Change
USAID|West Africa

The West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change activity employed climate change vulnerability assessments to facilitate cross-sectoral programming discussions. When used in combination with other resources, these assessments can help inform multiple programming processes.

Amazonia Verde
USAID|Peru

USAID/Peru used geographic information systems to map interventions and identify opportunities for co-located activities. Geospatial data and analysis provides an opportunity to promote evidence-based biodiversity integration throughout the USAID program cycle.

Forest Income for Economic Sustainability

Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative

Land Governance Support
USAID|Liberia

USAID/Liberia made the strategic adaptive management decision to integrate two democracy, human rights, and governance activities and a biodiversity activity in response to a midterm evaluation. This re-design strengthened the mission's existing activities, enhanced coordination across sectors, and ultimately contributed to stronger development programming that supports Liberia's journey to self-reliance.

Sustainable Ecosystems Advanced
USAID|Indonesia

USAID/Indonesia's Sustainable Ecosystems Advanced activity regularly reviewed the theory of change to analyze how different activity interventions intersect, overlap, or do not support each other, and how integration across interventions can amplify outcomes for fisheries, food security, and marine biodiversity conservation.

Guatemala Biodiversity Project
USAID|Guatemala

The Guatemala Biodiversity Project utilized a thinking and working politically approach to consistently reflect on and adapt to changing conditions based on analysis, rather than assumptions or guesses. The political economy analysis helped the Project to better understand and map organized civil society and other informal groups, including clandestine groups, and learn the rules of the game, both formal and informal. As a result, team members were able to develop an overall vision, as well as to identify the need for integration and complementarity between the Project´s conservation and governance components.

West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change
USAID|West Africa

The West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change activity viewed co-funding as an opportunity to promote adaptive management and achieve benefits across sectors. Staff observed that integration of funding streams can make a project more nimble in responding to cross-sectoral challenges.

USAID partner releasing rehabilitated orangutans in Central Kalimantan Indonesia. The USAID LESTARI activity's work in Central Kalimantan is helping to re-establish a new population of orangutans in areas where they have been locally extinct for over 100 years. Photo by USAID/Indonesia.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

MEL processes are often time consuming and challenging. Very few missions conduct rigorous evaluations that examine the contribution of one sector to achieving results for other sectors, but missions are working to develop integrated theories of change and results frameworks to begin assessing the impacts of their efforts.

Lesson: Document how integrated approaches generate other sector benefits.

Northern Rangelands Trust
USAID | Kenya

The USAID/Kenya and East Africa Mission has strengthened governance among the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) conservancies to help build peace and security, which, in turn, created the conditions for tackling wildlife poaching and created tourism livelihood and educational opportunities. The mission shares these cross-sectoral results to illustrate how their longstanding biodiversity investments have generated results across multiple sectors.

Lesson: Be realistic about time and resource constraints for MEL.

HoPE LVB
USAID Office of Population and Reproductive Health

The USAID Washington Office of Population and Reproductive Health's Health of People and the Environment in the Lake Victoria Basin (HoPE LVB) activity used quantitative and qualitative data to examine and improve program interventions and advocated with multiple donors for a single reporting format with cross-sectoral indicators to streamline reporting processes and reduce costs and staff time. Staff recommended securing funding for an evaluation at the project or activity start; developing a strong MEL plan; and being realistic about the complexity, time, and cost associated with monitoring and evaluating integrated programming.

Forest Income for Economic Sustainability
Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative
Land Governance Support
USAID | Liberia

USAID/Liberia recommended that missions budget time to synthesize results and findings across activities to ensure integrated MEL and improve understanding of how integrated approaches contribute to development results.

Sustainable Ecosystems Advanced
USAID | Indonesia

USAID/Indonesia's Sustainable Ecosystems Advanced activity recommended setting realistic timelines for implementation that recognize the additional time needed to plan co-funded activities and do baseline monitoring. Sustainable Ecosystems Advanced staff reflected that some biodiversity indicators, such as number of hectares showing improved biophysical conditions, can require more than five years to observe measurable results; they recommended missions and implementing partners plan for this time and adapt as necessary.

Lesson: Develop and employ MEL tools to assess benefits across sectors.

ECOFISH
Siete Pecados
USAID | Philippines

USAID/Philippines and implementing partners determine benefits across sectors through the Marine Protected Area Effectiveness Assessment Tool. This tool measures both biophysical and social factors, and incorporates population, health, and environment approaches as an addendum to the tool to assess integration across the population, health, and environment sectors.

Lesson: Recognize the varying ways different sectors approach monitoring and evaluation.

Conservation Through Public Health
USAID | Uganda

The USAID/Uganda Conservation Through Public Health activity reflected that there are differences in measuring biodiversity conservation and human health outcomes. They suggested others recognize that health outcomes, such as increased handwashing facilities and increased access to family planning, are often easier to measure than biodiversity conservation results, such as increased community tolerance for gorilla populations and reduced poaching.

Lesson: Include learning questions from the start.

Northern Rangelands Trust
USAID | Kenya

The USAID/Kenya and East Africa Mission said inclusion of learning questions from the start would have been helpful for them in reflecting on learning and implementing adaptive management. In the future, they plan to identify learning questions during the design phase and then use these learning questions to orient pause and reflect sessions and other adaptive management actions.

Northern Rangelands Trust's unique community conservancy model supports the management of community-owned land for the benefit of livelihoods in Kenya. Photo by Duncan Ndotono.

Knowledge Management

Sharing biodiversity integration experiences across sectors can build evidence on the benefits of integration, facilitate information exchange on both technical and operational elements of integration, and ensure lessons learned are applied.

Lesson: Document experiences.

Amazonia Verde
USAID|Peru

USAID/Peru staff recorded all Amazonia Verde meetings, validations, and recommendations to document their efforts over time and provide an institutional memory for new employees and staff who want to reflect on past decisions or approaches for future questions and justifications.

ECOFISH
USAID|Philippines

The USAID/Philippines ECOFISH activity encouraged communication and frequent dissemination of data and information among the team and stakeholders to share the effectiveness of the closed season on fish stock recovery.

Protect Wildlife
USAID|Philippines

USAID/Philippines's Protect Wildlife activity shared knowledge and lessons among the team on a regular basis and collectively reflected on necessary actions to achieve integration objectives.

Lesson: Share the results of integrated activities across sectors to enhance understanding.

Northern Rangelands Trust
USAID|Kenya

The USAID/Kenya and East Africa Mission's environment office shared concrete data and results from biodiversity integration to help staff in other sectors understand how biodiversity investments generate benefits for other sectors. Staff stressed that sharing experience and evidence is an ongoing process that often begins during the design stage but must continue during implementation and MEL.

Lesson: Raise awareness of the benefits of using cross-sectoral indicators.

Climate Risk Reduction
USAID|Dominican Republic

USAID/Dominican Republic staff highlighted connections and benefits across sectors to increase awareness and use of cross-sectoral indicators in activity design. This revealed that there is a learning curve for staff to understand other sector indicators and measure the results of integrated programming.

Inclusive, Open Processes and Transparent Decision-making

Inclusive, open processes and transparent decision-making can facilitate a culture of collaboration and integration, underscoring the close linkages between collaborating, learning, and adapting and successful biodiversity integration.

Lesson: Remain open to learning from team members.

Protect Wildlife
USAID | Philippines

USAID/Philippines Protect Wildlife's implementing partners shared knowledge and lessons with each other and collectively reflected on actions necessary to achieve integration objectives.

Lesson: Be transparent about challenges and gaps.

Amazonia Verde
USAID | Peru

USAID/Peru intentionally shared challenges and knowledge gaps with all team members during the Amazonia Verde design. Staff encouraged team members to suggest innovative solutions that others may not have considered, underscoring the importance of promoting a culture where all staff feel comfortable sharing ideas.

Lesson: Embrace flexibility and be open to innovation.

Climate Risk Reduction
USAID | Dominican Republic

When USAID/Dominican Republic's climate change adaptation funding was eliminated halfway through the mission's Climate Risk Reduction activity, the mission explored ways to continue to achieve climate change adaptation; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); and biodiversity conservation results. Mission staff examined and built on the cross-sectoral elements of existing programming and pursued WASH funding to continue cross-sectoral work.

A Village Health Team member and a member of a model household discuss agriculture with community members, on Bussi Island, Uganda as part of the HoPE LVB activity. Photo by Jake Lyell, Pathfinder International

Collaboration with Internal and External Experts

Internal and external collaboration can help add value, fill gaps, avoid duplication, and achieve shared goals.

Lesson: Collaborate from the beginning.

ECOFISH
Protect Wildlife
Siete Pecados
USAID | Philippines

Three USAID/Philippines activities (ECOFISH, Protect Wildlife, and Siete Pecados) underscore the benefits of building relationships across teams and with stakeholders and stress the importance of building relationships early.

Program for Aquatic Natural Resources Improvement
USAID | Nepal

USAID/Nepal's Program for Aquatic Natural Resources Improvement, known as Paani, collaborated with local government, community groups, and other stakeholders to identify threats to watershed and river system health, including unplanned infrastructure development and destructive fishing practices. Early communication among these stakeholders facilitated by Paani contributed to development of tailored conservation policies and laws.

Lesson: Identify areas where outside expertise can complement mission expertise.

SCIOA
USAID | Peru

USAID/Peru engaged the Agency's Indigenous Peoples Advisor and the E3 Forestry and Biodiversity Office to help the mission throughout the development of the SCIOA activity's theory of change, annual work plan, and MEL plan.

Amazonia Verde
USAID | Peru

USAID/Peru collaborated internally with the E3 Offices of Forestry and Biodiversity, Global Climate Change, and Land and Urban, the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC); and the GeoCenter during the Amazonia Verde design. The mission also engaged the Government of Peru, civil society, academia, other donors, and the private sector to facilitate buy-in to the proposed design.

Climate Risk Reduction
USAID | Dominican Republic

USAID/Dominican Republic collaborated with WASH experts and the LAC Bureau to supplement mission expertise and jointly identify solutions for the Climate Risk Reduction activity.

Lesson: Encourage field visits

Northern Rangelands Trust
USAID|Kenya

The USAID/Kenya and East Africa Mission organized cross-sectoral field visits to demonstrate to staff how co-located activities can maximize benefits to multiple sectors.

Climate Risk Reduction
USAID|Dominican Republic

USAID/Dominican Republic encouraged USAID/Washington staff to visit and observe how the Climate Risk Reduction activity was contributing to multiple sector results objectives. Over a six-month period that included site visits and remote conversations, mission and Washington colleagues discussed how to continue the activity and ensure its interventions aligned with WASH funding requirements.

Pateshwori Chaudhary leads members of the Baikha fishing group to patrol against destructive fishing practices in the Rapti River, Nepal. The USAID Paani activity supported Rapti Rural Municipality to develop and endorse the Aquatic Animal and Biodiversity Conservation Bill 2019, which has become instrumental in stopping destructive fishing practices. Photo by Sudin Bajracharya for USAID.

Mission Leadership and Staff Champions

Mission leadership support and staff champions are critical when pursuing and implementing integration.

Lesson: Engage mission leadership.

Northern Rangelands Trust
USAID|Kenya

In the USAID/Kenya and East Africa Mission, environment staff shared experiences and evidence with mission leadership and other sector colleagues to enhance their understanding of how biodiversity investments generate benefits for other sectors. This understanding helped garner additional support for biodiversity integration in the mission.

Amazonia Verde (Peru)
Protect Wildlife (the Philippines)

The USAID/Peru Amazonia Verde and USAID/Philippines Protect Wildlife teams both ensured the Mission Director's support and buy-in.

Lesson: Identify and empower champions.

Amazonia Verde
USAID|Peru

During the Amazonia Verde Project design, USAID/Peru designated a strong leader to lead each phase and keep the team informed.

Protect Wildlife
USAID|Philippines

USAID/Philippines's Protect Wildlife activity defined team members' unique roles and their contributions to achieving activity objectives. They designated individuals to coordinate integration efforts.

Best Practices for Managing and Motivating Staff

Integration requires a unique skill set and a common language among personnel. Missions and implementing partners may need to invest time and resources to ensure staff have the skills and tools to design, implement, and MEL from integrated programming.

Lesson: Hold cross-sectoral orientation sessions.

HoPE LVB
USAID Office of Population and Reproductive Health

The USAID Office of Population and Reproductive Health's activity, Health of the People and Environment in the Lake Victoria Basin, held cross-sectoral orientation sessions for staff to become familiar with other sectors' terminology and indicators. These sessions aimed to ensure that staff developed a common language to communicate effectively across sectors and could discuss how interventions in one sector support interventions in another.

Lesson: Ensure technical staff understand how integrated components amplify their own sector results.

LESTARI
USAID|Indonesia

The USAID/Indonesia LESTARI activity developed and communicated a strategic vision for integrating objectives and ensured that technical staff fully understood how other integrated components contributed to their own sector results. The mission used integration as an opportunity to build unity and cohesion among staff, achieve results, and generate buy-in and support from government and local stakeholders.

Lesson: Identify the different skills and resource needed to be effective.

Conservation Through Public Health
USAID|Uganda

USAID/Uganda's Conservation through Public Health activity demonstrated that holistic and collaborative approaches to promoting the health of people, wildlife, and the environment require staff who understand these interlinkages and also require additional time and effort for MEL.

Lesson: Recognize and leverage individual strengths.
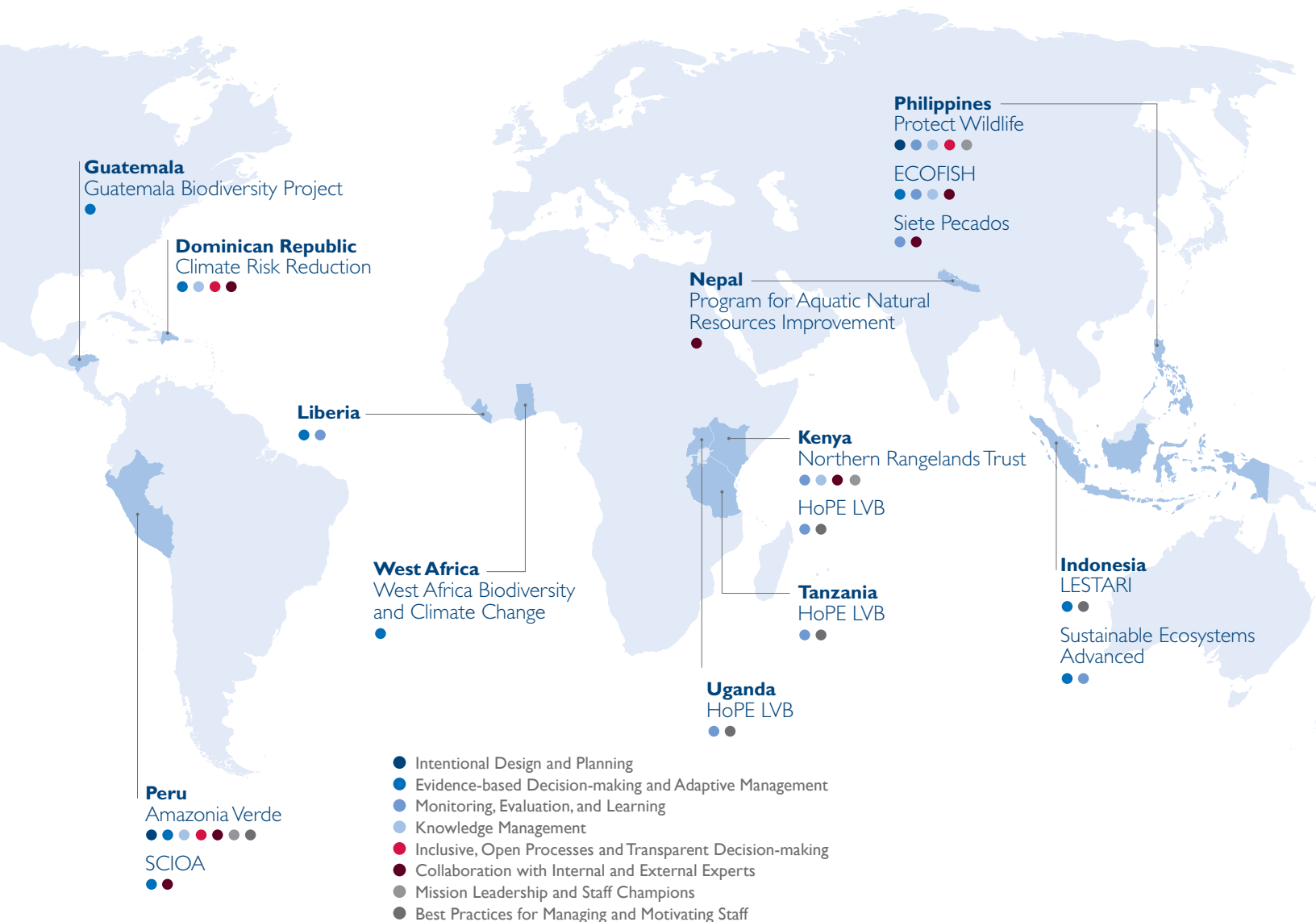
Amazonia Verde
USAID|Peru

USAID/Peru cautions that not all team members need to know how to use and manage computer tools and systems that support planning processes. USAID/Peru allocated responsibilities based on individual abilities and strengths during the Amazonia Verde design.

Closing

Collectively, the biodiversity integration cases illustrate key lessons for USAID and implementing partner staff interested in pursuing integrated programming. Many of these lessons focus on enabling conditions for integration related to culture, processes, and resources. The lessons learned also offer solutions on how to address challenges posed by integration, or at least how to be realistic and prepared for them. Moving forward, cross-mission communication, knowledge management, and learning will be critical to enabling lessons learned on integration to inform future programming.

FIGURE 4: **Geographic distribution of the cases submitted to the 2019 Biodiversity Integration Case Study Competition**

Philippines
Protect Wildlife

ECOFISH

Siete Pecados

Guatemala
Guatemala Biodiversity Project

Dominican Republic
Climate Risk Reduction

Nepal
Program for Aquatic Natural Resources Improvement

Liberia

Kenya
Northern Rangelands Trust

HoPE LVB

West Africa
West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change

Tanzania
HoPE LVB

Indonesia
LESTARI

Sustainable Ecosystems Advanced

Uganda
HoPE LVB

Peru
Amazonia Verde

SCIOA

- Intentional Design and Planning
- Evidence-based Decision-making and Adaptive Management
- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
- Knowledge Management
- Inclusive, Open Processes and Transparent Decision-making
- Collaboration with Internal and External Experts
- Mission Leadership and Staff Champions
- Best Practices for Managing and Motivating Staff

The full description of each case study is available at: https://bridgebiointegration.net/case-studies.

COVER PHOTO: Christina Lintag for USAID ECOFISH.
PHOTO TOP: Photo by USAID/Peru.