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Technical Brief

BUILDING A CONSERVATION ENTERPRISE
KEYS FOR SUCCESS

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Conservation Enterprises Learning Group

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Front Cover: The Kapeeka Community Forest Management Group's beekeeping enterprise, which is supported by the Africa Wildlife Foundation and Jane Goodall Institute under USAID's Uganda Biodiversity Program. *Photo credit: Judy Boshoven*

Back Cover: Beekeeping is among the conservation enterprises strategic approaches supported by USAID. *Photo credit: Pixabay*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

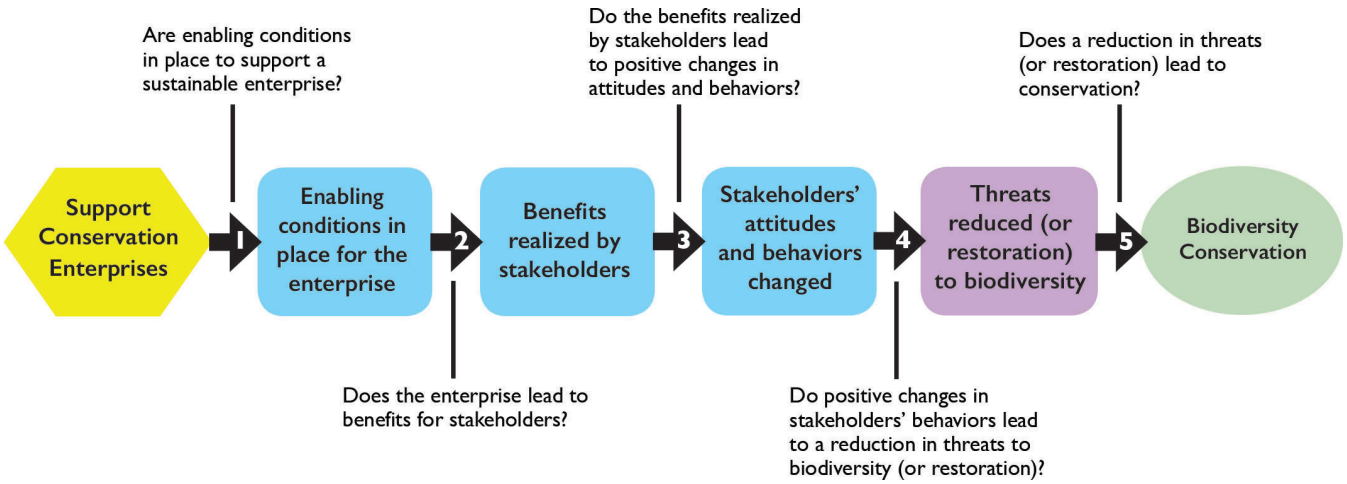
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

A. INTRODUCTION

Conservation enterprise approaches are a common component of many United States Agency for International Development (USAID) biodiversity activities. Often developed as part of a broader community-based natural resource management or sustainable livelihoods project, conservation enterprises provide income to participants through the production and sale of goods and services such as ecotourism, beekeeping, and crafts. The hypothesis is that if participant income is increased, then that increased income provides the motivation and ability for participants to discontinue unsustainable activities and exclude others from uses that result in threats to biodiversity. The theory of change for how support for conservation enterprises leads to conservation of biodiversity includes the following key assumptions (represented by the arrows in the results chain in Figure 1):

1. If the enabling conditions (for instance, market potential) are in place, then there will be enterprise revenues and the enterprise will be sustainable.
2. If the enterprise generates revenues and is sustainable, then stakeholders will realize benefits (primarily an increase in income, but also additional non-cash benefits).
3. If stakeholders realize benefits from the enterprise, that will lead to positive changes in attitudes and behaviors (in other words, stopping or reducing threat-inducing practices).
4. If there are positive changes in stakeholders' attitudes and behaviors, those changes will contribute to an overall reduction in threats (such as reduced overfishing, poaching, logging) induced by the stakeholders themselves (internal threats) and controlling outsiders (external threats) or restoration.
5. If there is an overall reduction in threats (or restoration), then biodiversity focal interests will be conserved.

Figure 1. Results Chain Depicting the Generalized Theory of Change and Learning Questions Under the Conservation Enterprises Learning Agenda



The Conservation Enterprises Collaborative Learning Group developed a Learning Agenda with specific learning questions that explore key assumptions of the theory of change. This review provides a summary of the guidance from key resource documents on the enabling conditions for conservation enterprises to address the first learning question: Are the enabling conditions in place to support a sustainable enterprise?

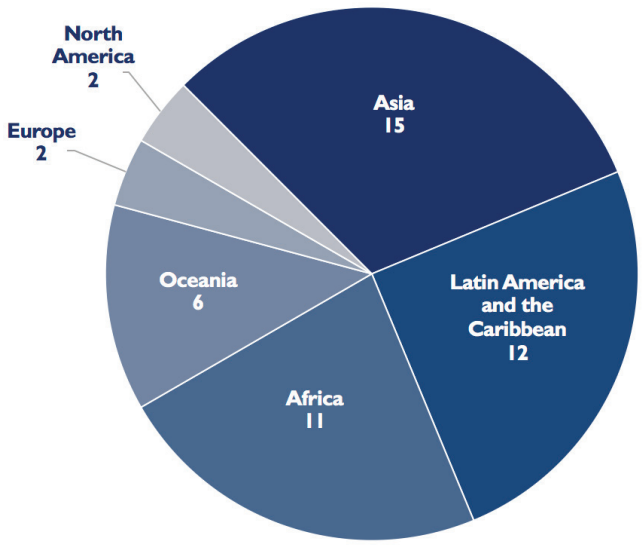
The purpose of this review is to make the information from these resources more readily available to members of the Conservation Enterprises Collaborative Learning Group and other USAID staff to inform their design and implementation of projects and activities that use a conservation enterprises approach. Specifically, this review seeks to help USAID and its implementing partners understand the enabling conditions for effective conservation enterprises. Annex 1 on page 21 includes a checklist that can be used during project design to guide consideration of the enabling conditions described in this brief.

B. METHODS

An initial search of the peer-reviewed and USAID grey literature revealed a broad array of published documents on the enabling conditions for conservation enterprises and the need for a selection process to identify key resource documents. Search terms and parameters were identified based on a previous synthesis of key lessons from USAID-funded conservation enterprises, and an expanded search protocol was developed for key resource documents relevant to building the enabling conditions for conservation enterprises (see Annex 2 on page 26 for search protocol). Based on the search, 22 documents were selected for review; all had to have been published after 2000 and address multiple enabling conditions for conservation enterprises. Documents were also selected if they were based on a review of multiple types of conservation enterprises. Two documents that did not identify specific enterprise types and one that only identified one type were selected because of the broad scope of enabling conditions for conservation enterprises reviewed in these documents. Although some selected documents have a broader focus on sustainable or alternative livelihoods, they define strategic approaches to establish an enterprise, generate income, provide benefits to stakeholders, change attitudes and behaviors, and reduce threats to achieve biodiversity conservation in a manner that is consistent with the Learning Agenda for conservation enterprises.

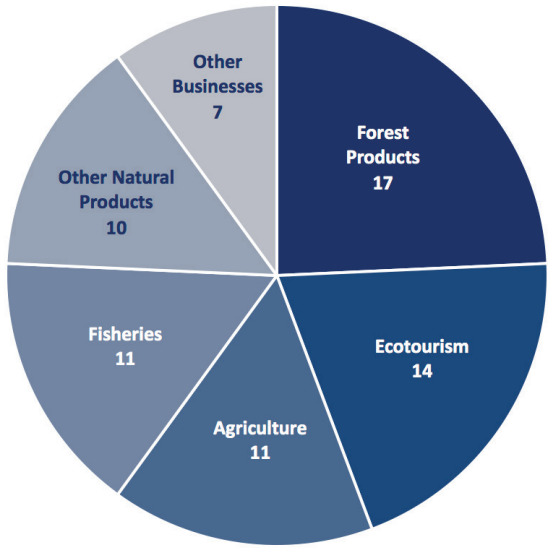
Figures 2-5 on pages 5 and 6 show that the scope of the 22 reference documents, and their many case studies, are inclusive of a wide range of enterprise types and of all the regions where USAID implements biodiversity programming. The documents provided both general information on enabling conditions as well as case studies that offered explicit information on enabling conditions directly linked to a specific conservation enterprise. The documents covered 282 case studies in total. Most documents reviewed multiple enterprise types.

Figure 2. Number of Documents Covering Each Region



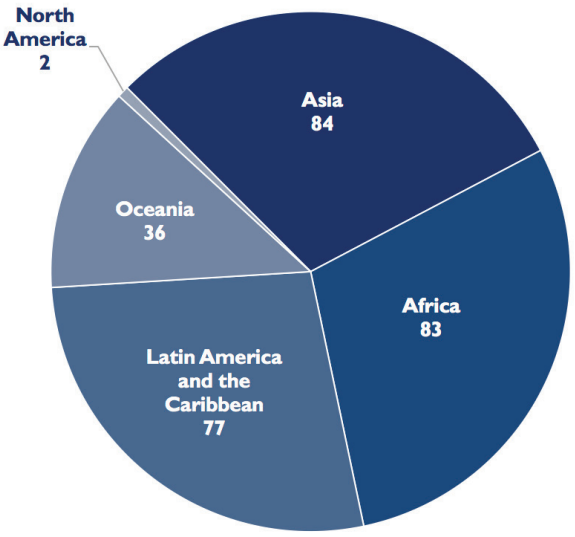
Of the 22 documents, 36% focused on a single geographic region, but 55% focused on multiple regions. Eighteen percent are focused on a single country, while 68% focused on five or more countries.

Figure 3. Number of Documents Covering Each Enterprise Type



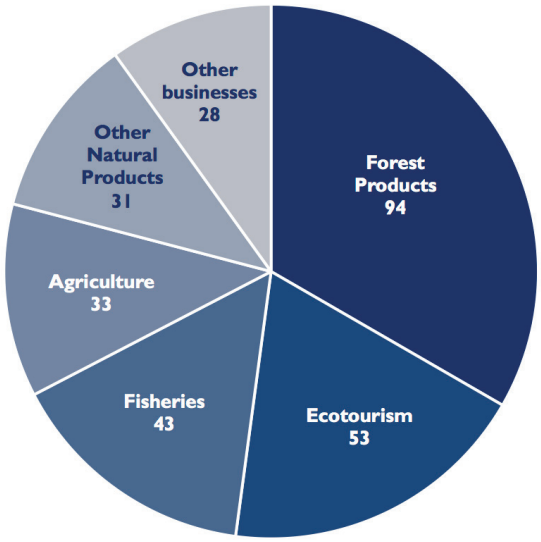
Of the 22 documents, 82% reviewed multiple enterprise types and 32% reviewed five or more. Two documents did not include enterprise types, and two documents reviewed only one enterprise type.

Figure 4. Number of Case Studies Occurring in Each Region



The 282 case studies included in the documents are mostly from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and span 67 countries.

Figure 5. Number of Case Studies Representing Each Enterprise Type



Forest products were included in 33% of the 282 case studies in the documents, though the other five enterprise types were also well represented.

Table 1 on page 7 shows seven categories containing a total of 21 enabling conditions that were identified from the review of the resource documents. There are seven categories of enabling conditions:

- Participants' livelihood needs are met
- Business aspects are in place
- Strong internal governance exists
- Supportive external policies and partnerships are in place
- Participants have the necessary skills and capacity
- Production and supply chains are in place
- Benefits, attitude and behavior change, threat reduction, and conservation ensured

The first six categories (shown in red in Table 1) are logical groupings of the enabling conditions that are mainly focused on the establishment of the enterprise by participants and the enterprise's sustainability over time (e.g., revenues are being generated and the desired participation is achieved). These categories and their enabling conditions are interrelated – for example, supportive partnerships can strengthen participants' skills and capacity.

The seventh category (shown in blue in Table 1) is a group of enabling conditions more focused on ensuring that the other intermediate outcomes are achieved, and the theory of change towards biodiversity conservation holds true over time – in other words, that benefits are realized by stakeholders, they have positive changes in their attitudes and behaviors, threats are reduced to biodiversity, and ultimately conservation is achieved. These enabling conditions are interrelated within the category and with other categories of enabling conditions. For example, if benefits are shared among the stakeholders, a strong internal governance of the enterprise is more likely to be sustained over time.

Table 1 indicates whether a document contains an expanded discussion of the enabling condition (shown with a star) or a mention (shown with a check). A document reference webpage for each of the resources used in this synthesis is available on the online platform for the Conservation Enterprises Collaborative Learning Group.

For each of the seven categories of enabling conditions, key points were extracted and summarized in the findings to provide practitioners with information to guide program development.

Table 1. Enabling Conditions Addressed by Each Resource Document Included in This Review.

		Enabling Conditions	Anderson & Mehta 2013	Bishop et al. 2008	Bovarnick & Gupta 2003	Boyer et al. 2008	Campbell 2008	Cattermoul et al. 2008	Dudley et al. 2016	Elliott & Sumba 2011	Enterprise Works/VITA 2009	Govan 2011	Ireland et al. 2004	Koontz 2008	Lecup 2011	Leisher et al. 2010	Macqueen 2012	Molnar et al. 2007	O'Garra 2007	Salafsky et al. 2001	Subedi et al. 2007	Torell & Tobey 2012	UNDP 2006	Wheeler et al. 2005
Conditions for ensuring enterprise establishment and sustainability	Participants' Livelihood Needs are Met	**Stakeholder Alignment**	✓		★	✓	★	✓	✓		✓	★	✓		✓		★	✓	✓		✓	★	✓	✓
		Diversification			✓						★	✓					✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
	Business Aspects Are in Place	**Market Demand**	✓		★	✓	✓	✓	✓		★	✓	✓	★	✓	✓	★	✓	✓	✓	✓	★	✓	
		Profit Potential	★		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				★		★		★		✓
		Access to Financing		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	★	✓		✓		★	✓	✓			✓	✓	★
	Strong Internal Governance Exists	**Ownership**		✓						✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	★	✓	★	
		Governance	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓				✓		★	✓	★	✓		✓	★	★
	Supportive External Policies & Partnerships Are in Place	**Government Requirements**		★				✓	✓		✓	✓		★	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
		Policies for Enterprises	✓	★		✓	★	★	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		★	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
		Business Alliances	✓	✓	✓	✓	★	✓	★	★	★	★	✓	✓	★	✓	★	✓	✓		★		✓	★
	Participants Have Necessary Skills & Capacity	**Business Management Capacity**		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		★	✓	✓	✓	★	✓	✓	
		Technical Capacity	✓	✓	✓	✓	★	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	★	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	★
	Production & Supply Chains Are in Place	**Inputs**	✓		✓					✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓			★		
		Equipment									✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
		Infrastructure			✓				✓		✓	✓	★			✓	✓	✓						
Conditions for ensuring other outcomes in the theory of change	Benefits, Attitude and Behavior Change, Threat Reduction, and Conservation Ensured	**Benefit Sharing**	✓		★	✓			✓	★	★	✓	✓			★	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
		Targeted Participants					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		★		✓		✓			✓	★	★
		Combined Strategic Approaches		✓				★	✓	✓	✓		✓							✓		✓		
		Biodiversity Linkage			★	✓			★	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		★	✓	✓
		Planning for External Disturbance			✓	★				✓	✓	★	★			★	✓	✓	✓	✓				
		Policies for and Enforcement of Resource Use	★	★	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	★	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

KEY	
★	*Resource documents containing expanded discussion of the enabling condition*
✓	*Brief mention*

C. FINDINGS ON ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR ENTERPRISE ESTABLISHMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

This section synthesizes the key points from the resource documents according to the six categories related to the conditions for ensuring enterprise establishment and sustainability.

1. PARTICIPANTS' LIVELIHOOD NEEDS ARE MET

Stakeholder Alignment: The enterprise is aligned with the needs and aspirations of participants

It is important to recognize that alignment needs to occur between enterprises and both the tangible and intangible needs and aspirations of participants. Needs and aspirations beyond increased income may include risk reduction, prestige, job satisfaction, and compatibility with cultural traditions and social norms. For example, reducing risks associated with human-wildlife conflict or addressing insecure land tenure can provide strong incentives for participation in new enterprises.[15]

It may be difficult to restrict access to natural resources without providing people with an alternative, especially when resources are used for subsistence.

Understanding how current livelihoods evolved, how current livelihoods may create barriers or opportunities to shift to more sustainable options, and the different needs among groups within the community (e.g., age, gender, economic status) can help an organization promoting conservation enterprises identify approaches that will match with the needs across different stakeholders. Often, more than one enterprise approach within a community is needed.[3, 5, 10, 13, 15]

Allowing community members, including women and disadvantaged groups, to explicitly lay out their own needs and aspirations can help avoid situations where (1) outsider knowledge is perceived as correct, even when it is not, or (2) enterprises that may not be suited to the context are simply replicated because they have been perceived as being successful elsewhere.[10,11]

In addition to promoting sustainable forestry around Tikal National Park in Guatemala, the Rainforest Alliance is promoting sustainable tourism to the ancient Mayan site. Photo credit: Charlie Watson for USAID/Rainforest Alliance Forestry Enterprises

Working with the community to understand the relationship between their livelihood needs and biodiversity conservation can build consensus for the need to change resource use patterns and explore options for alternative livelihood strategies.[5, 6, 21]

Diversification: The enterprise diversifies the livelihood options of participants

It may be difficult to restrict access to natural resources without providing people with an alternative, especially when resources are used for subsistence. However, conservation enterprises can help diversify resource-dependent livelihoods and entice people away from unsustainable activities. Additionally, diversifying livelihoods may increase community resiliency to stresses and shocks like natural disasters or political unrest.[1,18,21] Diversification may also reduce vulnerability from the failure of a single livelihood, particularly in isolated areas.[10,21]

Creating multiple opportunities that provide participants with both short- and long-term benefits can help maintain interest in enterprises and ensure sustainability of enterprises overall.[15] As enterprises mature, they may diversify into multiple income streams to create more employment and returns and to address social issues that are hard to address early on.[17]

There is a risk with new enterprises that they may be pursued in addition to unsustainable activities rather than instead of them.[15] In such cases, conservation goals are unlikely to be achieved.

2. BUSINESS ASPECTS ARE IN PLACE

Market Demand: There is strong market demand for the goods and services provided by the enterprise, and the enterprise is capable of meeting this demand

Inadequate understanding of the market, lack of a strong market, and superficial supply-driven approaches to creating markets are common failures in establishing and sustaining conservation enterprises.[1,11,13,16,21] Thorough market research to understand (1) current and future international, national, and local trends; (2) where established but not-too-competitive market demand exists; and (3) whether these markets are accessible will help lead to profitable enterprises.[3,5,6,12,13,16,21]

In most cases, developing a new market is beyond the reach of influence of local communities.[18] Middlemen or business partners are necessary conduits to external markets. Market research can act as "proof" to secure the outside partnerships and business alliances needed to establish the conservation enterprises.[4]

In some cases, the lack of market demand may not be the issue; instead there may be limited ability of enterprises to meet demand for quality and quantity of products without overuse of resources.[12,17] One way to encourage sustainable harvesting of the resource is get the product certified. Certification can diversify a community enterprises' consumer base beyond local markets to larger and more lucrative national and international markets, allowing enterprises to get more revenues from fewer inputs.[7]

Profit Potential: The proposed enterprise goods and services present positive profit potential

Ensuring positive profit potential that meets the financial needs of the enterprises over the long term can help the enterprises meet their financial sustainability objectives within the short-term funding period provided by donors.[1,12,19,20] Enterprises that meet or exceed the profit potential of existing livelihood options that are dependent on unsustainable resource use are more likely to achieve long-term sustainability and conservation success.[3,8,21] (See also Targeted Participants on page 16.)

Beekeeping is a common example of a conservation enterprise; it produces products that can be sold in local markets and become a source of regular income. Photo credit: Stephen Mitchell

Transaction costs and opportunity costs (e.g., time spent on enterprises versus other livelihood activities), which are sometimes overlooked, should be analyzed to fully understand the profit potential of enterprises and the incentives for participation.[1,10,12] If enterprises can prove the profit potential of their product, it may be easier to secure outside partnerships and business alliances.[4] (See also Business Alliances on page 12.)

Access to Financing: Participants have access to credit and/or capital and the ability to manage these funds

The ability of enterprise participants to access and manage credit is often a prerequisite for generating income and achieving financial sustainability. As part of financing, participants must be capable of managing funding agreements and relationships with funding sources (if applicable).[5,21]

Credit mechanisms should be tailored to the needs and knowledge of each group of individuals within the community. Different methods may be required for different stakeholders,[5] and special attention may be needed to increase women's access to credit and capital for enterprises.[21]

Providing access to more than one financing tool (e.g., grants, loans, equity investments) may reduce risk and improve community support for the enterprises.[2] The establishment of savings mechanisms and local micro-finance institutions, increased capacity of the government, or enacting enabling policies to provide these services may be necessary to help enterprises become independent and self-sustaining.[3,15]

3. STRONG INTERNAL GOVERNANCE EXISTS

Ownership: The enterprise is owned by the participants

Enterprises are more likely to align with community needs when the participants from the community have ownership of the enterprises (as opposed to external actors), which maintains community support and contributes to enterprise sustainability. Ownership can also incentivize members of the community to participate beyond the economic activities of the enterprises and to pursue broader conservation goals.[3] Ownership by community members is considered to be essential to ensuring sustained community involvement[7] and equitable benefit-sharing in the enterprises.[9]

No single enterprise-ownership structure (e.g., individual versus joint ownership among members of the community) seems best in all situations; instead, it is important to find the ownership structure that incentivizes participants to stay engaged in the enterprises.[20] When many stakeholders are involved in enterprises, clearly defined and documented ownership roles[2,15] and plans for the transfer of ownership or management from external actors to the community members (if applicable)[7,16] can help avoid confusion and conflict.

Ecotourism at the Underground River in the Philippines – one of the seven natural wonders of the world, featuring a coastal cave with kilometers of navigable water – provides an economic alternative to traditional forest livelihoods. Photo credit: Jason Houston

Governance: Strong governance systems are in place

Effective governance – in the form of well-defined and transparent organizational structures with open communication – is critical for enterprise sustainability.[9,16,17] Governance systems should also extend to include defining the roles and responsibilities with business alliances and partnerships.[9,22] (See Business Alliances on page 12 and Benefit Sharing on page 16.)

Jars of mushroom spawn, or concentrated mushroom mycelium, canned by farmers in North West Cameroon for sale to mushroom cultivators. Photo credit: Ashleigh Baker

Robust and balanced leadership within the governance structure can support enterprise sustainability. Good leaders are respected by the community,[13] can successfully mediate problems and maintain enterprise cohesion,[7,16,18] and are capable of networking with community members, partners, and government entities.[4,7,16]

Strong, well-defined, and transparent organizational structures with open communication are critical to stable enterprise partnerships[9,22] and enterprise sustainability.[9,16,17] A recorded governance structure with defined decision-making protocols can help enterprises bounce back and maintain success when leaders change, especially if the initial leader was the driving force behind an enterprise.[16]

Local management of enterprises can contribute to enterprise sustainability, given that local stakeholders are familiar with the concerns and priorities of their communities.[19,21] Including women and disadvantaged groups in planning, decision-making, and implementation of the enterprises also helps to ensure that enterprise governance is representative of the needs of all stakeholder groups.[18,21]

4. SUPPORTIVE EXTERNAL POLICIES & PARTNERSHIPS ARE IN PLACE

Government Requirements: The enterprise complies with government requirements

Knowledge of and compliance with government requirements has been identified as a key factor to ensure enterprise sustainability. Complying with (often complex) government health, safety, export, land tenure, land use, transportation, and benefit sharing regulations can pose a challenge for enterprises,[13,17] but is often a necessity.[12,21] Introducing participants to government requirements and regulations and helping them understand and meet compliance requirements is important throughout the enterprise development process.[10,12,15]

Working to modify legal and regulatory frameworks, such as those that limit the role of women in planning and economic development, may also be necessary in some contexts for enterprise development.[15,21] Alliances and associations can support a government's capacity to change laws and regulations, such as unfavorable resource use and enterprise policies[10,15,16] or costly, time-consuming bureaucratic requirements, that present obstacles to positive livelihood changes.[6,17]

Policies for Enterprises: There are supportive policies and legal frameworks in place for enterprise development

Supportive regional, national, and international policies around enterprise development and certification processes can help conservation enterprises become established and grow. Alliances between the government, private

Introducing participants to government requirements and regulations and helping them understand and meet compliance requirements is important throughout the enterprise development process.

sector organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the community can support needed policy changes.[5] (See Business Alliances below) Supportive policies can help secure access to national or international markets for sustainable products and promote environmental and social standards through certification schemes.[10]

Successful conservation enterprises meet participants' livelihood needs. A UNDP project in Cambodia provides women, especially widows who are the sole breadwinners of their families, the opportunity to earn additional income as boat guides for tourists, while also protecting the flooded forest and fish habitat. Photo credit: Ashleigh Baker

Engaging with policymakers early in the enterprise development process can help implementing partners and enterprise participants understand the existing policy context as well as where policy change could create a more favorable enabling environment for the enterprises.[5,16] Policy interventions for enterprise development could include: macro-economic policies (interest rates, taxation, public spending), deregulation and simplification of systems (such as cutting bureaucratic procedures, legislative exemptions, reconciling conflicting policies at different governmental levels), sectoral and problem-specific policies (such as rural development support, cooperative development, support for women),[5] and creating incentives.[2,13]

Certification processes can encourage and maintain the sustainability of a natural product[12,16] and promote high social standards,[10] while making enterprises more competitive on the international market.[2,12] Some high-demand certifications include: organic, Fair Trade, Forest Stewardship Council, and Bird Friendly.[12]

Business Alliances: The enterprise is supported by business alliances and partnerships at the local, national, and international levels

Business alliances may range from cooperation among small, local entrepreneurial groups that support sharing of technical skills to external partnerships with large, international corporations that expand the enterprises' market access. Alliances between enterprises through groups or associations can give enterprises (and the community) a stronger voice,[6,16,20] provide a platform for sharing of technical skills,[2,7,16] and reduce production costs.[13] Common external partners include: international agencies, local or national governments,[13] local communities, universities and vocational business training institutions (particularly for technical capacity building), and the private sector (including middlemen).[3,5,15,18,22] Defining clear roles and responsibilities[2,16] and maintaining regular, open communication between parties are key factors for a healthy alliance or partnership.[4,16]

Business alliances and external partners can provide the following support:

- Locally relevant[10] technical skills[3,7,10,13,16,22] and plans for future skills transfer trainings or meetings[5]
- Assistance with marketing[7,10,13]
- Enterprise management[3,13]
- Policy advice and support[10,13,15]
- Access to materials and equipment[10]
- Start-up funding[3,10,13,22]

- Transportation of goods[5,10]
- Access to a secure market for goods and services,[1,12,15,21,5,6,7,16,20] especially through network-building such as export/import ties and long-term buying relationships[3,10,12,15,18,22]

Long-term support from external partners may be necessary, but an exit strategy can help ensure enterprise sustainability beyond the life of the external support.[9,16] Socially responsible private sector partners may be more capable of seeing communities as equitable partners and are less likely to exploit the enterprises and undermine attempts to maintain an environmentally sustainable process.[9]

5. PARTICIPANTS HAVE NECESSARY SKILLS & CAPACITY

Business Management Capacity: Participants have skills necessary to manage the enterprise

Conservation enterprises often suffer from limited business skills and a lack of market information.[17] Entrepreneurship is a skill that differs by culture, and facilitators may need to build awareness of this skill through trainings and knowledge-sharing events.[5] The capacity of enterprise participants in financial management,[18] business planning, and marketing,[13] including locating buyers and/or attracting clients,[4] and responding to market changes, is key to enterprise sustainability.[2,4,6,10,12,19,21]

Sustained access to technical training and availability of partners to provide that training is a key factor in enterprise sustainability.

A financial management plan should include a marketing plan, a production plan, and an organization plan. Financial plans can be used to create larger business plans for the enterprises.[20] Financial planning can reduce future financial stresses that may not have been anticipated (i.e., machinery replacement or external disturbance).[17]

Involving participants in the financial planning process and establishing ongoing transparent financial management systems can help ensure enterprise sustainability beyond external support.[7,13,20] Banks, mobile banks, cooperatives, micro-credit schemes, small or local businesses, and NGOs offer resources to build financial planning and management skills.[10]

Technical Capacity: Participants have the right technical skills to produce goods and provide services

Sustained access to technical training and availability of partners to provide that training is a key factor in enterprise sustainability. Communities that have been involved in related livelihood activities in the past may have already developed many of the technical skills needed for conservation-based enterprises.[15] Sustainability appears to be more likely when there is a focus on simple enterprises that use existing skills and knowledge of the community, rather than complex enterprises that require new skills and ongoing technical assistance.[3,12,13,19,21]

Resources management association member displays a chili drying rack for a chili enterprise in Uganda. Photo Credit: Judy Boshoven

In the Maya Biosphere Reserve in Guatemala, all active community concessions have successfully achieved Forest Stewardship Council certification. The benefits from selling a variety of timber and non-timber forest products provide incentives for community concession holders to sustainably manage their forest and protect against illegal logging and other threats. Photo courtesy of Rainforest Alliance

Technical capacity should be approached as an investment. After initial training, capacity building should be maintained in some manner, and enterprises should have access to new skill development as appropriate (e.g., regular trainings, access to training resources, meetings).[3,10,11,22] Technical capacity support may come from government extension departments (although this assistance is often lacking[7]), NGOs,[17] similar businesses (through lessons learned and knowledge sharing events[7]), local community associations or networks,[10] and universities and vocational business training institutions.[22]

It may be necessary to build the capacity of partners and alliances as well as the entrepreneurs; if these support systems fail, the enterprise may also fail.[5] It is also important to understand and address any gender differences in access to technical capacity building in the local context.[21]

6. PRODUCTION AND SUPPLY CHAINS ARE IN PLACE

Inputs: Participants have access to inputs for enterprise goods and services

Many enterprises are limited in growth or sustainability by access or availability of key inputs for their enterprises.[13,21] Secure and sustainable access to raw materials and land for the production of enterprise goods and services is needed to establish and sustain the conservation enterprises. Effective enterprises think beyond production to packaging, marketing, and transportation inputs.[10]

For ecosystem-based livelihoods, local land-use planning[1] and appropriate resource tenure systems are needed for secure access to inputs.[1,3,17] Determining which resources and which habitat will be necessary for enterprises, understanding the effect of the enterprises' use of those resources, and determining how to use these inputs sustainably can help the enterprise achieve long-term sustainability.[10] Policies for, and enforcement of, resource use may be needed to ensure that enterprises have access and control over the needed inputs. (See Policies for and Enforcement of Resource Use on page 18.)

Effective enterprises think beyond production to packaging, marketing, and transportation inputs.

Equipment: Participants have access to the equipment necessary to develop, process, and/or distribute enterprise goods and services

Consistent, economical access to (or ownership of) the necessary equipment to produce enterprise goods and provide services and knowledge of equipment use, maintenance, and upgrades when necessary are keys to establish and sustain enterprises.[10,13] It is best to determine what equipment will be necessary from start to finish, whether there is access to it, and how to obtain access to it.[10] Equipment should match the needs of the enterprises and also be adaptable to local conditions.

Users should know how to budget for purchase, depreciation, and replacement of equipment.[17] Most projects will require significant credit or capital from external sources[18] because it can be difficult to obtain the necessary capital to purchase equipment for the processing of products.[17] (See Access to Financing on page 10.) Partnerships and alliances may provide easier access (physical and financial) to equipment and equipment repairs. (See Business Alliances on page 12.)[17,20]

Infrastructure: Infrastructure is in place for the enterprise to meet production and transportation needs

Infrastructure can have an important influence on the production and transportation of enterprise goods and the provision of services and, therefore, the success of enterprises.[11] Dependency of the enterprises on infrastructure for access to markets, inputs, and services should be assessed. Weak infrastructure limits transportation abilities, thereby affecting market access.[10,17,18] The transportation needs of the enterprises should be considered before developing the enterprises in an inaccessible region, especially if products are fragile or perishable.[3,15] If infrastructure is poor, a product that can be made and marketed locally should be considered. Otherwise, enterprises should outsource certain tasks or set up an office close to the market location.[3]

Fishermen who previously fished illegally for sea turtles now monitor and tag turtles in Loreto Bay National Park, Mexico. Eco tour guide Pancho Mayoral is training to be the first outiftter in the Loreto area to take his clients out to assist with sea turtle monitoring trips.
Photo credit: © Jason Houston

D. ENABLING CONDITIONS THAT ENSURE OTHER OUTCOMES ALONG THE THEORY OF CHANGE

This section summarizes key findings for the category of enabling conditions that support the achievement of outcomes along the theory of change towards biodiversity conservation, beyond the establishment and sustainability of the enterprises themselves.

Benefit Sharing: Equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms are in place

In community-based enterprises, arrangements may be needed to avoid free riders[15,16] and elite capture.[1,9,14,21] Stakeholders must perceive that benefits from the enterprises compensate for the sacrifices they make in terms of reducing resource use.[9,15] If the benefits only reach a small portion of resource users and do not exceed the cost of conservation, an enterprise approach may not succeed in reducing the unsustainable resource use.[3,9]

If the benefits only reach a small portion of resource users, the enterprise approach may not succeed in reducing the unsustainable resource use.

Benefit distribution mechanisms may need to take into consideration the social and cultural dynamics of the community.[3,4,9] It is important that stakeholders have clear and realistic expectations for benefit distribution and timing.[3,4,9] As benefits increase from enterprise participation, other stakeholders may become interested in moving in to take those benefits. Therefore, benefit distribution arrangements may need to be reviewed periodically to be sure that benefits continue to be distributed equitably.[15]

In Tanzania, USAID's sustainable landscape approach targets critical ecosystems to sustain wildlife habitats, reverse land degradation, restore watersheds, and improve community livelihoods through conservation enterprises like ecotourism. Photo credit: USAID in Africa Flickr

Robust and transparent legal structures can ensure that benefits are shared and remain with the targeted stakeholders.[1,2,9,15]

If benefits take a significant amount of time to be secured, it may be necessary to have a system in place to provide stakeholders with shorter-term benefits to keep them engaged and supportive of reducing their resource use.[4,10]

The enterprise approach may be more effective at providing economic incentives for attitude and behavior change if it targets benefit distribution to those who depend on the resources and those who make decisions about resource-use.[3,9] (See also Targeted Participants.)

Targeted Participants: The enterprise involves individuals that have the closest connection to the natural resource that is the focal interest of biodiversity conservation

The enterprise approach may be more effective at providing economic incentives for attitude and behavior change if it targets benefit distribution to those who depend on the resources, as well as resource-use decision-makers. These are the groups of stakeholders who most directly cause internal threats or who have the ability to stop external threats to biodiversity.[3,6,9] Enterprises that target these stakeholders may help reduce poverty of

those most vulnerable to overexploitation of the resource, while also conserving biodiversity.[15] During the design process, practitioners should clearly identify whose attitudes need to change, how they need to change, and what measures are likely to bring about that change.[6]

Combined Strategic Approaches: The enterprise approach is part of a set of strategic approaches

During the design process, practitioners should clearly identify whose attitudes and behaviors need to change, how they need to change, and what measures are likely to bring about that change. The benefits of combining conservation enterprises with other conservation livelihood interventions or other conservation strategic approaches may result in an improved capacity for behavior change, threat reduction, and ultimately biodiversity conservation. For example, conservation enterprises that provide program staff an entry point into the community may raise overall awareness for the need to protect and manage natural resources and be more likely to lead to conservation results.[15,21] (See also Policies for and Enforcement of Resource Use on page 18.)

During the design process, practitioners should clearly identify whose attitudes need to change, how they need to change, and what measures are likely to bring about that change.

Combining enterprise approaches with other approaches that strengthen trust and confidence, such as providing education, may make stakeholders more willing to listen, plan, and take action to counter internal and external threats to biodiversity. In some situations, raising awareness and building community engagement in conservation may be just as effective as community enterprises in meeting conservation objectives.[19]

Biodiversity Linkage: The success of the enterprise is dependent on the status of the biodiversity focal interest

Conservation enterprises that have a link between the biodiversity focal interest and the success or sustainability of the enterprises may be more effective at achieving conservation outcomes.[15] Certain conservation enterprises are easier to link to biodiversity conservation, such as ecotourism, beekeeping,[15,22] and some sustainable harvest businesses (e.g., medicinal plants[3] or crabs[11]), which require entrepreneurs to protect the associated ecosystems (e.g., forests[3] or mangroves[11]). However, it has been found that conservation can occur regardless of whether or not the enterprise is linked to biodiversity. One possible explanation for this finding is that the community's perception of linkage may be more important than the actual linkage.[19]

Members of a Filipino women's organization harvest seaweed – used in products including cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and ice cream – for their seaweed cultivation enterprise. Photo credit: © Jason Houston

Planning for External Disturbance: If the enterprise is subject to external forces, participants should plan for these disturbances

External shocks (e.g., natural disasters, coups, and diseases) and trends (e.g., population growth, market prices, policy, and climate change) can negatively affect enterprises.[10,14,15,18] Conservation enterprises that depend on ecosystem functions may be vulnerable to climate change. Climate-related stresses on resources may have a greater influence on the enterprises and outcomes towards biodiversity conservation over the longer term.[15] Significant

levels of migration to the area due to external disturbances may shift conservation enterprise participants back to unsustainable practices.[3]

Policies for and Enforcement of Resource Use: Policies and legal frameworks are in place to control overuse of resources by participants and outsiders.

Communities often face constraints (lack of tenure or complex, arbitrary, and/or corrupt processes) that prevent community management of in situ resources or disempower enterprise stakeholders.[1] Therefore, many enterprise approaches are paired with efforts to transition from uncontrolled, open-access resource use to forms of limited entry and user rights.[13, 21]

Clarity on ownership and access rights for enterprise-dependent resources and ecosystem services is crucial for effective management of the enterprises at the local level.[1] If resource rights are weak, engaging with policymakers early in the design of the enterprises is important for getting supportive policies in place.[1,15,16]

Strong markets are needed for successful enterprises. Through the Northern Rangeland Trust, Kenyan women living in community conservancies sell their beaded christmas ornaments at zoos in the United States and Australia. Photo credit: USAID/Riccardo Gangale

The economic value of tenure security can provide a strong incentive for enterprise participation[1,13] and conservation, although annual contracts or short-term leases may not provide sufficient security and incentive for participation in the enterprises or behavior change.[1] In some situations, the full legal control by participants of resource use may not be necessary; even limited resource rights can be sufficient to incentivize participation, reduce some types of threats, and enable profitable enterprises.[15,21]

Creating or increasing the value of a natural resource through the enterprises is not always enough to encourage protection of the resource. When resource rights are scarce or nonexistent, the combination of short-term economic gain and uncertainty over future benefits may incentivize communities to overexploit the resource.[3] In cases where participant management of resources increases the resources' value over time, issues of rights and claims may re-emerge, and external threats may actually increase.[1,21]

Community enforcement against both internal and external threats can help achieve enterprise success and conservation outcomes.[15,19,21] However, a lack of enforcement capacity and regulations can be a barrier and may lead to inequitable benefit-sharing, corruption, and negative natural resource effects such as depletion of resources and pollution.[2]

Tenure needs may vary, so it is critical to determine the best approach to tenure for the given community and enterprises.[15] Not all enterprises require strong tenure, therefore if policy changes are unlikely or distant, small-scale enterprises like backyard crops, poultry rearing, and piggeries may be more feasible.[15]

E. CONCLUSION

The review of 22 resource documents suggests that the 21 enabling conditions discussed in this synthesis are important for the establishment and sustainability of a conservation enterprise and the achievement of other outcomes in the theory of change for biodiversity conservation. The lack of these conditions were frequently cited as reasons for enterprise failure or failure to achieve desired conservation outcomes. The enabling conditions outlined in this document are those that were most frequently cited among the resource documents included in this synthesis, but may not represent all of the enabling conditions that lead to establishment or sustainability of an enterprise in a given context. However, the finding that many of these conditions were common among the resource documents (and the case studies within) suggests that they are important considerations in many contexts for enterprise establishment, outcomes towards biodiversity conservation, and sustainability.

It is apparent from the review that there is not just one model for building the enabling conditions for a conservation enterprise, but rather each approach for supporting conservation enterprises must be tailored according to the specific context. Based on this synthesis, the checklist found in Annex 1 on page 21 guides practitioners through important considerations that should be made when developing a conservation enterprise strategic approach. The review of resource documents revealed that much of the guidance available focuses on enabling conditions necessary for enterprise establishment, and less on ensuring the achievement of outcomes towards biodiversity conservation. If the ultimate goal of the conservation enterprise approach is to improve the status of a biodiversity focal interest, careful consideration must be taken to the series of intermediate outcomes beyond enterprise establishment that will be needed to achieve and sustain conservation. For this reason, Annex 1 provides implementers with guiding questions for the development of a theory of change.

Once a theory of change is outlined, the specific question regarding the enabling conditions for the enterprise becomes the following:

Are the enabling conditions in place, or can they be put in place, such that an enterprise is established and sustained that:

- Provides sufficient income (and potentially other benefits) to participants,
- Motivates and enables them to discontinue unsustainable activities and exclude others from unsustainable uses, and
- Contributes to reducing threats to the biodiversity focal interests within the geographic scope of the activity?

Visit the checklist of enabling conditions in Annex 1 to help plan conservation enterprise approaches.

Farmers harvest and sort baobab fruit for sale in southern Senegal. Photo credit: Ashleigh Baker

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G. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: CONSERVATION ENTERPRISE PLANNING CHECKLIST

This conservation enterprise checklist can be used by practitioners to help plan their conservation enterprise approach. The questions can be used to identify the important considerations (to note in space provided) in the context of the particular site. The first set of questions is related to understanding the theory of change for the conservation enterprise approach. The second set of questions focuses on building and improving the necessary enabling conditions focused on the establishment and sustainability of the enterprise itself. The third set of questions focuses on the necessary enabling conditions for assuring other outcomes along the theory of change. The last set of questions are for reflecting on how practitioners will know if the enterprise approach is achieving its purpose of biodiversity conservation.

SET THE STAGE WITH A THEORY OF CHANGE
What is the biodiversity focal interest and scope of the enterprise approach?
• *What is the area of biological significance that the enterprise approach aims to conserve?* • *What are the biodiversity focal interests (species, habitats, and/or ecosystems) that the enterprise approach aims to conserve?* • *What is the current status of the biodiversity focal interests?*
NOTES: Approach to addressing biodiversity focal interest and scope
How will the enterprise address threats to the biodiversity focal interests?
• *What are the threats to the biodiversity focal interests (e.g., poaching, illegal timber cutting)?* • *What is the current status of these threats (e.g., who is inducing them, when, where, and why)?* • *Is the scale and timeframe of the enterprise sufficient to reduce the threats?* • *Is the enterprise approach enough to reduce threats, or are additional approaches, such as community contracts and/or law enforcement, also required?* • *Is the enterprise linked to the resource in a way that motivates participants to exclude external users, or are other approaches needed to exclude external users?*
NOTES: Approach to addressing the threats to biodiversity

How will the enterprise address attitude and behavior change?

- *Whose behaviors should and could be modified to reduce these threats?*
- *What attitudes and behaviors are related to the threats to the biodiversity focal interests?*
- *How do attitudes need to change in order to positively change behavior?*

NOTES: Approach to addressing attitude and behavior change

How will the enterprise address benefit sharing?

- *What amount, frequency, and timing of income will motivate and enable positive changes in attitudes and behaviors?*
- *What distribution of income will motivate and enable positive changes in attitudes and behaviors?*
- *What types of non-monetary benefits are important for influencing positive changes in attitudes and behaviors?*

NOTES: Approach to addressing benefit sharing

BUILD AND IMPROVE THE ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR ENTERPRISE ESTABLISHMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Are the social and economic livelihood needs of the participants met through the enterprise?

- *How is the enterprise aligned with the needs and aspirations of participants?*
- *How does the enterprise diversify the livelihood options of participants?*

NOTES: Approach to addressing social and economic livelihood needs of participants

BUILD AND IMPROVE THE ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR ENTERPRISE ESTABLISHMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Are the appropriate business aspects in place to support the enterprise?

- *What is the market demand for the goods and services provided by the enterprise, and how will the enterprise meet this demand?*
- *What is the profit potential for the proposed enterprise goods and services?*
- *What kind of access do participants have to credit and/or capital, and how do they plan to manage these funds?*

NOTES: Approach to addressing business aspects

Do the participants own the enterprise and have strong internal governance structures in place to manage the enterprise?

- *To what extent are participants involved in the process of developing the enterprise?*
- *What level of ownership do participants have in the enterprise?*
- *What systems of governance and management are in place?*

NOTES: Approach to addressing strong internal governance structures

Is the enterprise supported by external policies and partners?

- *How does the enterprise comply with government requirements?*
- *What supportive policies and legal frameworks are in place for enterprise development?*
- *How is the enterprise supported by business alliances and partnerships at the local, national, and international levels?*

NOTES: Approach to addressing external policies and partners

BUILD AND IMPROVE THE ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR ENTERPRISE ESTABLISHMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY
Do participants have the skills and capacity to develop and maintain the enterprise?
• *Which financial management skills do participants have and which skills do they need?* • *Which relevant technical skills to produce goods and provide services do participants have and which skills do they need?*
NOTES: Approach to addressing skills and capacity development
Are there production and supply chains in place to support and connect the enterprise?
• *How will participants access a sustainable source of inputs for enterprise goods and services?* • *How will participants access equipment necessary to develop, process, and/or distribute enterprise goods and services?* • *What infrastructure is in place for the enterprise to meet production and transportation needs?*
NOTES: Approach to addressing production and supply chains support

BUILD AND IMPROVE THE ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR OTHER OUTCOMES ALONG THE ENTERPRISE THEORY OF CHANGE

Are benefits, attitude and behavior change, threat reduction, and conservation ensured?

- *What kind of equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms are in place?*
- *How does the enterprise involve individuals that have the closest connection to the natural resource that is the biodiversity focal interest?*
- *How is the enterprise approach part of a set of strategic approaches?*
- *How is the success of the enterprise dependent on the status of the biodiversity focal interest?*
- *What policies and legal frameworks are in place to control overuse of resources by participants and outsiders?*
- *What types of external factors are the enterprise subject to, and have participants planned for these disturbances?*

NOTES: Approach to addressing other outcomes

REFLECT

Are the enabling conditions in place, or can they be put in place, such that an enterprise:

- *Is established and sustained?*
- *Provides sufficient income (and potentially other benefits) to participants?*
- *Motivates and enables them to discontinue unsustainable activities and exclude others from unsustainable uses?*
- *Contributes to reducing threats to the biodiversity focal interest within the geographic scope of the activity?*

NOTES: Approach to verifying that enabling conditions are (or can be put) in place

ANNEX 2: SEARCH PROTOCOL

Date: Searches were conducted in February 2016.
Search Strategy: The final search strings for Google and Science Direct, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar are shown below. The search strategy for foundational guidance on conservation enterprises included pairings of "conservation enterprises" (and their synonyms) with conservation AND/OR biodiversity. During scoping, the first 25 (databases) or 50 (Google) results were searched for relevant documents for databases.

To determine relevant literature, the following criteria were used:

A. **Scan** document titles, abstracts, key words, tables, and figures for key words/phrases including:
conservation, biodiversity;
AND *conservation enterprise, (alternative/sustainable) livelihoods, income generating activity, benefit-sharing, integrated conservation and development projects;*
AND/OR *participation, entrepreneur, entrepreneurship, employment, markets, market access, profit, profit potential;*
AND/OR *factors, influence, cooperation, best practices*.

B. **Accept** documents as "foundational" if they meet at least one of the following criteria:
- Review multiple conservation enterprises;
- Review multiple enabling conditions for conservation enterprises; or
- Recent (published 2000-present).

Databases: Science Direct, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar

The top **25** documents for each search string resulting in **454** documents, which were then further narrowed down to **64 relevant documents** based on keywords.	
1) ("income generating activity" AND conservation)	= 18,356, Science Direct; 424, Web of Science; 152,769, JSTOR; 3,130, Google Scholar
2) ("income generating activity" AND conservation AND biodiversity)	= 5,453, Science Direct; 94, Web of Science; 19,493, JSTOR; 1,470, Google Scholar
3) (enterprise AND conservation)	= 20,626, Science Direct; 5,548, Web of Science; 28,397, JSTOR; 379,000, Google Scholar
4) (enterprise AND conservation AND biodiversity)	= 3,992, Science Direct; 350, Web of Science; 2,389, JSTOR; 87,100, Google Scholar
5) ("enterprise-linked" AND conservation AND biodiversity)	= 3, Science Direct; 1, Web of Science; 1,009, JSTOR; 35, Google Scholar

Google Search Engine

The top **50** documents from each search string were reviewed, resulting in **350** documents that were then further narrowed down to **27 relevant documents** based on keywords.	
1) "building successful conservation enterprises"	= 455
2) "sustainable livelihoods" AND conservation	= 302
3) "alternative livelihoods" AND conservation	= 313
4) site: www.iucn.org biodiversity AND "conservation enterprise"	= 166
5) ("enterprise-linked" AND conservation AND biodiversity)	= 2,100
6) site: www.wwf.org biodiversity AND "conservation enterprise"	= 1,120
7) site: www.thegef.org biodiversity AND "conservation enterprise"	= 246

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