

WCS Equatorial Guinea Mid-Term Assessment and Strategic Planning Reports

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Mid-Term Assessment Report

Introduction

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has been operating in Equatorial Guinea since 2014, with initial support from the Noble Foundation and with more recent support from the Waitt Foundation. To date, the program has worked primarily through the Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Forestal y de Áreas Protegidas (INDEFOR-AP), focusing primarily on marine resources and biodiversity in three protected areas seen as pilot areas: Nature Reserves of Rio Campo and Punta Ilende and the Scientific Reserve Nendyi Playa. From July through October 2017, WCS's Equatorial Guinea Program, with support from WCS Brazil and Foundations of Success (FOS) staff, conducted a mid-term assessment of progress to date on the Noble Foundation grant. WCS used this self-reflection point as an opportunity to think about what was working and what was not and use this insight to determine how WCS should proceed for the future (using a 10-20 year timeframe). This document summarizes the process used and the results from both the mid-term assessment and strategic planning.

Mid-Term Assessment Process

WCS's Equatorial Guinea Program's (hereafter, "WCS") grant with the Noble Foundation required a mid-term assessment. To assist with this assessment, WCS brought in support from its Brazil office (Karl Didier) and FOS (Caroline Stem). Together with the WCS Equatorial Guinea Director (Christian Barrientos), these individuals formed the core team for the mid-term assessment and strategic planning processes.

Purpose: The purpose of the mid-term assessment was to determine the results to date of conservation efforts funded under the five-year Foundation grant. Of equal or even greater importance was the need to reflect upon experiences and results and use this information to adapt the direction of the WCS program for the future.

Assessment Method: Both the mid-term assessment and the strategic planning process were grounded in key concepts from the Conservation Measures Partnership's [Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation](#) (Figure 1). These standards, developed and used by many key players in the conservation community (including WCS), provide a structured process and set of tools for designing, planning, monitoring, and adapting conservation projects and programs.

For the assessment, the core team used [results chains](#), a key tool from the Open Standards that helps teams lay out in a diagram the theories of change behind the strategies (set of actions) they implement and how they believe those strategies will reduce threats to and improve the status of ecosystems, habitats, and species (Figure 2 shows a generic chain). Results chains show a series of expected results and can be read in an "if-then" fashion (e.g., **If** fishers receive a higher price for sustainably harvested fish, **then** they will receive a higher premium for these fish). They are a particularly useful tool to facilitate discussion, to help a team and set of partners agree upon what they are hoping to achieve, and to provide a

framework for assessing progress. On this last point, a results chain can help focus assessments and evaluations because the team can measure progress against what they expected to achieve. Similarly, results chains are also useful for planning purposes, as they clarify what the team intends to achieve. The team can then set objectives, goals, and associated indicators (purple triangles in Figure 2) tied directly to elements in their results chain.

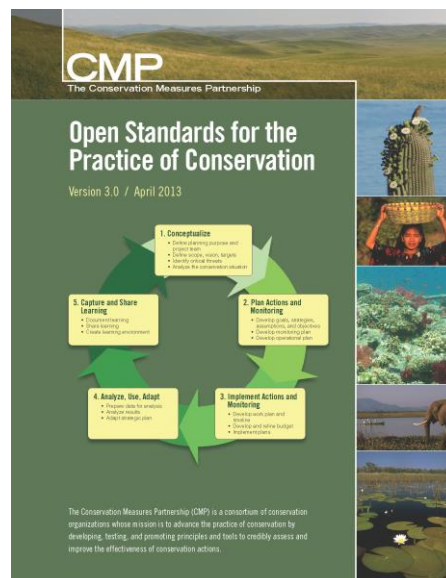


Figure 1. CMP Open Standards v. 3.0

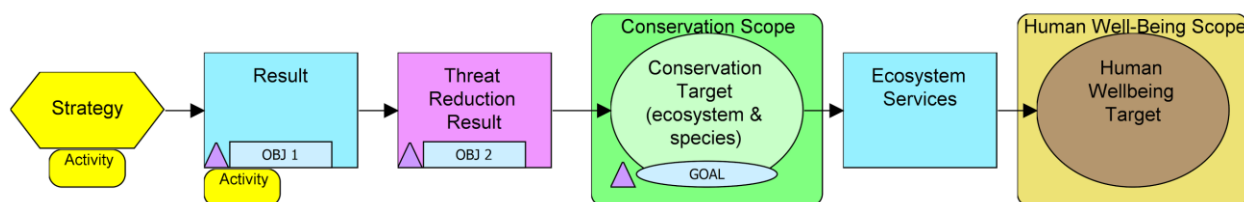


Figure 2. Main Components of Results Chains

From July – September 2017, the core team for the mid-term assessment created draft results chains retrospectively based on the primary strategies WCS was implementing[1] and drawing on the country director’s knowledge of the intent behind the strategies and implicit theories of change laid out in the Noble proposal. While WCS had a program proposal and a series of annual operational plans, the plans were very broad and ambitious, and there were some inconsistencies among strategies, activities, goals, and objectives. To keep the assessment focused, the core team focused on the primary strategies WCS had been implementing over the previous three years. These strategies were:

1. Build a model / pilot system to manage subsistence and small-scale fishing
2. Build a model/pilot system to manage small-scale agriculture
3. Strengthen the capacity of INDEFOR-AP
4. Increase civil society's (WCS's) capacity to support government organizations

Because the results chains were created retrospectively, there was not a clear correspondence between the chains and the objectives and goals laid out in various project documents. Also, the objectives and goals in project documents were at varying levels and, in some cases, were actually activities or broader strategies. As such, the core team felt it would be most productive to focus the assessment on the logic laid out in the retrospective results chains and gather input

and evidence from key informants on the degree to which results or groups of results were achieved.

To collect this input and evidence, WCS held a 2.5-day assessment workshop (see [Appendix 1](#) for agenda and [Appendix 2](#) for a list of participants). The workshop objectives were:

- Identify program achievements
- Identify where expected results have not been achieved and why
- Develop lessons learned - what have we learned? How should we adapt our actions for the future?

The core team shared the four draft results chains (corresponding to WCS's four main strategies) they had developed with workshop participants. Participants spent the majority of time in working groups providing input to clarify and amend the logic in the draft chains and then to identify evidence (including anecdotes) of progress made toward results in the chain. Based on that evidence, participants rated the overall progress using a five-point scale (3 = a lot of progress; 2 = some progress; 1 = little progress; 0 = no progress; -1 = negative impact). Their final exercise involved taking a step back and reflecting on whether it made sense to continue investing in the strategy and, if investment should continue, what adjustments should be made. This information was then used the following week in the Strategic Planning Workshop (see [Summary of the Strategic Planning Workshop](#) below).

Caveats: The resources (funding and time) available for this assessment only allowed a coarse, high-level assessment of progress. With this in mind, the assessment team tried to convene key individuals familiar with the work of WCS and INDEFOR-AP (WCS's main partner in this work). Some workshop invitees were not able to attend and sent colleagues in their place. In some cases, these colleagues were not as familiar with the work as would have been ideal. Also, there were some situations in which workshop participants may have been hesitant to speak because of social and work dynamics. The workshop facilitators did our best to reduce the influence of these factors (e.g., calling directly on participants and sharing working group results in plenary to allow others not in the group to weigh in). We feel the information that came out of the workshop was important and of high enough quality to be useful to make management decisions.

Assessment Results

This section shares assessment results by the four strategies, with a description of the overall chain (as refined by workshop participants), description of key achievements (and lack thereof, where relevant), and participant suggestions for adaptation. All strategies that WCS is implementing are designed, in one way or another, to improve management in the three focal protected areas. By improving management in these areas, WCS expects to reduce direct threats to priority ecosystems and species and thus conserve these ecosystems and species. To reflect these concepts, all results chains include a blue group box labeled, "Conservation in Equatorial Guinea Improved" and associated results (Figure 3). Depending on the strategy, other results may be included in the "Conservation Improved" group box. Because WCS is only

three years into its program in Equatorial Guinea, this assessment did not focus on progress on results in this final blue box, which represent the longer term impact of the entire suite of strategies WCS is implementing. At the end of the five-year grant, it may make sense to at least analyze the degree to which protected area management in the three focal areas has improved.

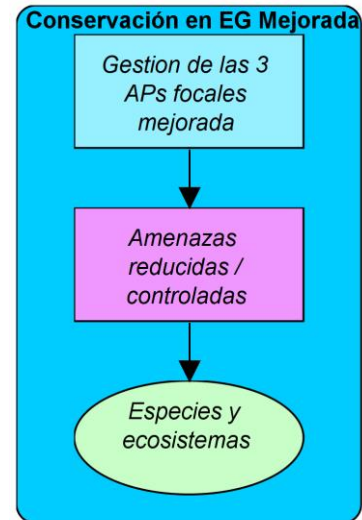


Figure 3. Ultimate Aims of WCS Strategies in Equatorial Guinea

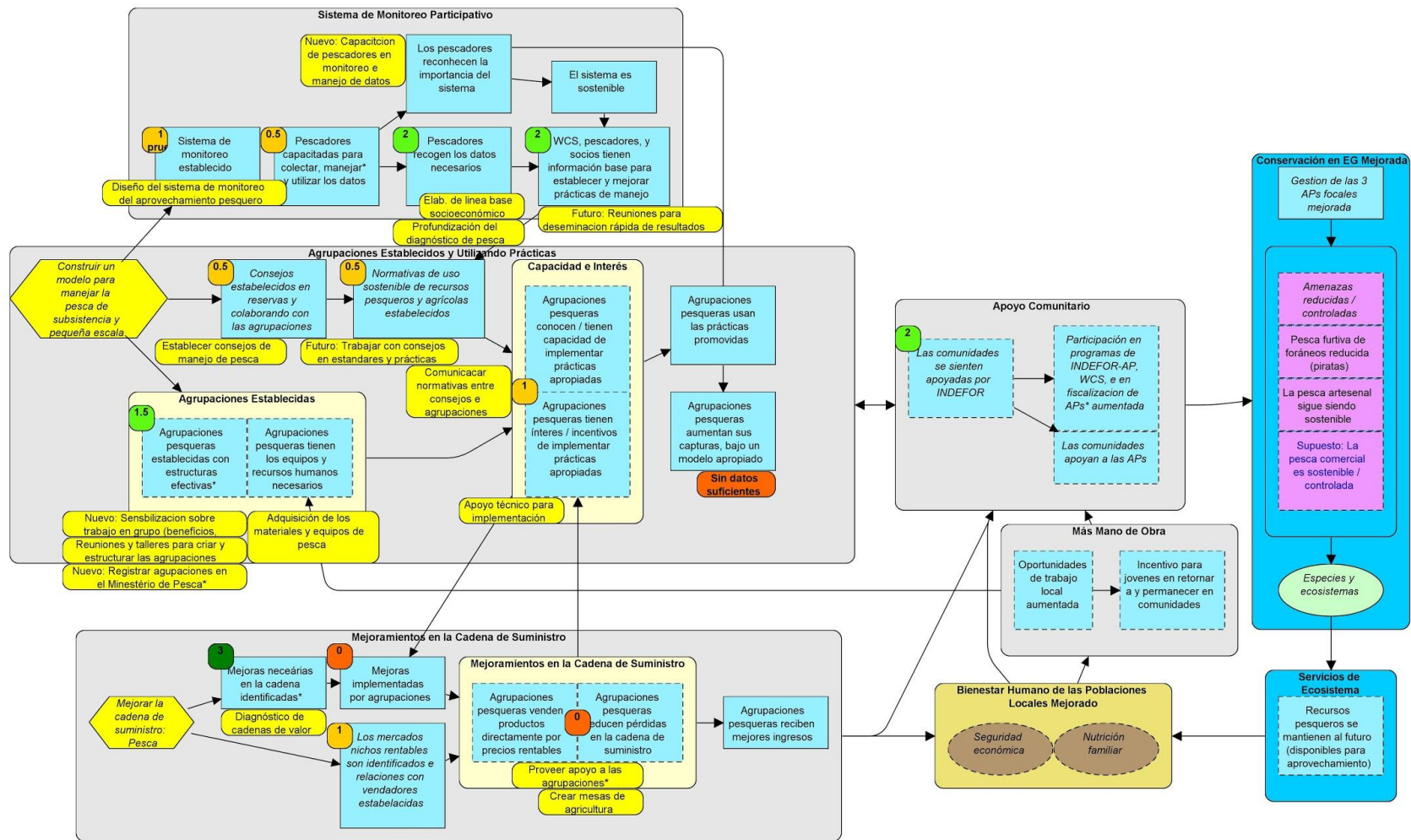
1. Build a model / pilot system to manage subsistence and small-scale fishing

Working group participants for this chain included: Luis Eyeng Obiang Asue, Frida Manuel Bindang Nsue Betebe, Juan Nsogo, Juvencio Eko Mangué, Epifanio Seraico,; Gaspar Lutero Mangué; Facilitators: Karl Didier, Marianela La Grave Siso

Description of Results Chain

This strategy involves working with local coastal communities to build a system to manage and improve artisanal fisheries so that the fisheries become more productive, generate more income for families in the communities, especially through improvements in the supply chain, while continuing to be sustainable. WCS EG focuses on improving artisanal fisheries production and local agricultural production (see [next results chain below](#)) because these are the two most important activities in terms of food for family consumption and income. Therefore, they need to be the starting point for any effort to change patterns of land and resource use.

At a high level, the theory of change basically states that if the program is able to establish groups of fisherman who work collaboratively together to (a) catch fish, (b) use best fishing practices, (c) directly sell their products to urban markets, avoiding middlemen, and (d) use efficient storage and transport practice to get their product to market, that fisherman will catch more, sell more, and earn more from fishing. These improvements should lead to increased support and participation of local communities for INDEFOR and WCS programs aimed at combating multiple threats, including unsustainable commercial and pirate fishing, unsustainable collection of turtles and hunting, and logging of mangrove forests. Also, improvements in the local economy will hopefully attract young people who have migrated to urban centers to return to their home communities and help out with fishing and agricultural production (increased labor), creating a positive-feedback loop that allows communities to continually increase productivity. Also central to this strategy is the development of a participatory monitoring and management system that will ensure that artisanal fishing continues to be sustainable even with increases in production.



Key		Progress Ratings			
Strategy	Intermediate Result	0 None	2 Some	1 Little	3 A lot
Ecosystems & Species	Threat Reduction Result				
Human Wellbeing Aspects					

Figure 4. Results Chain for Small-Scale Fishing Strategy

Progress and Strategy Effectiveness

After approximately two years of work trying to improve artisanal fishing by establishing collaborative fishing groups, establishing a monitoring system, and working to improve the supply chain, participants recognized that some good progress has been made, but much needs to be done to ensure that these activities ultimately reduce threats and improve the wellbeing of local communities. Overall progress scores on individual key results are shown in the results chain diagram above, while summary scores for 4 groups of results (shown in the grey boxes) are in the table below:

Group of Results (gray group boxes)	Summary Rating for Group*
Monitoring System Established	1.5
Collaborative Fishing Groups (Agrupaciones) Established and Using Best Practices	1
Improvements in the Supply Chain	1
Community Support	1.5

* While ratings of individual results in the results chain were assigned by the group, the summary ratings in the table above were assigned by the facilitator and are mostly averages of the component results with small adjustments based on the workshop discussion (3 = a lot of progress; 2 = some progress; 1 = little progress; 0 = no progress; -1 = negative impact).

Key points for the 4 principal groups of results include:

Establishment of a Fisheries Monitoring System:

A system for participatory monitoring of fisheries in artisanal areas has been piloted and has produced enough information to establish early sets of norms, although the system needs to be refined and expanded to include more communities and more fisherman.

The system has been piloted in Pume, Punta Mbonda, Dibolo, and Ndote. There has been good success in ensuring participation of fishermen in the monitoring, and in general they are willingly to collect the data. However, while the participatory fishermen have been trained to collect the data, they have not been trained to manage the data or use the data, and so are not yet experiencing the benefits that a monitoring system can bring to them (e.g, improved information on good fishing areas, effectiveness and sustainability of specific fishing techniques, overall production and cost information). However, a baseline of information from the pilot monitoring system does now exist, and can be used by WCS, INDEFOR, and fisherman to establish early versions of regulations and norms, and initiate adaptive management of artisanal fisheries.

Establishment of Collaborative Fishing Groups (Agrupaciones) and Use of Best Practices:

A total of 5 collaborative fishing groups have been established in 4 coastal communities (Pume, Ndote, Rio Campo, and Punta Mbonda) **and have been equipped with fishing gear** that should allow them to increase productivity. However, these are not groups working as well as they could be, especially in terms of them having an effective and fair governance structure formalized in the collaboratives “estatuto” (e.g., in some, too much power rest in the hands of the president), establishing rules for working together (e.g., appropriate use of equipment, fair distribution of costs and revenue) and best fishing practices (where, when, and how to fish), and having sufficient technical capacity to use equipment and best practices. In one community, Handje, collaborative groups have not been established apparently because of lack of confidence in WCS and INDEFOR and perceived lack of continuity in their support to the communities. In general, establishment of collaborative groups in EG is challenging because people are not accustomed to working together and are skeptical of such effort (e.g., they are afraid of cheating).

The establishment of Management Councils in each community who are charged with developing fishing regulations and norms and providing technical support to fishing groups **has been slower than hoped**. While technical staff from INDEFOR and WCS have provided some technical support, a more consistent presence in communities and coordination of Management Councils is needed. To ensure that norms are effective and realistic, Management Councils should include representatives from the entire fishing community, and not just from the above collaborative fishing groups.

There is not yet enough quantitative data from the monitoring system to evaluate whether collaborative fishing groups in general have been able to increase their fishing catch. However, based on 2017 interviews, performed by students, with participating fisherman from Ndote (qualitative, perception based data, not quantitative), it appears that fishing takes have increased a little in this community since initial interviews in 2015. With expansion and improvement of the monitoring system, quantitative data to begin to assess progress in this key result should be available in about 1-2 years.

Improving the Supply Chain:

There has been good progress in identifying the weaknesses of the current supply chain and identify mechanisms to improve it, but less progress so far in actually implementing improvements. Buyers (e.g., supermarkets, restaurants) are interested in the products that communities can offer (fresh fish, lobster, etc.) and several potential buyers have been specifically identified. However, improvements are needed in the supply chain to establish formal relationships with buyers, including:

- Quantifying the current production levels of groups and communities to see if they are sufficient to convince buyers to establish formal relationships with communities. It is likely that production will need to increase in communities or be pooled across communities to establish a sufficiently large supply.
- Improving methods for storing products (freezing or drying), so that buyers product quality standard are met and little product is lost.

- Improving methods for transporting products to markets, so that costs for fishing groups are reduced and the system is profitable.

Increasing Community Support:

There was clear consensus among participants that the above effort to improve fisheries management and productivity has resulted in **communities feeling more supported by WCS and INDEFOR and greater community support for the programs of these institutions.** However, participants noted that it is important to quantitatively and qualitatively (e.g., published stories) demonstrate changes in attitudes and support of communities for INDEFOR, WCS, and their natural resource management programs, possible through interview-based questionnaires. In addition, records of community participation in programs could be used to demonstrate changes in participation (# of people participation in workshops, etc.)

In terms of changes and threats and improvements in conservation targets, participants roundly agreed that it is too early in the implementation of this fisheries strategies to see meaningful improvements. Establishment of baseline conditions and establishment of the monitoring system above, which includes monitoring of some threats and marine biodiversity targets, is a critical step in assessing the long-term impacts of fisheries management.

Recommendations for Future

Establishment of a Fisheries Monitoring System:

Participants recommended that investments in expanding and improving the monitoring system be maintained. They also recommended that WCS and INDEFOR rely less on students to collect data sheets and compile data from individual fishermen, but to train a set of fisherman (e.g., one per community or agrupaciones) to collect the forms, enter the data into a database, produce basic summaries of the data, and present the data back to their communities and agrupaciones. This will speed the return of data from the monitoring system to local communities, improve the fishermen's sense of ownership of the data, increase understanding of how the system is useful for the fishermen themselves beyond *just* as a source of economic information about fishery (production, prices, etc.), and increase willingness to participate (i.e., more fishermen participating for longer periods of time).

Establishment of Collaborative Fishing Groups (Agrupaciones) Established and Use of Best Practices:

Participants also recommended that investments in creating fishing groups be maintained, but that resources be focused on the communities that have advanced in creating the fishing groups (e.g., not Handje). In the successful communities, effort should be made to have a more consistent presence in the communities, possibly sending WCS and INDEFOR representatives more frequently to provide technical support and encourage continued operation of the agrupaciones and ensuring more interaction between the Conselhos and the Agrupaciones. To improve the understanding of how fishing groups can be useful, participants recommended that WCS and INDEFOR develop materials (presentations, workshop) for communities about the potential advantages and costs of working in collaborative fishing groups. Participants also felt

it was critical to work to clearly and formally define the governance structure of agrupaciones, include rights and responsibilities, rules for distributing profits and using/renting shared resources, and compliance mechanisms for rulebreakers. These definitions should be included in the “Estatuto” of each group. Finally, the participants recommended all fishermen from the community be represented in discussions about fishing norms and best practices (i.e., in Council meeting), not just fisherman from the agrupaciones.

Progress in establishing collaborative groups for fishing and for agriculture (see below) has been slow, relative to other countries where such efforts have been attempted, organizing and sustaining groups is more challenging because of systematic discouragement of grassroots initiatives by government authorities, and the disruption of rural production systems by the changes associated with the oil economy.

Improvements in the Supply Chain

Participants recommended that investments in improving the supply chain be maintained, but that focus move beyond just identifying weaknesses of the chain, to helping agrupaciones actually implement improvements, especially in preserving products and transporting them to markets (so that buyers are happy with the quality). Because prices for common items are low because of competition from Cameroon (where prices are artificially fixed at low levels), participants also recommended that effort be invested in identifying new “niche markets” (e.g., live lobster) that communities could supply, finding ways to increase the prices that communities can receive for their products (e.g., putting a premium on fresh or “locally produced” fish), and looking for markets outside of Bata. Finally, all participants were in agreement that the monitoring system needs to be improved and expanded so that agrupaciones can estimate their production capacity and compare it to what buyers require. One of the first things that potential buyers ask is “how much of X product can you provide”, and as of yet, agrupaciones cannot effectively answer this question.

2. Build a model/pilot system to manage small-scale agriculture

Working group participants for this chain included: Sefora Consuelo Abegue Briones Mikue, Celestina Bindang Ebona Manuge, Maria Medianera Afang Esono Mikue, Josue Asumu Ateba Anguesomo, Sergio Jovino Asama, Gaspar Lutero Mangué, Salvador Nkili Nsi Akele; Facilitator: Michael Painter.

Description of Results Chain

This strategy is similar in concept to the strategy above, and involves working with local coastal communities to build a system to manage and improve small-scale agricultural production so that the agricultural areas are more productive (bigger harvests) and generate more income for families in the communities, especially through improvements production activities and in the supply chain, while continuing to be sustainable. WCS EG focuses on improving local agricultural production and artisanal fisheries production (see [results chain above](#)) because these are the two most important activities in terms of food for family consumption and income. Therefore, they need to be the starting point for any effort to change patterns of land and

resource use. For local agricultural production in particular, growth in local production will likely need to occur in niche markets, because of the disadvantages that characterize farming in EG, distortions driven by the oil economy and difficulties in competing with agricultural imports.

At a high level the theory of change basically states that if the program is able to establish groups of farmers who work collaboratively with each other, WCS, and INDEFOR to (a) identify agricultural products of interest to urban markets (b) share agricultural equipment and knowledge about best practices, (c) work together to complete production activities (e.g., clearing land, el desmonte de tierras, siembra, deshierbe y cosecha) (d) negotiate with buyers and directly sell their products to urban markets, avoiding middlemen, and (e) use efficient storage and transport practice to get their product to market, that farmers will produce larger harvest, sell more, and earn more from agricultural activities. These improvements should lead to increased support and participation of local communities for INDEFOR and WCS programs aimed at combating multiple threats, including revenge killing of wildlife that destroy crops, unsustainable commercial and pirate fishing, unsustainable collection of turtles and hunting, and logging of mangrove forests. Also, improvements in the local economy will hopefully attract young people who have migrated to urban centers to return to their home communities and help out with agricultural production and fishing (increased labor), creating a positive-feedback loop that allows communities to continually increase productivity. Also important to the success of this strategy the development of effective program to manage conflict with wildlife that damage crops, such as elephants, marmots, and primate. Underlying this strategy is the assumption that, with appropriate management programs, agricultural production will not grow to the point of being unsustainable (e.g., a major source of deforestation, pollution of water, etc.), and that a monitoring system needs to be established to ensure sustainability and other results.

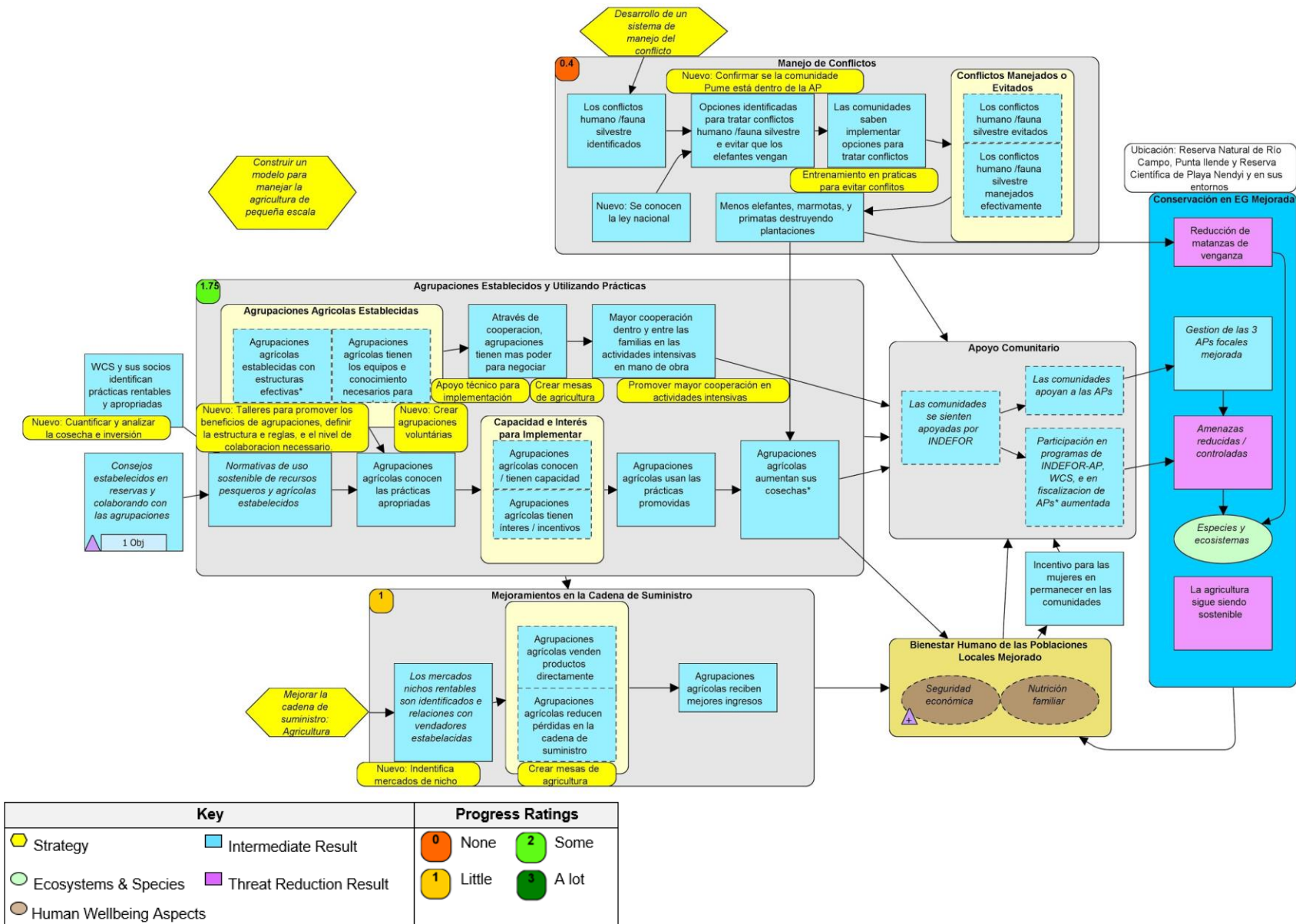


Figure 5. Results Chain for Small-Scale Agriculture Strategy

Progress and Strategy Effectiveness

After approximately two years of work to improve small-scale agricultural production by establishing collaborative fishing groups, improving the supply chain, and managing conflicts with wildlife, participants recognized that good progress has been made, but that much still needs to be done to make these efforts effectively reduce threats and improve community wellbeing. Summary scores for 3 groups of results (shown in the grey boxes) are shown in the results chain above and the table below. Note, for this working group, scores were not produced for individual results in the chain, although some description of progress and challenges of individual results is described below:

Group of Results (grey group boxes”	Summary Rating for Group*
Collaborative Agriculture Groups (Agrupaciones) Established and Using Best Practices	1.75
Improvements in the Supply Chain	1
Wildlife Conflict Effectively Managed	0.4

(3 = a lot of progress; 2 = some progress; 1 = little progress; 0 = no progress; -1 = negative impact).

Key points for the 3 principal groups of results include:

Collaborative Agriculture Groups (Agrupaciones) Established and Using Best Practices:

Collaborative agricultural groups have been established 2 protected areas. In Rio Campo, groups have been established in two communities, and two farms have planted two crops. In Handje, one group has been established, and 3 crops (peanuts, plantains, and yuca) have been planted and harvested. However, many communities members continue to be distrustful of cooperative efforts or not understand the benefits of agrupaciones, limiting the the effectiveness of existing groups and WCS/INDEFOR capacity to increase membership and encourage creation of new groups. Also, in some cases, it has not been clear to community members that participation in the groups is entirely voluntary. Therefore, additional outreach in communities needs to be done to clarify how the groups work, including governance structures, rules, what level of investment is needed to join a group. As with the fishing groups, these elements also need to be formalized in “estatutos”. In addition, increased technical support is needed increase yields, especially in terms of choosing appropriate sites/soils for particular crops, appropriate size of the farm field, and appropriate site preparation and harvest techniques. As only 1 harvest has been made, it’s too early to tell if knowledge and use of best practices have substantially increased yields, relative farms or times when such practices were not used.

Progress in establishing collaborative groups for fishing and for agriculture has been slow, relative to other countries where such efforts have been attempted, organizing and sustaining groups is more challenging because of systematic discouragement of grassroots initiatives by government authorities, and the disruption of rural production systems by the changes associated with the oil economy.

Improvements in the Supply Chain:

Some initial progress has been made in improving the supply chain. A market study (value chain study) has been completed, and weakness of the current chain (including storage and transport of products) and potential urban markets/buyers have been identified for common products. However, more work needs to be done to identify niche products/markets (example?) that communities could exploit and would produce relatively high profit for small production scales. Although formal relationships have been established with buyers or sales made from the groups, the agricultural group in Handje has delegated a female member of the group to coordinate sale of products to market and expect sales to occur in the next year. *Substantial improvement in the effectiveness of collaborative groups, especially the confidence of community members in these groups, is a prerequisite to making large improvements in the market chain (e.g., collaborative production to meet demand, storage, transport).*

Wildlife Conflict Effectively Managed:

Efforts to manage conflict with wildlife that can damage crops are relatively new, having explicitly started only about a year ago after agrupaciones and landowners raised concerns. WCS and INDEFOR's response represent effective adaptive management of this overall strategy to improve management of agricultural areas. Thus far, through conversations with agrupaciones and farmers, WCS and INDEFOR have identified the principal culprit species (elephants, marmots, and primates) and have begun researching potential methods for preventing crop damage that would eliminate the need for landowners to kill wildlife. On one farm, WCS and INDEFOR have helped build a fence to prevent marmots from damaging crops. Workshop participants noted that in developing methods to prevent crop damage, it is important to research what existing EG laws and regulations say about the practice and managing nuisance wildlife and incorporate this into damage prevention techniques.

Recommendations for Future

Workshop participants emphasized the effectiveness of a program to improve productivity and management of agriculture, and all three of its component strategies, is highly dependent on WCS and INDEFOR establishing effective and positive relationships with communities. Thus, the majority of the participants' recommendations for the future focus on improving these relationships.

Collaborative Agriculture Groups (Agrupaciones) Established and Using Best Practices:

Workshop participants made four suggestions for improving the effectiveness of agricultural groups:

- An explicit effort should be made by WCS and INDEFOR to emphasize that participation in the collaborative groups (for fishing and agriculture) is entirely voluntary and they should avoid imposing group participation on people who are uncertain.
- As with the fishing groups, outreach should be done to increase community members' awareness of the potential benefits of working in the groups, and what kinds of personal investment is needed.

- In all meetings with communities, special attention should be given to managing group dynamics so that no one gets the sense that they are being taken advantage of
- Efforts should be made to ensure that the groups become self-sufficient and independent over time, and don't depend on WCS and INDEFOR for coordination or technical support. Creating exchanges between the different collaborative groups to share knowledge, both in terms of governance and technical aspects, would help encourage this independence.

Improvements in the Supply Chain:

As noted above, participants suggested that an effort be made to identify niche markets and products that the community could produce and profit from, and establish relationships with these markets/buyers

Wildlife Conflict Effectively Managed:

More effort needs to be invested in avoiding crop damage by wildlife and associated wildlife conflict, especially identifying potentially effective techniques (e.g., from the literature and from other WCS programs) and training local landowners to use them instead of killing wildlife that damage their crops. As noted above, WCS and INDEFOR should research the national laws and regulations of wildlife conflict, to ensure that damage control techniques are legal and to identify needed improvements in these laws.

General Recommendation:

As an overall recommendation for efforts to improve agriculture, workshop participants emphasize the need to clarify for communities what INDEFOR's and WCS's roles were in protected area management. In particular, it's important to clarify that INDEFOR has legal authority of PAs and use of natural resources within them and a responsibility to support local communities, and that WCS's primary role is to provide technical support to INDEFOR and local communities.

3. Strengthen the capacity of INDEFOR-AP

Working group participants for this chain included: Agustin Ebana, Angeles Mang Eyene, Juan Nsogo, Angela Angue Nkisogo Mbasogo, Fidel Esono Mba; Facilitator: Caroline Stem

Description of Results Chain

This strategy involves working to strengthen both the administrative and programmatic capacity of INDEFOR-AP, Equatorial Guinea's lead government agency responsible for protected area management throughout the country. At a high level, the logic behind this strategy is that strengthening the administrative and programmatic capacity of the country's leading government agency will translate to improved management on the ground (in the three focal areas and beyond) and subsequent reduction of threats and improvement of priority ecosystems and species (see darker blue box of results in Figure 6).

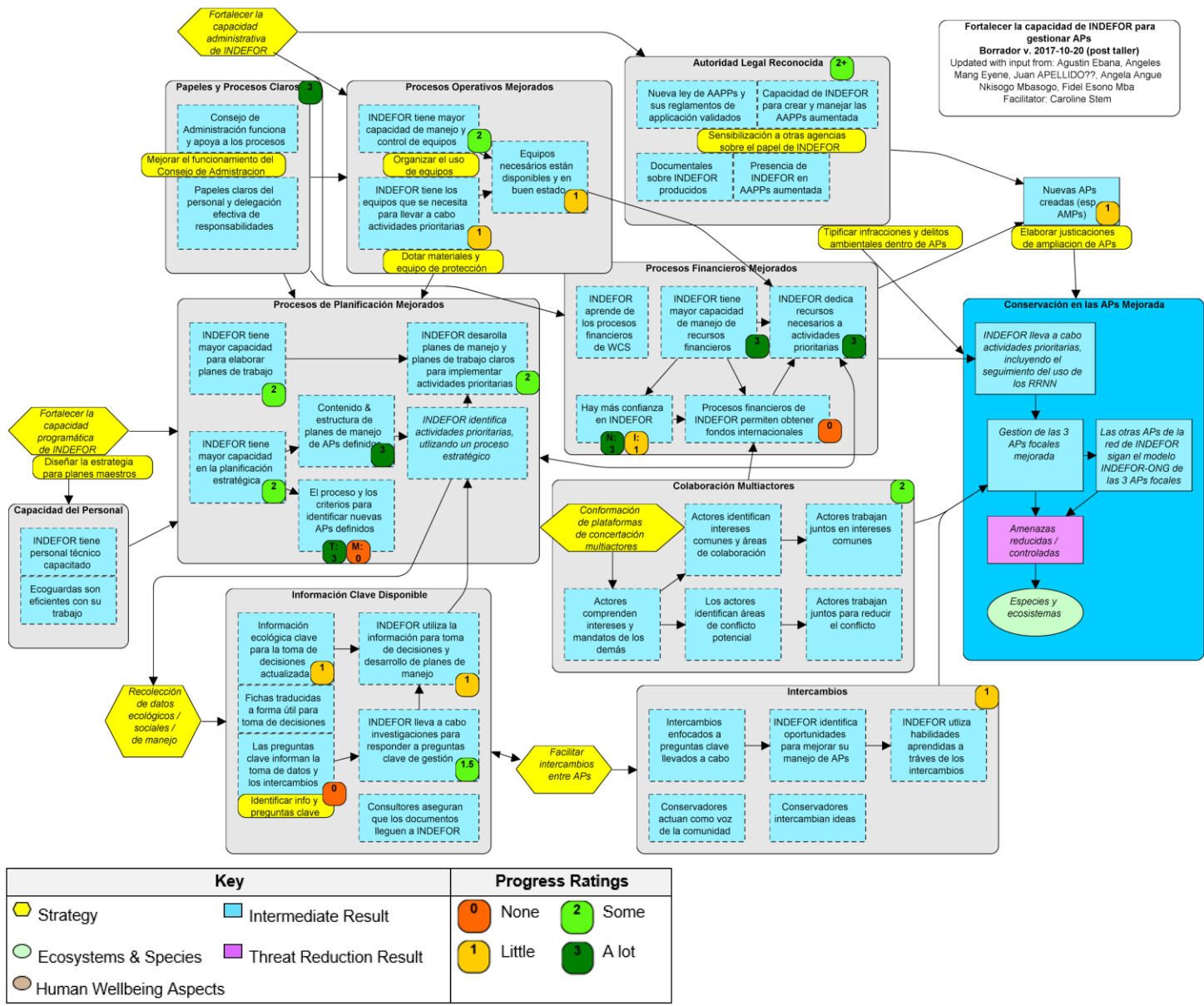


Figure 6. Results Chain for Strengthening INDEFOR-AP Strategy

INDEFOR’s Administrative Capacity: The top part of Figure 6 explains the expected results related to strengthening INDEFOR’s administrative capacity. WCS hopes this strategy will contribute to greater clarity with respect to administrative roles and processes, which in turn will help improve operational processes, such as the management, control, and availability of equipment and supplies. This greater control, along with WCS’s direct support, is believed to help improve financial processes, especially regarding INDEFOR’s ability to meet international funding standards and expectations. Finally, WCS expects that its work with INDEFOR will help to solidify and strengthen INDEFOR’s legal recognition and ability to create protected areas (top right portion of Figure 6a).

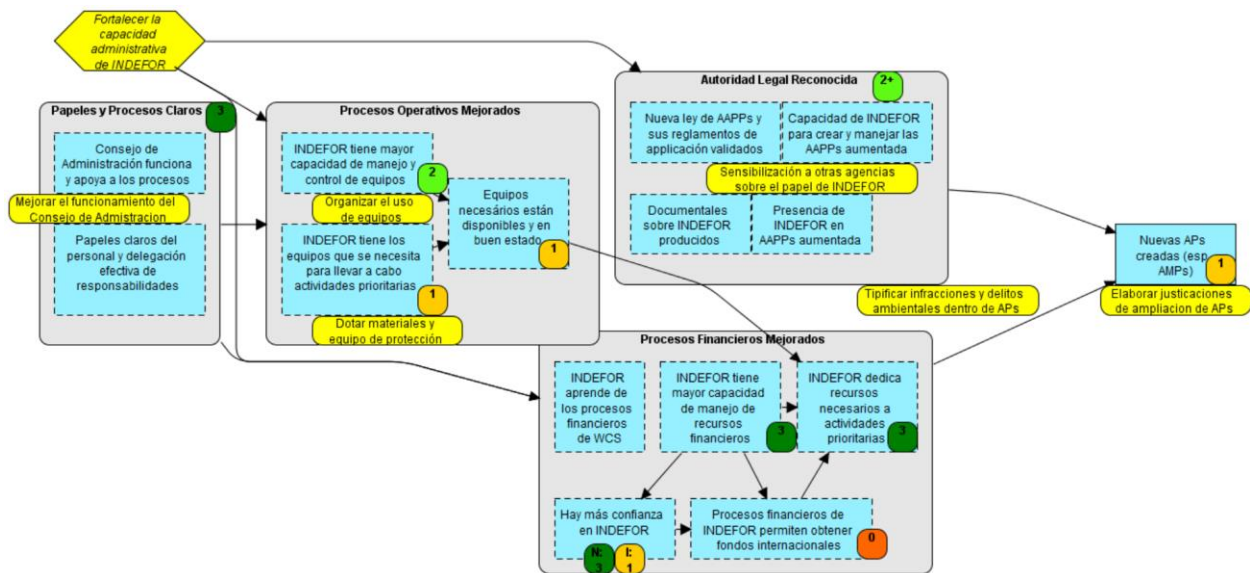


Figure 6a. Strengthening INDEFOR-AP Strategy – Administrative Capacity Results

INDEFOR’s Programmatic Capacity: The bottom portion of Figure 6 (shown below as Figure 6b) includes strategies and activities designed to increase INDEFOR’s programmatic capacity. Within this area, WCS is investing in strengthening the technical skills and providing the technical equipment INDEFOR staff needs to be effective in their work. This capacity, combined with direct support from WCS, is aimed to improve INDEFOR’s strategic planning and work planning processes, helping INDEFOR identify and adequately plan for key strategies and activities. This improved planning would help inform how INDEFOR allocates its financial, human, and technical resources (financial process results in Figure 6a).

Figure 6b includes specific programmatic efforts WCS has supported, largely through its eco-grants program. These include data collection and management, protected area exchanges, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. **Data collection and management** activities are designed to ensure that good social, economic, and ecological data for key management needs are readily available in a format that allows INDEFOR and other partners to use them to make sound decisions, which should also be reflected in strategic planning processes. **Protected area exchanges** help promote the sharing of information, experiences, and lessons among INDEFOR staff, with the intent that staff will use what they learn to directly improve protected

area management. **Multi-stakeholder collaboration** activities are designed to create better understanding of interests among different government actors involved in or affected by protected area management (e.g., INDEFOR technical staff, local government authorities, military personnel, and fisheries and forestry agencies). WCS hopes that this collaboration will help the different parties identify and work together on common interests, as well as work together to resolve conflicts.

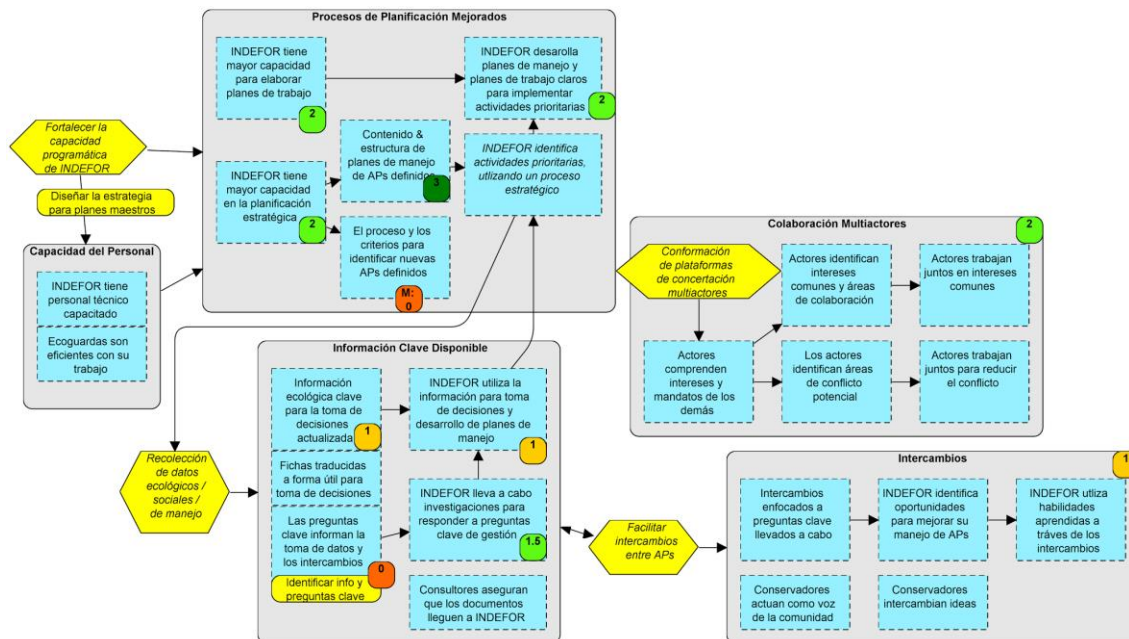


Figure 6b. Strengthening INDEFOR-AP Strategy – Programmatic Capacity Results

WCS’s work with INDEFOR to strengthen both administrative and programmatic capacity ultimately aims to improve protected area management in the three focal areas WCS has supported to date (the Nature Reserves of Rio Campo and Punta Ilende and the Scientific Reserve Nendyi Playa) (Figure 6c). However, this strategy in particular operates at an institutional level, meaning that WCS expects that this work with INDEFOR will have benefits across all areas that INDEFOR manages. WCS assumes that improved management across all protected will lead to reduced threats and the improved status of priority ecosystems and species.

Progress and Strategy Effectiveness

WCS has invested a lot of time and resources into INDEFOR-AP, as its principal partner in this work. It is clear that this work is leading to some important outcomes, but the strategy itself is ambitious, and much work remains to be done. Overall progress scores on individual key results are shown in the results chain diagrams above, while summary scores for groups of results (shown in the gray boxes) are in the table below. For more detailed notes on progress and strategy effectiveness, see [Appendix 3](#). It is worth noting that most of the participants in this working group were INDEFOR staff and may be biased toward inflating progress ratings for

results for which INDEFOR holds the primary responsibility. In addition, there were likely some power dynamics among staff of differing levels of seniority that also influenced participant ratings.

Group of Results (gray boxes)	Summary Rating for Group*
Clear Roles and Processes	3
Improved Operational Processes	1.3
Legal Authority Recognized	2
New Protected Areas Created	1
INDEFOR Staff Capacity	1.25
Planning Processes Improved	2.25
Financial Processes Improved	2
Key Information Available	.9
Multi-sectoral Collaboration	2
Facilitate Exchanges among Protected Areas	1

* Where the working group rated the progress for the entire group of results (gray box), the ratings here will be the same as those in the results chain. Where the group rated individual results, rather than the group of results, the ratings here reflect an average across the group.

(3 = a lot of progress; 2 = some progress; 1 = little progress; 0 = no progress; -1 = negative impact).

Key points for the principal groups of results include:

Clear Roles and Processes

WCS feels its work with INDEFOR is designed to help clarify roles and processes within the institution. However, participants in this working group (who primarily represented INDEFOR) felt that WCS is not (and does not need to be) involved in this area. They see these results as the domain of INDEFOR and the Ministry and feel that they have been achieved, as evidenced by clear job titles and position descriptions.

Improved Operational Processes

WCS support has helped fund cabinets, furniture, computers, and other office equipment for the National Herbarium. WCS is currently in the process of providing support to the cartography department, but this is in its early stages. WCS funding has also supported camera traps in Río

Campo. In general, participants felt that there has been some minimal progress in terms of having the necessary equipment in good condition. However, they that more progress had been achieved in INDEFOR's capacity to control and manage equipment.

Legal Authority Recognized

This is an area where significant progress has been achieved. Participants all felt very strongly that WCS support was helping to increase INDEFOR's presence in protected areas. A concrete example is the new eco-guards in Río Mun. At a policy level, the new protected areas law and supporting regulations now include the maritime area - an important advance, especially given Equatorial Guinea's ecological positioning and management control in the Gulf of Guinea. However, the law is not yet approved.

New Protected Areas Created

Funds have been acquired, and WCS is working with INDEFOR-AP to create new marine protected areas. Participants were not in full agreement on progress achieved here. While there has been a lot of progress toward declaring marine protected areas, there have not been any new designations within the last three years. As such, some participants were hesitant to rate overall progress higher.

INDEFOR Staff Capacity

This is one of the areas where WCS support seems to be have been instrumental and made a big impact. Examples of capacity strengthening include: fisheries and agriculture field staff, which INDEFOR-AP did not have before; university students supported by WCS who bring new, fresh ideas and energy to INDEFOR; cartography staff who have participated in trainings; and various INDEFOR staff who have helped support ecological and socio-economic studies WCS has funded (e.g., Ray's work with Frida on freshwater; Angeles' work on the socio-economic study).

Planning Processes Improved

This set of results focuses on strategic planning (including management plans) and work planning. The process and criteria for identifying new protected areas are well developed for terrestrial areas but non-existent for marine areas. INDEFOR has developed management plans for Punta Ilende, Montes Temeloro, and Playa Nendy Nature Reserves, but these plans are in draft form, and it is not clear when they will be finalized and approved. Participants felt that INDEFOR has made some progress on strategic planning and identifying priority actions. Plans exist, but the reality is that these plans are very general and do not provide a lot of guidance on INDEFOR's highest and lowest priorities.

Financial Processes Improved

INDEFOR staff felt that their financial processes have improved a lot, and they noted that they have learned by working with WCS and seeing their internal processes. The most contentious result in the working group discussion was "There is more confidence in INDEFOR." INDEFOR staff feel that, at a national and regional level (e.g., PACEBCo, a Congo Basin funding initiative), there is much confidence in INDEFOR and their financial processes. However, international

organizations and donors do not have confidence in INDEFOR's internal processes, and INDEFOR cannot currently acquire funding directly from international sources. This has caused some hard feelings within INDEFOR.

Key Information Available

There has not been a lot of progress in this area, though there have been numerous studies (e.g., socio-economic, value chain, and freshwater ecosystems). Working group participants noted that the studies tended to be reactive, rather than being based on a process that identifies and seeks to answer key management questions. One of the big challenges is that the studies are done, but most INDEFOR staff do not have ready access to them. This is due to a number of factors, including the results were not shared directly with INDEFOR, they were shared with a limited number of staff who did not share them with others, and/or INDEFOR does not have a system for storing, organizing, and sharing information. Working group participants also noted that field staff regularly fill out "fichas" (field reports), but no one ever uses the information in those reports. There was a lot of discussion around how those fichas could be improved to collect needed data and to ensure that key people are actively reviewing these data and staying on top of what is happening in the field.

Multi-sectoral Collaboration

There has been some good progress here in establishing relationships, understanding interests, and working collaboratively. At a grant level, communication and collaboration happen among INDEFOR, WCS, and Noble through the steering committee and other activities on the ground. INDEFOR-AP and the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources are now working together to review and refine the water and coastal law from 2005. Communication is also happening among some key actors in the country, including INDEFOR, WCS, Noble, Biology Initiative, World Resource Institute, GEF, and local groups like ADEGE. ECOGUINEA is providing another platform for cross-institutional collaboration through the Biodiversity week. Among others, it includes representation from the Polytechnic University of Madrid, the National University of Equatorial Guinea, and INDEFOR.

Facilitate Exchanges among Protected Areas

Progress in this area has been fairly limited. The main way that WCS has helped support exchanges to date has been via opportunities for INDEFOR staff to work with consultants on studies. They also send people to Costa Rica Tropical Conservation Development workshop to improve management and critical thinking skill and apply them to EG problems at hand. However, this is really more of a staff capacity building contribution.

Recommendations for Future

The working group felt that it was crucial to continue WCS support to the strategy to strengthen INDEFOR's capacity. However, the potential areas where WCS can work to do this are numerous. With limited funds, it is impossible to make significant progress on all the results laid out in the overall chain for this strategy (Figure 6). With this in mind, working group participants

spent some time discussing and agreeing upon recommendations (at the gray group box level) of where WCS should focus investments going forward (see table below).

Proposed Emphasis of Investment in INDEFOR Capacity Strengthening

No future investment	Clear Roles and Processes
Maintain investment	Improved Operational Processes Legal Authority Recognized (incl. New protected areas created)
Increase investment	Planning Processes Improved (1st priority) Financial Processes Improved (1st priority) INDEFOR Staff Capacity (2nd priority) Multi-sectoral Collaboration (3rd priority) Key Information Available (4th priority) Facilitate Exchanges among Protected Areas (5th priority)

In addition, the group identified and prioritized several new actions for WCS to consider, as part of the overall capacity strengthening strategy. These include:

Highest Priority New Actions to Consider:

- Improve the understanding between actors (esp. WCS and INDEFOR) about financial management and increase the capacity to manage financial resources. This line of work directly responds to the discrepancies in views about INDEFOR’s capacity to directly manage financial resources.
- Training for conservation field staff (“conservadores”)
- Equipment - especially transportation (bikes) and radios for eco-guards, field equipment, Internet
- Study to understand elephant routes and how they are affected by existing and potential new roads
- Technical support in the development and validation of management plans (following the RAPAC model) - this would help ensure plans that are consistent across the Congo Basin region, and it would help move plans out of draft mode and into approval and then implementation.

Slightly Lower Priority New Actions to Consider:

- Expand WCS’s geographic focus to the interior areas
- Financial support to increase the number of eco-guards
- Support for the organization and ongoing management of INDEFOR’s library
- Awareness raising, both within and outside of protected areas

4. Increase civil society's (WCS's) capacity to support government organizations

Working group participants for this chain included: Jesús Mba Mba Mba, Pablo Esono Esono, Baltazar Nguema Ekua Nchama, Edmundo Esono Nsue, Ken McGhee, Domingo Mbomio; Facilitator: Christian Barrientos.

Description of Results Chain

This strategy involves working to establish WCS as a recognized legal entity within Equatorial Guinea and to provide WCS with the support and resources necessary to work effectively within the country. At a high level, the theory of change also posits that the experience of WCS and

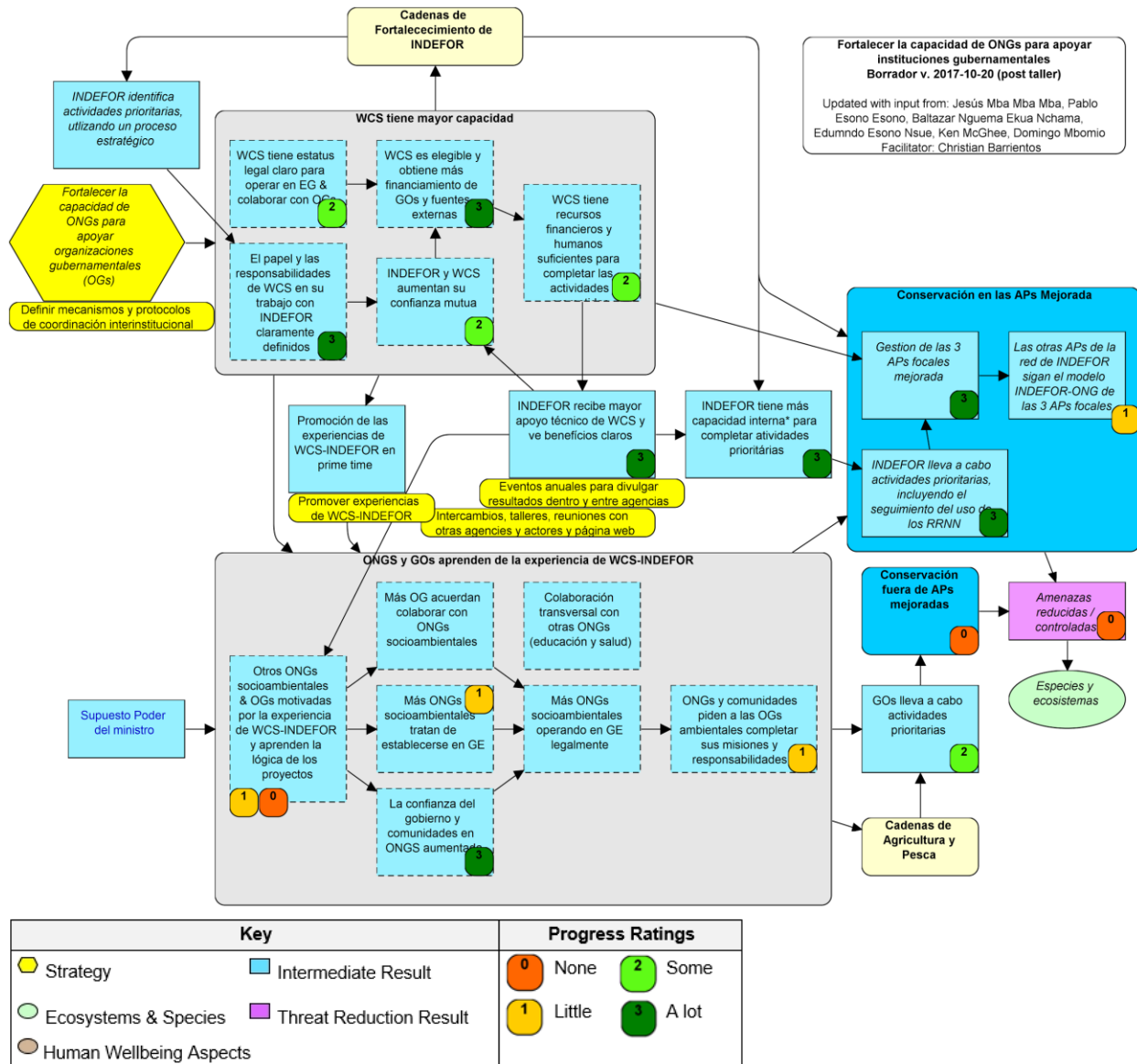


Figure 7. Results Chain for Strengthening Civil Society Strategy

INDEFOR-AP will be useful to both non-governmental organizations interested in working in Equatorial Guinea and governmental agencies that might engage with these NGOs (Figure 7). In essence, WCS and INDEFOR could pave the way and serve as a model to establish greater civil society representation and engagement in the country.

WCS Has Greater Capacity: The top half of Figure 7 (represented in Figure 7a below) focuses on increasing the capacity of WCS to operate within Equatorial Guinea. A big part of this is ensuring that WCS has clear legal status in the country that will allow it to collaborate with government agencies and obtain sufficient funding from these agencies and external sources to implement priority activities. Another important part is establishing clear roles and responsibilities between WCS and INDEFOR, which the team believes will help increase the mutual confidence in one another. Establishing WCS's capacity also directly affects its ability to support INDEFOR in various capacity building areas, as laid out in further detail in the [INDEFOR capacity strengthening strategy](#). The theory of change also holds that all of these results would lead to improving the management of the three focal protected areas and beyond to other areas in which INDEFOR works, ultimately reducing threats and improving ecosystem and species health (though, the team sees these as longer-term results not directly impacted by this strategy).

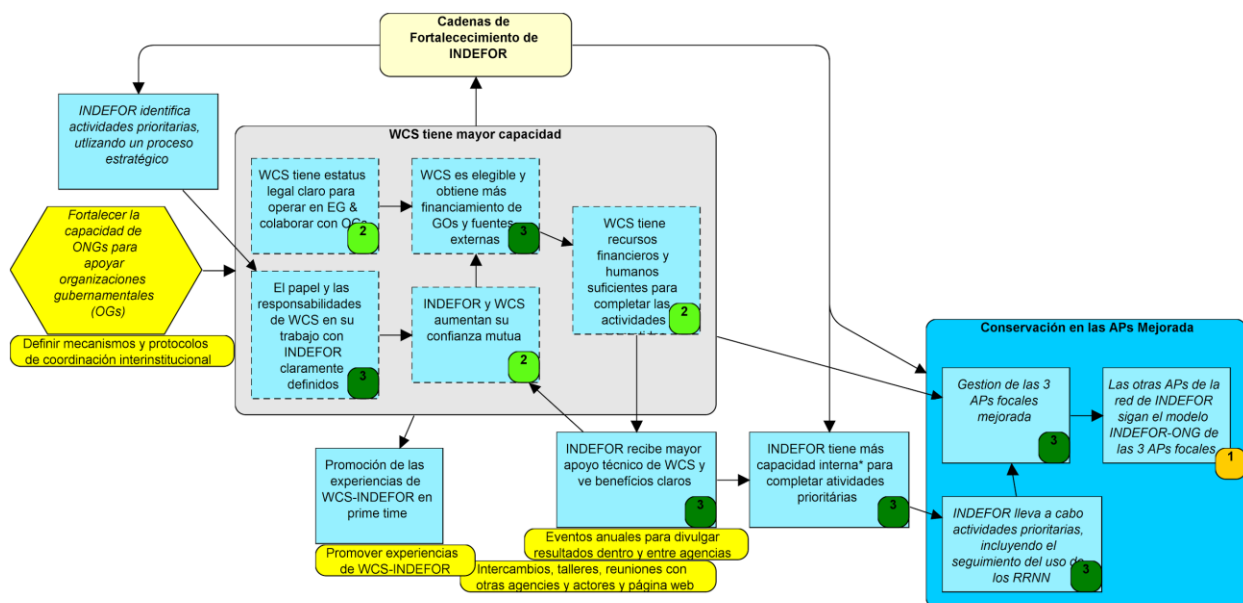


Figure 7a. Results Chain for Strengthening Civil Society Strategy - WCS Results

NGOs and GOs learn from the experiences of WCS and INDEFOR: To date, there has been limited collaboration between civil society (especially external organizations) and government agencies within Equatorial Guinea. Indeed, there is not a strong tradition of civil society action within the country. The experience of WCS and INDEFOR thus provides an opportunity for learning and for expanding civil society engagement (Figure 7b). To make this happen, WCS and INDEFOR would need to actively promote and share their experiences in a way that others could learn from them and take action. If this happens, WCS assumes that these groups would

be motivated by the experiences, develop mutual trust, and start collaborating with one another. This would then lead to more social and environmental NGOs operating in Equatorial Guinea and greater civil society pressure for governmental organizations to carry out their missions, all of which would reinforce WCS's work in agriculture and fisheries and presumably lead to government agencies carrying out priority activities. WCS further assumes that this will lead to improved conservation outside of protected areas, as well as contribute to better management and improved conservation within protected areas (via INDEFOR's involvement in this spin-off set of expected results).

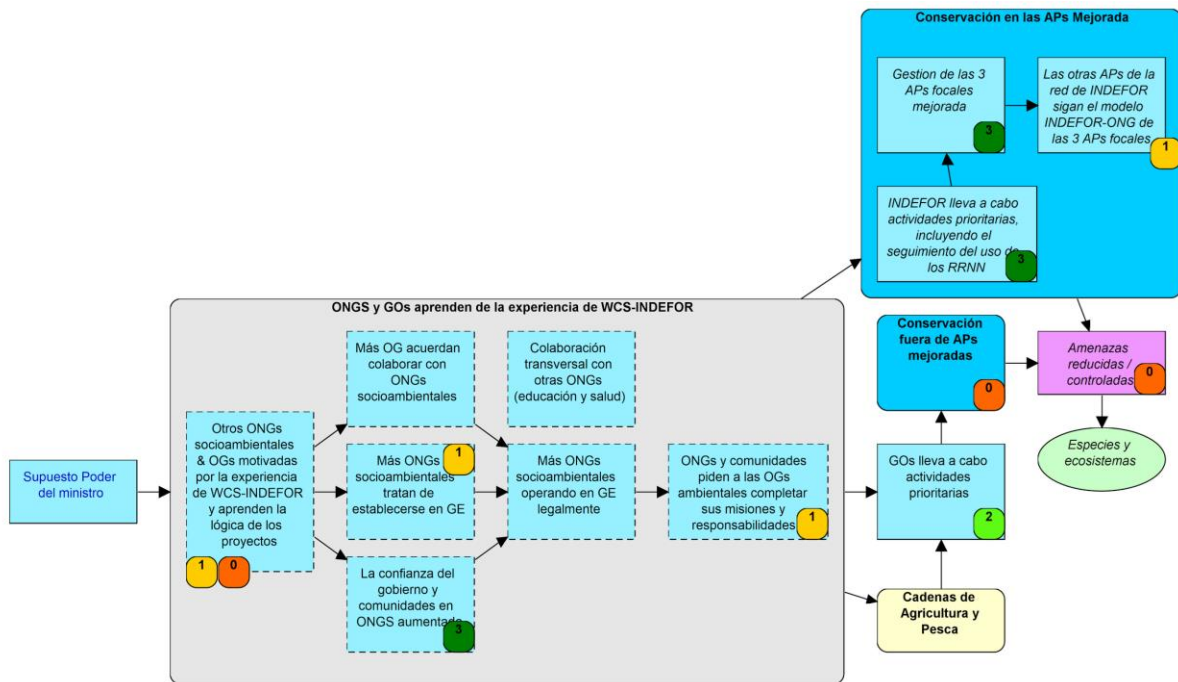


Figure 7b. Results Chain for Strengthening Civil Society Strategy - Other NGOs Results

Progress and Strategy Effectiveness

WCS has spent the past three years trying to build relationships within Equatorial Guinea and establish itself as a legally recognized entity. This process has involved many fits and starts and required a lot of patience, in particular because this is unknown territory. WCS cannot benefit from the experience of others in the county. Instead they are forging their own path. With much persistence and the support of INDEFOR colleagues, WCS has been able to mostly achieve what it set out to do, in terms of establishing itself within the country (current status: Ministry of Forestry and Environment requested [on Oct. 24, 2017] authorization from the Prime Minister to sign the MOU). The area requiring more work is in the sharing of lessons and experiences to foster greater civic engagement (results in Figure 7b). Overall progress scores on individual key results are shown in the results chain diagrams above, while summary scores for groups of results (shown in the gray and darker blue boxes) are in the table below. For more detailed notes on progress and strategy effectiveness, see [Appendix 3](#).

Group of Results (gray and blue boxes)	Summary Rating for Group*
--	---------------------------

WCS Has Greater Capacity	2.4
NGOs and GOs learn from the experiences of WCS and INDEFOR	1.2
Conservation in Protected Areas Improved	2.3
Conservation Outside of Protected Areas Improved	0

** Where the working group rated the progress for the entire group of results (gray box), the ratings here will be the same as those in the results chain. Where the group rated individual results, rather than the group of results, the ratings here reflect an average across the group.*

(3 = a lot of progress; 2 = some progress; 1 = little progress; 0 = no progress; -1 = negative impact).

WCS Has Greater Capacity

As a new NGO in Equatorial Guinea, WCS is working on getting the most effective group of professionals to work closely with INFEDOR and other governmental organizations. WCS is already recognized in Central Africa as a strong terrestrial conservation partner. In EG, WCS wants to establish a strong program based on the fact that EG has an enormous EEZ (exclusive economic zone), especially when compared to its terrestrial size. As such, WCS wishes to create / contribute to the capacity of coastal, water, freshwater and islands specialists. WCS is also building capacity via the EcoGrants it supports - a funding strategy to improve INDEFOR capacity in several areas. We already have 11 successful EcoGrants, but we are still working to build INDEFOR strategic planning and fundraising capacities. Of course, all these activities have increased INDEFOR's trust in WCS, and other governmental organizations are aware of this and willing to tap into the recent professional capacity provided by WCS. WCS-EG initiated three new notable efforts for the program. The first is collaboration with National Geographic and University of Tulane to assess the status of continental fish in coastal protected areas in EG. This not only aims to strengthen INDEFOR-AP capacity to conduct fisheries research, but also serves to collect the most needed management information for protected areas and for natural resource management, more generally. WCS's presence in EG is helping to identify, attract, and foster investment in EG's environment, in particular toward research, local capacity building, and creating a stronger INDEFOR-AP.

NGOs and GOs learn from the experiences of WCS and INDEFOR

This is a new area in which EG has limited experience, in part because the country is still relatively young (~50 years old). As a Spanish colony, EG was completely dependent upon Spain. As a new country, EG has experienced growing pains in different areas, including the support and protection of civil society organizations. NGOs are often seen as promoting human rights, social justice, and other societal interests, which in EG can be perceived as undesirable for the government model. WCS and INDEFOR will need to actively promote and share their experiences in a way that others could learn from them and take action.

Conservation in Protected Areas Improved

One of the general assumptions of the WCS working in EG is that the conservation will be improved. Because there is no baseline in terms of species or ecosystems, WCS needs to rely on other indicators, like the increased presence of INDEFOR in areas. However, this is insufficient to truly get at improvements in conservation, and WCS recognizes that it is one of the aspects that they need to improve.

Conservation Outside of Protected Areas Improved

INDEFOR has a department that works with forest management outside protected areas. Working with this department may be a way to improve what is happening outside protected areas. In order to assure that the limited funds are used in the most efficient way, WCS intends to work close to the coastal protected areas, where they already have a presence and where there is a closer tie to the country's rich marine resources and biodiversity.

Recommendations for Future

Working group participants felt this strategy was important to continue in the future and identified three broad recommendations:

- Increase investment in the three protected areas, through technical and financial support from WCS to INDEFOR-AP.
- Increase the participation of civil society via INDEFOR in the management of protected areas.
- Increase investment in WCS's legal inscription process as a local NGO. This final recommendation is a precursor for all the other work WCS would support and do.

Concluding Remarks

The work of WCS in Equatorial Guinea is still very new, especially considering that the program had to first establish operations in the country. Indeed, there are very few precedents of NGOs working in Equatorial Guinea. Within this context, WCS has made important strides. It was clear from the workshop results that participants found the work of WCS to be valuable in advancing conservation in the country, and all were supportive of continued involvement of WCS.

Nevertheless, working in Equatorial Guinea is complicated, and WCS's agenda is ambitious. Going forward, the WCS team will have to step back and think about what it wants to accomplish across the country and what the priority strategies for getting there are. This will likely mean scaling back or abandoning existing strategies while also expanding into new strategies and/or geographic regions. A clear and common understanding of the program's geographic scope, priority ecosystems and species, major threats, and drivers behind those threats is needed to help the WCS team identify effective strategies. The strategic planning workshop that followed the assessment workshop was a first step in this direction. The planning process, however, will require more time and thought from key actors involved in setting the direction for the overall program. To learn from prior experience, we hope the team will return to the assessment results and use them to help determine where the program should head in the future.

Summary of the Strategic Planning Workshop

Purpose and goals

The Strategic Planning Workshop was held from Oct. 23-24 in Bata, EG. The goal of the workshop and follow-up work was to develop initial inputs to a strategic plan for WCS' Equatorial Program as it enters its fourth operational year. Key components of strategic plan that we aim to complete by March 2018 include:

- A description of the geographic and thematic **scope** of the program and planning process
- A list of **conservation targets** (focal species and ecosystems)
- A description of the principal **ecosystem services** and **human wellbeing benefits** provided by these conservation targets
- A list of critical key **threats** and an assessment of the impacts of those threats on conservation targets
- An assessment of the key social, political, or economic **drivers** of threats
- A prioritized list of **strategies** to address threats and benefit conservation targets
- A **conceptual model** diagram that summarizes the above components
- **Theories of change** for prioritized strategies (represented diagrammatically by **results chains**) that outline the expected results from the strategies, including immediate, intermediate, and ultimate results
- A plan to **monitor the effectiveness** of the program's strategies through time, including measurable **goals** for conservation targets and key wellbeing benefits, measurable **objectives** for other key results, and specific **indicators**, and statements of "**milestones**" that can be achieved after 5 years implement the strategic plan

Because of limited time, during the workshop itself we aimed to only complete drafts of some of the above components (see below). We plan to complete final versions of all components by March 2018.

The Strategic Plan itself should be useful for:

- Communicating internally and externally about the program
- For fundraising, particularly for rapid development of funding proposals and helping to keep the program on track in face of new opportunities that may or may not align with long-term program goals and priority strategies.
- Ultimately, helping the program spend its resources wisely and have the biggest impacts possible

The strategic plan, associated process, and workshop were specifically **not** designed to:

1. To produce a **spatial plan** for where WCS EG should work within the country
2. To train the WCS EG staff in strategic planning, the Open Standards, or the Miradi software

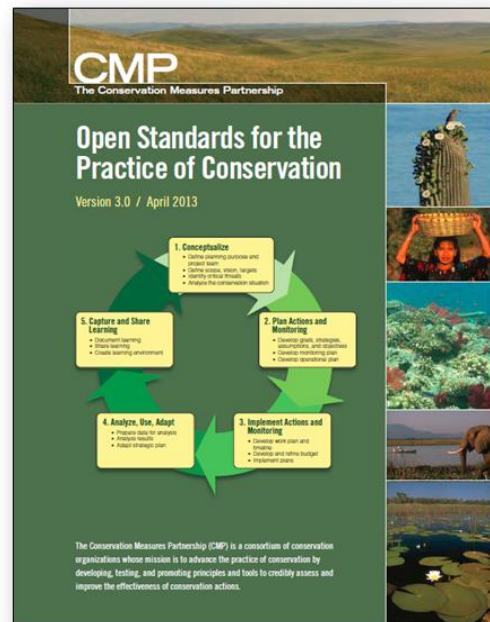
Planning Method

During strategic planning, we will use a streamlined version of a project planning and management process called the [Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation](#). While WCS EG staff will be introduced to the Open Standards, the goal is not to train participants to use the Standards.

The Open Standards are the most widely used process of planning and managing projects within the conservation community. The standards were developed and are managed by the the [Conservation Measures Partnership](#) (CMP), a partnership of nearly 30 organizations, including major non-governmental implementers such as WCS, WWF, and TNC and government agencies such as USFWS and USAID.

The components of a strategic plan described above (see [Purpose and Goals](#)) are adopted from the Open Standards project cycle, particularly Phases 1 (Conceptualize Your Project) and 2 (Plan your Action and Monitoring). The intention is, of course, that after completing a strategic plan, the WCS EG Program continues with the other three phases of the management cycle, particularly implementing strategies and monitoring represented in the strategic plan (Phase 3), analyzing the effectiveness and adapting strategies over time (Phase 4), and capturing and sharing what they learn with the broader WCS and conservation community (Phase 5).

To manage the strategic planning process and products, we used the [Miradi project management software](#), although staff were not trained in Miradi.



Strategic Planning DRAFT Workshop Results

The strategic planning workshop was held on Oct 23-24, 2017 in Bata, EG. Participants included the two facilitators, WCS EG Staff, WCS Global Staff (Dr. Michael Painter from Conservation Science and Solutions and Dr. Kate Holmes, Marine Program), and key partners. The final agenda for the workshop, list of project participants, and the presentation used to facilitate the workshop is available in [Appendix 4](#), [Appendix 5](#), and [Appendix 6](#).

In order to make the most use of the presence of the participants and proceed as far as possible during the two days of the workshop, the facilitators and Christian Barrientos worked during the 2-3 months prior to the workshop to produce draft products for many of the strategic planning components listed [above](#), especially the components of the “Conceptualize” phase of the Open Standards project cycle (i.e., conservation targets, threats, drivers, and conceptual model). Our hope was that entering the workshop, we could quickly review and revise much of the context with the participants and spend substantially more time focusing on identifying and prioritizing strategies, developing theories of change, and developing a plan to measure project effectiveness over time. We were aware that reviewing and revising these products could take longer than we anticipated, and so planned to adjust the agenda if necessary, and delay working on monitoring until after the workshop.

In practice, review of the draft conceptualization products indeed took longer than we’d scheduled, as did the identification and prioritization of strategies. As a consequence we did not directly address effectiveness monitoring during the workshop (including development of measurable goals, objectives, and indicators).

Justification for WCS Working in EG

Prior to workshop, we had planned to spend a few minutes at the start of the workshop to develop a vision statement for WCS EG. However, just before the workshop, Dr. Emma Stokes (WCS Regional Director for Central Africa) pointed to the continuing challenge she and others have justifying internally and externally why WCS works in a country as small and politically challenging as EG, especially considering that there are other vast regions of Central Africa where WCS does not yet work that, at least on a quick glance, have as much if not more conservation value and lower operational costs. We decided, therefore, to spend these few moments at the beginning of the workshop to explore the question with workshop participants and see if we could develop a concise set of reasons why WCS should continue investing in EG.

In workshop plenary, we explained this challenge to workshop participants and asked each participant to verbally respond to two questions:

- Why does EG stand out for conservation?
- Why does WCS in EG stand out?

The responses of individual participants are described in the workshop Discussion Notes in [Appendix 7](#), but the most intriguing responses include:

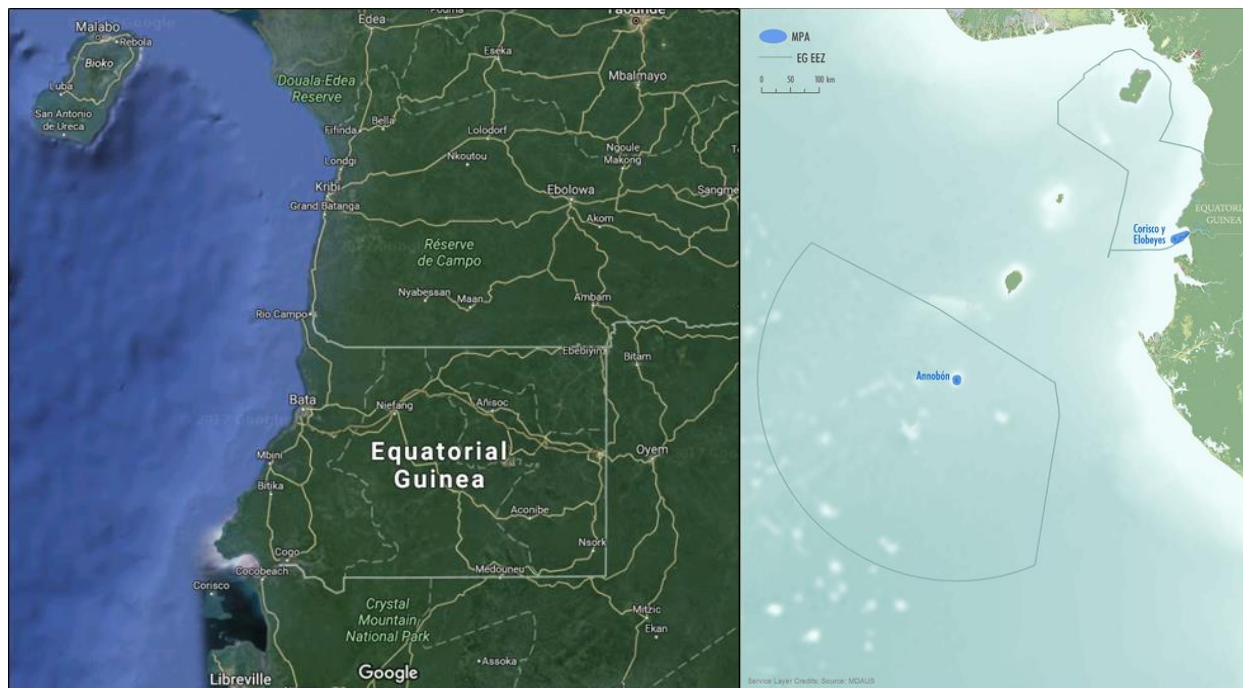
Why should WCS work in Equatorial Guinea and why should donors support us to do so?

The following responses are summarized in places and embellished in others.

- **EG has a gigantic EEZ for its size, which is relatively intact.** Compared to other countries, we need to influence a very small set of political actors to affect conservation across a large marine region. **It is a critical piece in WCS work in coastal and marine region of Central Africa. We work in all the surrounding neighboring countries, and need to also work in EG to have the regional impact.** Otherwise, EG would represent a hole in the WCS map, especially for *coastal* Central Africa.
- **The combination of the continental and island components is unusual for WCS.**
- Several of the participants mentioned that **despite its small size, EG is highly rich in biodiversity and natural resources.** One participant claimed that EG is “one of the most important countries in the world in terms of biodiversity” (paraphrased and translated). These comments suggest that conservation in EG could represent an unusually high return on investment in terms of number of species conserved per unit area or other measures, especially compared to its neighbors and/or tropical forests. We recommend that WCS EG research more extensively these claims and compile scientific studies and other evidence to support this claim. If it indeed can be supported, it could be a good argument for continuing or increasing investment in EG.
- EG represents an unusual opportunity for conservation in Central Africa because the **people that are living in protected areas are already convinced of the need for conserving biodiversity.**
- **There are still isolated populations of large terrestrial mammals left in EG (e.g., elephants and gorillas), and EG still has extensive, unfragmented (although degraded) stretches of habitat (forest) for these animals.** By reducing hunting and reducing future fragmentation, populations could be recovered and connected to neighboring populations where WCS has other programs.
- While there is a fair bit of scientific information about EG, **very little scientific information has been published about the country’s biodiversity and conservation.** It therefore represents an opportunity for science and publications for WCS scientists.
- Startup costs for WCS to work in EG are relatively low, because **we can rely on WCS expertise in neighboring countries (Gabon, Nigeria, Republic of Congo).**
- **We (WCS) speak Spanish, and unlike many other NGOs, we can draw on our extensive expertise in conservation in Latin America to help build a long-term program.** Many of our Latin American colleagues are both highly skilled and also highly intrigued by the opportunity to work in Africa.

Geographic & Thematic Scope of the Planning Process

Apriori Geographic Limitations of the Strategic Planning: All of EG except the terrestrial components of Bioko Island



Apriori Thematics Limitations of the Strategic Planning: None

Prior to the workshop, the facilitators and Christian Barrientos discussed what the scope of the strategic planning process should be, both in geographic and thematic terms. In other words, do we want to put any geographic limitations (e.g., restricting the planning to just a portion of EG) or thematic limitations (e.g., certain species, threats, kinds of strategies) on the process?

We agreed that we did not want to set any thematic limitations. However, from a geographic standpoint, we decided to consider all of EG except the terrestrial components of island of Bioko, principally because the biodiversity and context of the island are very different than the rest of the mainland and other islands (such as Annadon).

During the workshop, we discussed our scope decisions with participants, especially the idea of leaving the terrestrial components Bioko out of the strategic planning process. Detailed commentary on this decision is available in the Discussion Notes in [Appendix 7](#), but eventually the group agreed to the decision to leave Bioko out of the current effort at strategic planning because:

- The island's unique geological history for EG has resulted in a substantially different set of species, ecosystems, and social context than the rest of the EG that probably require an independent planning effort
- Several other conservation and social organizations are already working on Bioko, and it is reasonable for WCS EG to focus its energies on other parts of EG

The group also wanted to emphasize that:

- The coastal (e.g., beaches where turtles nest) and marine components of Bioko should be considered in the current planning effort
- Not explicitly considering Bioko in the current planning effort does not mean that WCS will not work with partners or communities on Bioko, especially when there are shared threats (e.g., turtle harvesting, beach development) and solutions (e.g., improving tourism), and where lessons and support can be shared to the benefit of all of EG. It simply means that, for the time-being, WCS will not be developing strategies explicitly for the unique components of Bioko's terrestrial ecosystems (e.g., endemic primates) or unique threats to these species (e.g., inappropriate tourism activities).

Conceptual Foundations of the Strategic Plan

Also prior to the workshop, the facilitators and Christian Barrientos developed draft versions of key products that are important as conceptual foundations for strategic planning, namely (a) WCS EG's focal **Biodiversity Targets**, (b) **Ecosystems Services** and **Human Wellbeing Benefits** provided by EG's biodiversity, (c) direct **Threats** to the Biodiversity Targets, and (d) a description of the principle social, economic, political, and institutional **Drivers** (i.e., Contributing Factors) of the threats. We summarized these components in a Conceptual Model diagram, the post-workshop version of which is shown below.

During the workshop, we presented draft of all of the above components to the participants for review and revision. Detailed discussion points and revision decisions are described in the Discussion Notes in [Appendix 7](#). Brief summaries of these components are below.

Biodiversity Targets

Prior to the workshop, we identified 11 biodiversity targets for the WCS EG Program. After discussion during the workshop, we added one and revised another to include an additional taxon (see footnotes), for a total of 12 targets. The post-workshop set of biodiversity targets is:

- Estuaries
- Mangroves
- Sea Mounts¹
- Marine Fisheries (especially the snapper family Lutjanidae)
- Sharks, Rays, and Whales²
- Beaches

¹ Added during the workshop

² Rays were added to this group during the workshop

- Turtles and Manatees
- Forests
- Elephant and Gorillas
- Consumed Species of Mammals and Crocodiles
- The Ecosystems of Corisco and Annobon Islands
- Mountain and Volcanic Ecosystems

The facilitators recommend that prior to finalizing the strategic plan, this list of targets be prioritized or reduced to 8-10 if possible, in order to reduce the number of elements that program needs to be monitored as a measure of the program's long-term success. One suggestion for doing so would be to eliminate the "Ecosystems of Corisco and Annobon Islands" target, and simply ensure that the monitoring of the other targets (i.e., beaches, turtles, forests, and consumed species) is stratified to explicitly include these two islands and separate mainland versus island changes in these targets.

Ecosystem Services and Human Wellbeing Benefits

Prior to the workshop, the facilitators and Christian Barrientos identified, in draft form, the principle ecosystem services provided by the biodiversity of EG and the principle benefits to human wellbeing that derive from biodiversity and ecosystem services. It is useful to explicitly identify these components so that (a) project members can clearly and succinctly explain to partners and donors how WCS projects may benefit people, (b) if of interest to the project, the project can test hypotheses relative to how changes in biodiversity affect human wellbeing (e.g., Do healthier populations of game species result in communities who have higher nutrition or income?), and (c) to explore whether improvements in wellbeing should be considered as an ultimate goal of the project and should be explicitly monitored as such (e.g., our goal is to improve human nutrition, and we will measure it), or whether it is sufficient for the project simply to understand the potential relationship between biodiversity and human wellbeing (e.g., we understand that improved biodiversity should contribute to human nutrition in X way, but it is not explicitly our goal to achieve improvement in human wellbeing).

Unfortunately, because of time constraints, we did not have time to present and revise drafts of these components to workshop participants. The facilitators recommend that before finalizing the strategic plan, WCS asks participants and any key stakeholders to review these components in particular and provide suggestions for improvement. The draft set of principle Ecosystem Services and Human Wellbeing Benefits are represented in the [Conceptual Model below](#), and include:

Principle Ecosystem Services provided by the ecosystems and species of EG:

- Water filter and clean water
- Tidal protection/storm protection
- Fish and other protein sources for consumption and sale (income)
- Other natural resources (wood, oil, sand) for use and sale
- Income and esthetic benefits from tourism in natural places
- Material and spaces for cultural practice and events

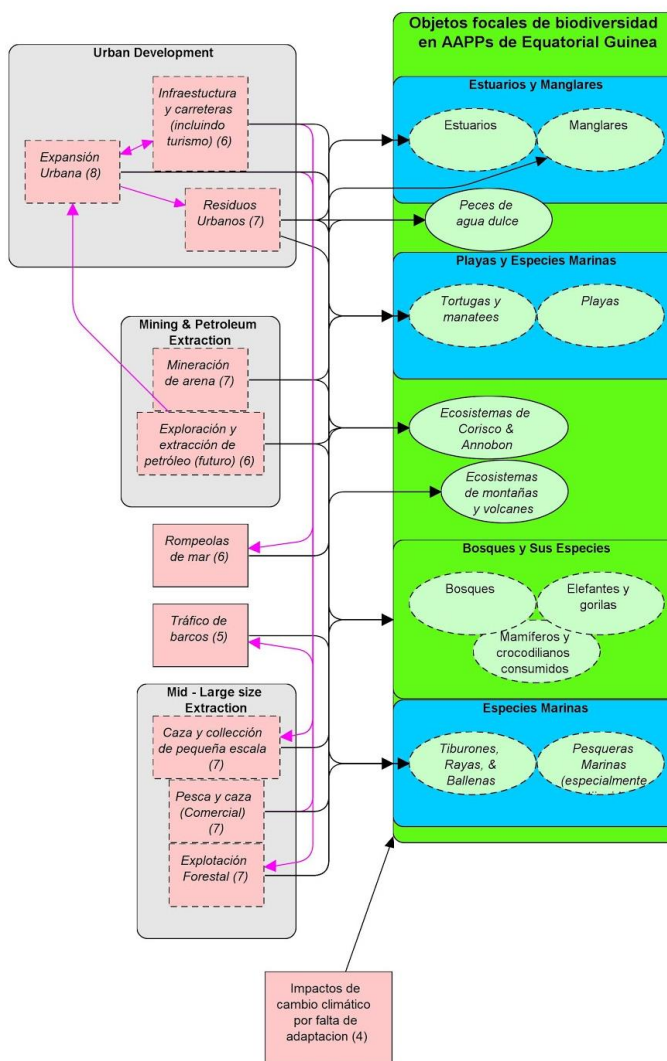
Principle Human Wellbeing Benefits derived from the EG's Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services:

- Economic security
- Family nutrition
- Cultural traditions
- Security in the face of weather and climatic events

Threats

Prior to the workshop, the facilitators and Christian Barrientos developed a list of the principle threats (human activities that, currently or potentially, directly and negatively affect biodiversity targets) to WCS EG's conservation targets. We also performed a rapid scoring of those threats in terms of their impact on biodiversity currently or within the next 10 years. The scoring of impact was generally based on 3 criteria: the *geographic scope* of the threat's effect on biodiversity targets (i.e., % of a target's distribution affected by the threat), the *severity* of its effects (i.e., amount of loss or degradation of the target caused by the threat within the geographic scope affected), and *irreversibility* of the threats effects (i.e., the ease with which the effects can be removed or mitigated and time needed to do so).

During the workshop, we briefly presented the draft threats and their scoring to the participants, who provided only minor suggestions for revising the title of the threats and scoring. The final list of threats is below. Impacts scores (over the next 10 years) are on a relative scale from 0-10 (zero being no impact, 10 being huge impact such as local extirpation of biodiversity targets):



Threats associated with Urban Development:

- **Expansion of urban areas (8)** (e.g., land clearance and degradation, colonization of new areas and development of new housing and industrial areas).
- **Urban waste (7)** (e.g., trash, pollution, sewage)
- **Creation or improvement of infrastructure (6)** (e.g., power lines) and roads

Mid- to large-scale extraction of natural resources:

- **Small-scale hunting and collection of wildlife (7)** (typically for subsistence purposes or family use, but is widespread and has severe impacts).
- **Commercial hunting and fishing (7)**. Artisanal fisheries were not currently considered a threat as they are likely sustainable at current levels, and could even increase without major sustainability issues.
- **Logging (7)** (both for individual/family use, such as charcoal from mangroves, and commercial logging)

Threats associated with mining and petroleum extraction:

- **Mining of sand (7)** (from beaches)
- **Oil exploration and extraction (6) (potential future threat)**. Current exploration and extraction activities were generally sustainable and with low direct impacts on biodiversity, although some possible impacts are poorly understood (e.g., effects of sound on whales). There is always a potential for an accident, or for activities to expand and become unsustainable, and actions would probably focus on ensuring continued use of best management practices and studying poorly-understood effects. It was recognized the oil industry is an important factor influencing other threats, especially urban expansion and in some cases unsustainable fishing (use of fish aggregation devices around oil platforms).

Other Threats:

- **Sea breaks (6)** (the structures constructed parallel to the coast meant to reduce waves primarily for shipping purposes)
- Unmanaged **Boat traffic (5)**
- Lack of **Climate Change (4)** adaptation. The group recognized that the drivers of climate change associated with increases in greenhouses gases were largely outside of their sphere of influence, but that actions to manage local impacts or adapt to unavoidable impacts were within their influence and should be explored.

Drivers of Threats & Key Opportunities to Address Them

Also prior to the workshop, the facilitators and Christian Barrientos discussed the major social, economic, and institutional factors that contribute to threats, identified what we thought were those *principal* drivers within the sphere of influence of WCS EG, and unique opportunities to address them. During the workshop, we presented those draft drivers, in the form of the Conceptual Model, to the participants and discussed them at length. The participants provided minor revisions to the model.

The final drivers are represented in the Conceptual Model below. In summary, the principle drivers include:

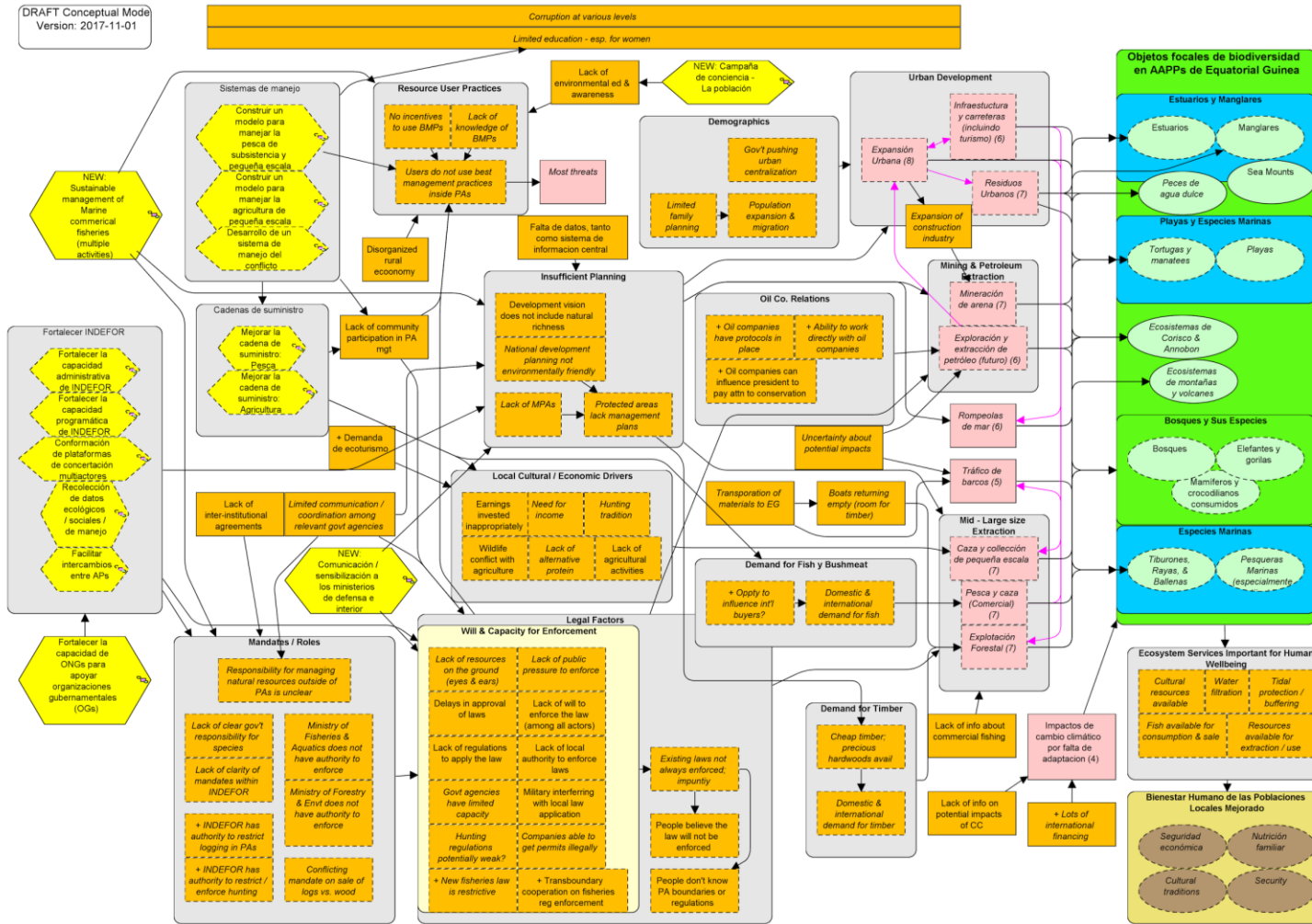
- Factors associated with changing demographics, migration to urban areas, and population change in EG
- Poor resource-use practices and lack of programs to manage natural resource use
- Poor national development planning, that excludes environmental concerns
- Unsustainable domestic and international demand for natural resources
- Local economic drivers, especially lack of alternatives or sustainable income generation activities
- Insufficiently well-developed and implemented legal system
- Lack of will and capacity (technical and financial) to enforce laws, and general societal lack of knowledge and respect for the law (impunity)
- Lack of clarity or conflict in terms of the roles and responsibilities of government agencies for managing natural resources
- Poor coordination among actors
- Lack of participation in natural resource management activities

A few unique opportunities to address threats were also identified, including:

- Good existing relationships with oil companies that have influence over government policies
- The current fishing laws are strong, and can be used to manage commercial fisheries
- Currently positive context for doing transboundary enforcement of fisheries with neighboring countries
- Recently strengthened mandates of INDEFOR to manage hunting and logging
- Increasing interest in ecotourism as a means of fundraising and education

Conceptual Model

The previous conceptual foundations for the strategic plan were summarized in a conceptual model diagram, shown below with the strategies currently being implemented by WCS EG under the Noble grant and 3 new strategies for which results chains were built during the planning workshop (see next section). We used this conceptual model as a basis for brainstorming and prioritizing strategies (see next section).



Strategy Brainstorming and Prioritization

Based on the above conceptual foundations, the principal objective of the Strategic Planning workshop was to identify a possible set of conservation strategies for WCS EG to pursue in the upcoming years, complementing and building on the set of existing strategies built under funding from the Noble foundation. To accomplish this, during the workshop we first **brainstormed possible new strategies** (in addition to the existing strategies under the Noble grant) by:

1. Dividing the participants in two groups, one to focus on identifying possible strategies for confronting threats associated with Urban Development and Mining and Petroleum, the second to focus on threats associated with resource extraction (hunting, fishing, and logging), sea breaks, and boat traffic.
2. Asking the participants to spend 10 minutes studying the Conceptual Model above and, individually, come up with strategies to improve the situation.
3. In a round-robin style, asking each participant to suggest 2-3 strategies to the group
4. Grouping similar strategies suggested by the participants

We then asked participants of each group to help WCS EG prioritize strategies for implementation by:

1. Scoring the possible effectiveness of each strategy for WCS using an Excel scoring tool and three criteria:
 - a. The **likely impact** of the strategy on threats/targets (e.g., no impact to high on a 0-10 scale)
 - b. The **social, cultural, & political feasibility** of the strategy
 - c. The **access to the personnel/skills** necessary that WCS EG has for implementing the strategy
2. Based on the scores and discussing, identifying 4 strategies to present in plenary.

We made it clear to participants that a full and final prioritization of all possible strategies, by the WCS program, would need to happen later and involve internal discussions, but that the scoring and strategies presented in plenary would be taken strongly into consideration.

The scoring exercise is shown in detail in [Appendix 8](#). In summary, 33 new strategies were brainstormed by the participants, and they were scored for the criteria above alongside the existing 11 strategies supported by the current Noble Grant. The 8 strategies chosen by the groups (4 by each group) and presented in plenary are shown in the table below. Three strategies, shown in bold, were chosen by participants in plenary for building Theories of Change/ Results Chains.

Strategy	New or Existing	Total Score
Sustainable management of marine commercial & artisanal uses (multiple activities) for EEZ	New	8.33
Facilitar intercambios entre APs	Existing	8.31
Program to engage local people in & around PAs in conservation (employment & decision-making, ecotourism)	New	7.78
Awareness raising campaign (to various audiences)	New	7.67
Apply the law for environmental impact assessment	New	7.33
Communications programs to explain benefits of ecosystems to key audiences (especially Ministries of Defense & Interior) & promote biodiversity funding	New	7.06
Regulate, facilitate, improve the systems for people to visit forests	New	7.00
Study of CC potential impacts on EG & possible adaptacion strategies	New	6.89

Table1. Eight possible priority strategies identified by working groups at the Strategic Planning Workshop. Of these eight, workshop participants then chose 3 (in bold), for which theories of changes/results chains were completed (see below).

The facilitators recommend that, as a next step in Strategic Planning, that WCS staff complete a internal prioritization exercise, using the scoring exercise completed by participants and internal discussions to place each of the 42 strategies shown in [Appendix 8](#) into one of the following priority categories:

- Already doing - keep going
- Already doing - stop doing
- New - Initiate now using existing funds
- New - Pursue financing within the next 1-2 years to begin implementation
- New- Consider later or pursue only if a specific funding opportunity arises
- Other (with explanation)

Results chains for selected strategies

During the strategic planning workshop, Theories of Change represented by Results Chain diagrams were completed for three new strategies selected by workshop participants.

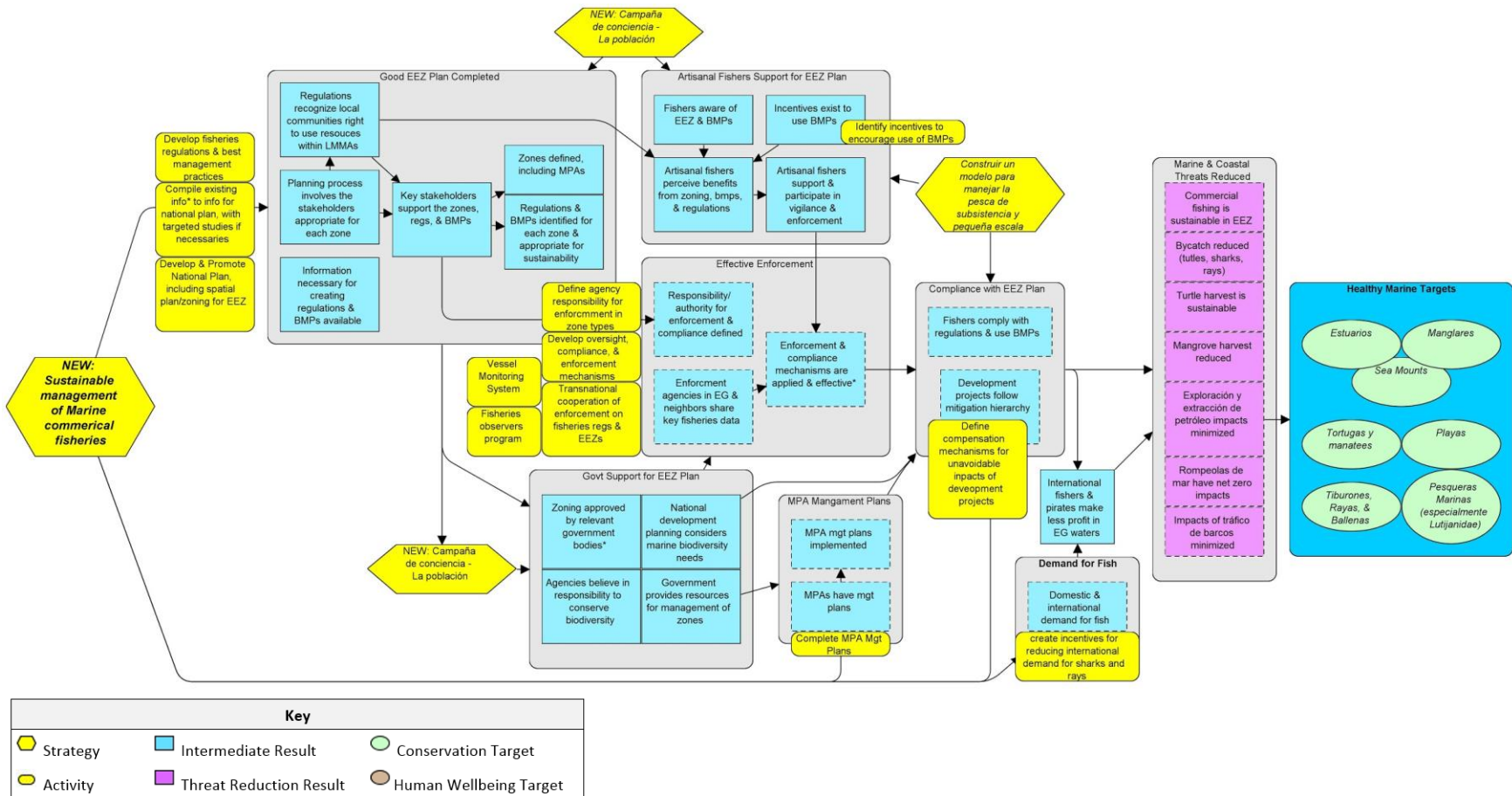
Theory of Change 1: Sustainable management of Marine commercial fisheries

This strategy develops a multi-component program for sustainably managing commercial fisheries, including activities related to zoning, enforcement, development of mitigation and compensation processes for development projects that affect marine resources, and writing management plans for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The full results chain is shown on the following page. Key results include:

- **Completion of a comprehensive plan for the EG's very large Exclusive Economic Zone**, which would zone the entire EEZ (example zones, MPAs, artisanal fishing zones, petroleum exploration zones, etc.) and create regulations and bmps for each zone.
- **Artisanal fishers perceive benefits from the EEZ plan, and support it implementation and enforcement**
- **Relevant government agencies approve the EEZ plan and provide resources for its implementation.**
- **Management plans are developed for MPAs**
- **Enforcement and compliance mechanisms defined in the EEZ and management plans are effectively implemented**

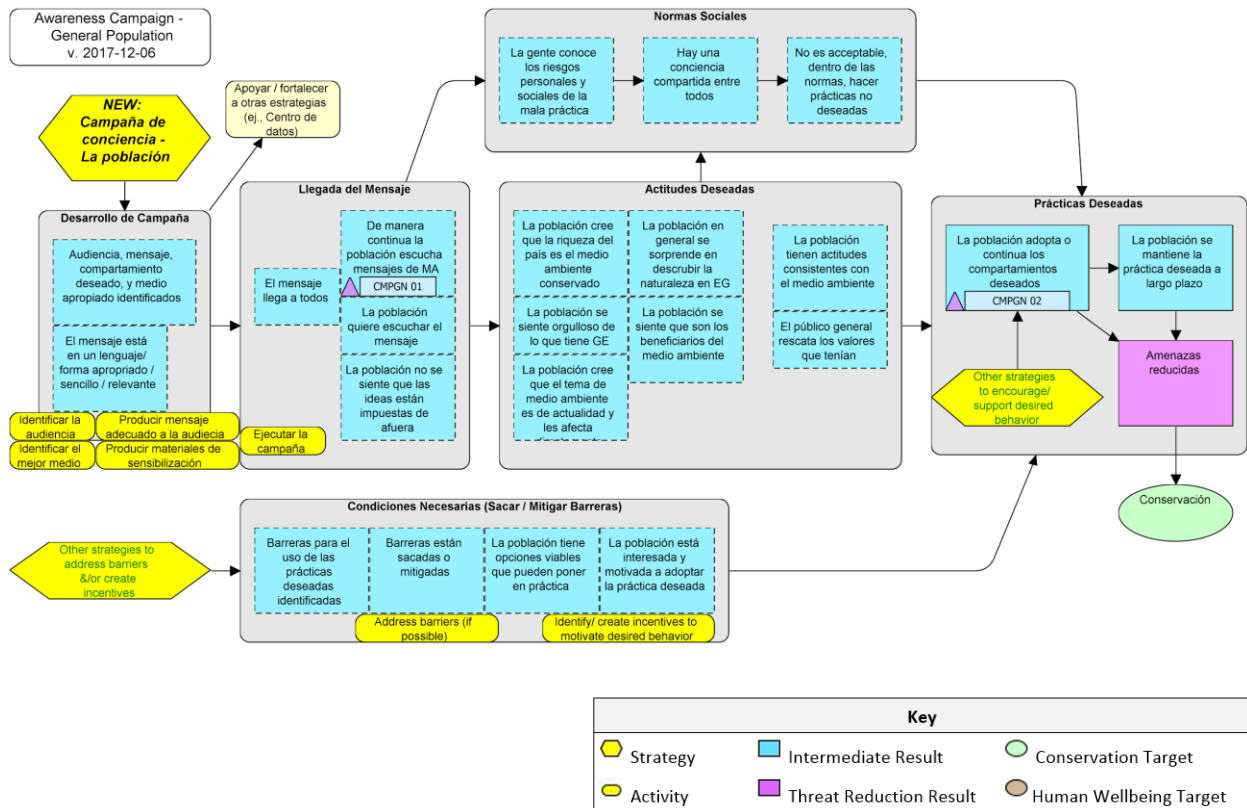
Ultimately, these activities and key results should reduce or minimize multiple threats to marine resources, especially helping to ensure that commercial fishing is sustainable and does not negatively affect artisanal fishers. The activities should also ultimately benefit multiple marine conservation targets including species of fish, turtles and the beaches where they nest, and shark, rays, and whales.

Next Steps: Currently the description of efforts to **reduce international demand for sharks and rays** is not well developed in the chain. We recommend that WCS EG describe in more detail the program's role in reducing international demand, what specific activities the program should take, and what the expected results are.



Theory of Change 2: Awareness Raising Campaign - General Population

This strategy was identified to address the driver “lack of environmental education and awareness” in the overall conceptual model, which influences resource user practices. It also intends to address something more systemic that is not explicitly identified in the conceptual model - namely, a general lack of value and appreciation, across multiple levels, for the rich biodiversity and resources of the country.



The theory of change for this strategy is at a high level. The audience is the general population, but the theory is not tailored for a specific message or desired behavior. As such, it could be adapted to a more specific campaign or set of campaigns, if WCS decides to take this strategy forward.

The chain involves a main branch that highlights results related to fostering the desired awareness, attitudes, and behaviors, while the top portion of the chain refers to creating favorable social norms that will reinforce the desired practices over the longer term. The bottom portion of the chain identifies some common barriers that could affect the degree to which the strategy is effective over the longer term. Each of these paths is described in a bit more detail below.

Main branch:

- **Campaign development:** Includes identifying the audience, message, desired behaviors and making sure that message is in the right language and format for the audience
- **Message arrival:** Includes arrival and ongoing message sharing and a willingness or openness on the part of the audience to receive the message
- **Desired attitudes:** Touches on various themes, including discovery of and pride in resources, valuing of resources conserved, and understanding of individual and societal benefits
- **Desired practices:** Emphasizes both shorter-term and ongoing adoption / continuation of desired practices, ultimately leading to reduction of relevant direct threats and conservation of key species and ecosystems. Also notes that other strategies will be important to influence practices - awareness raising on its own is not sufficient.

Social norms:

- **Social norms:** In addition to the standard knowledge-attitudes-practices theory, changes in attitudes and practices could lead to changing social norms over time - with an undesirable practice becoming something that is viewed as unacceptable within the existing norms.

Necessary or Enabling Conditions

- **Necessary Conditions (Barrier Removal / Mitigation):** Barriers that may prevent the audience from having the desired attitudes or taking the desired action need to be identified, removed and/or mitigated, and the population needs viable alternatives. With all of these, the assumption is that the general population will be interested and motivated to adopt the desired behavior. If these barriers are removed, people will be in a better position to adopt the desired practices.

Draft objectives and indicators developed for a few key results:

CMPGN 01:

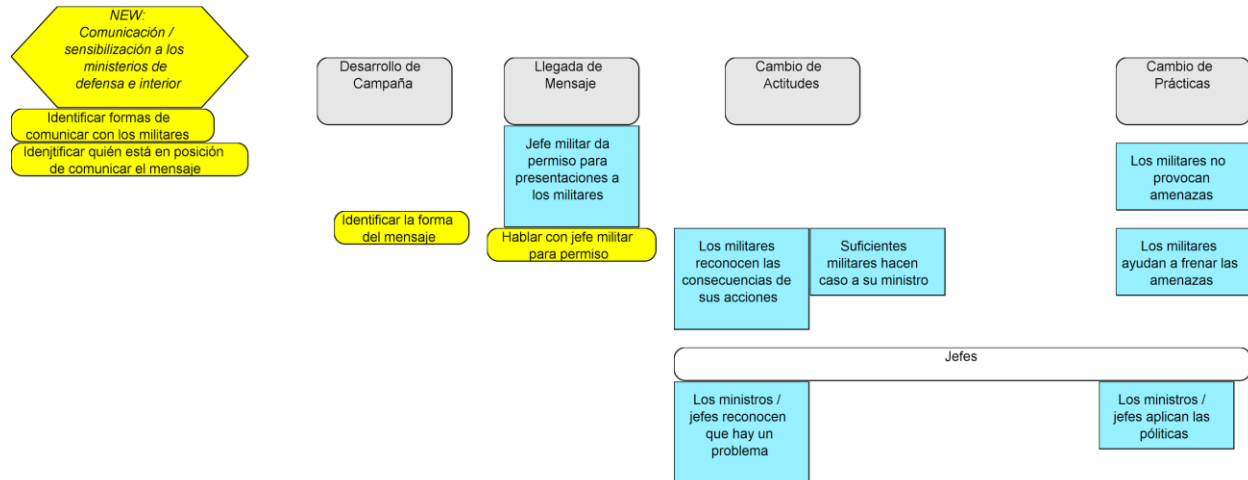
- Result:** The general population hears environmental messages on a continuous basis
- Objective:** Within X months of implementing the campaign, environmental messages go out by radio and/or television at least one time per day, at an appropriate time (i.e., prime time?)
- Indicator:** # of times per day that environmental messages go out via radio and/or television

CMPGN 01:

- Result:** The general population adopts or continues the desired behaviors
- Objective:** There is a reduction in evidence showing undesired behaviors
For example, if seeking a reduction in hunting, potential objective would be: Within x timeframe since the start of the campaign, fewer animal parts are seen in markets and along roadsides (as compared to 2017)
- Indicator:** Evidence of undesired behavior
Hunting example: # of animal parts seen in markets and along roadsides

Next steps: If WCS decides to implement this strategy, staff will need to clarify the audience(s) and the expected attitudes and behaviors. Depending on how many different audiences there are, there may be a need to develop separate results chains for each audience. Also, staff should consider whether there are other key results in the chain that merit monitoring (to be able to understand if the theory of change appears to be holding).

Theory of Change 3: Communication / Awareness Raising for the Ministries of Defense and Interior



The working group had a bit of time to start developing a theory of change around an awareness raising strategy related to the Ministries of Defense and Interior. They narrowed the audience further to focus on military personnel. The group identified military personnel as a key audience because they felt that military personnel had two important roles in reducing threats: 1) They could help enforce protected area and other environmental protection laws (currently, many military staff look the other way when it comes to offenses in protected areas), and 2) They could work to change their own individual practices which may be leading to degradation of priority species and/or ecosystems.

The group identified a two-pronged approach. They felt it was important to do awareness raising directly with military staff, with results that would follow a similar pattern to the general population awareness raising. They also felt it was important to reach the military leaders to ensure there was some pressure from the top for military staff to enforce environmental laws and to reduce their own practices that contribute to degradation.

Next steps: If WCS decides to implement this strategy, it should revisit the decision to narrow the focus to military personnel. It would help to identify the different actors in the ministries and how they might be able to contribute to threat reduction. If any strategy does go forward, it will need a more complete results chains and series of objectives. The results chain for awareness raising to the general population would serve as a good starting point.

Conclusions and Next Steps

In general, the above products represent substantial progress on completing a strategic plan for the WCS EG program. However, additional work is needed to complete a strategic plan that will guide fundraising and future monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management processes. We recommend that, over the next 3-4 months, the WCS EG program complete the following steps:

1. From the list of brainstormed strategies generated in the workshop, **complete an exercise that places each activity in a “priority category”** as described above (see [Strategy Brainstorming and Prioritization](#)). The priority categories will provide good orientation for future fundraising activities about what strategies the program should pursue first and help avoid extended arguments about what it a “high” or “low” priority. To clarify fundraising priorities, we recommend placing only 2-4 strategies in the “New - Pursue financing within the next 1-2 years”.
2. For all activities that fall within the categories “Already doing - keep going”, “New - Initiate now using existing funds”, and “New - Pursue financing within the next 1-2 years to begin implementation”, we recommend that the program **complete Theories of Changes / Results chains**. Having completed Theories of Change will help to reduce turnaround times for future proposals. A few existing results chains need to be refined.
3. **Develop Goal statements for each Conservation Target**, and if useful, for each Human Wellbeing target. In the absence of solid information on the current condition of the conservation targetes, initial Goal statements do not need to be perfectly “SMART”, although we recommend that at minimum they:
 - State whether the program aims to increase or maintain the health of the conservation target
 - Indicate what measurement(s) (indicators) will be used to demonstrate changes in the target over time, including units if possible (e.g., indicators for health of turtle populations = average number of adult females that lay eggs per km of beach per nesting season, average number of hatched eggs per nest)
 - Indicate, in a general sense, how long the program thinks they need to achieve the goal (e.g., <10 years, 10-20 years, 20-50 years, >50 years).
4. For all results chains, **identify key “intermediate” results** that should be monitored, and for these results, develop Objective statements (in the same way as for goals above). “Intermediate results” include all pink (threat reduction results) and blue boxes in results chains.
5. For all Goals and Objectives, **develop 5-year Milestones**, that indicates how far toward the Goal or Objective the team thinks it can progress in 5 years. Milestones are simply restatements of the Goals and Objectives with short time frames, and are particularly useful for funders to understand (e.g., If the goal is the increase the population of adult nesting turtle to 500 animals by 2030, how far can we get in the next 5 years?). It is possible, that in 5 years, little or no progress on Goals and Threat Reduction Objectives

can be achieved, and that only longer term frames make sense for these. It is important to communicate these limitations to donors, and be realistic about what can be achieved in the funder's time frame.

Guidance on these steps can be found in the powerpoint presentation for the Strategic Planning Workshop in [Appendix 6](#).

With the above products, the WCS EG Program will have sufficient products to produce an excellent strategic plan, that guides programmatic and fundraising decisions over the next 5-years, and provides the basis for measuring whether the strategies are working, both in the short term and long-term. The plan can also serve as the basis for completing staff annual workplans (who will do which activities, and when, and with what financial resources). We also recommend that the team complete an internal evaluation of progress every 6-12 months, based the plan and monitoring, and continuously adapt their strategies based on these evaluations. A more formal, externally-facilitated evaluation similar to the evaluation workshop described above can be performed about every 5-years.



Appendices

See all appendices in the [online google folder](#):

[Appendix 1: Agenda and Handouts for Assessment Workshop](#)

[Appendix 2: Participant List for Evaluation Workshop](#)

[Appendix 3: Workshop Notes Results Chain Progress & Recommendations](#)

[Appendix 4: Agenda for the Strategic Planning Workshop](#)

[Appendix 5: Participant List for the Strategic Planning Workshop](#)

[Appendix 6: PowerPoint Slides for Strategic Planning Workshop](#)

[Appendix 7: Strategic Planning Workshop Discussion Notes](#)

[Appendix 8: Results of the Strategy Scoring Exercise](#)