

*Share Fair Break-Out Session on Recent Outputs of USAID's Global Conservation Program Socio-Economic Learning Group:*

**“Conservation in a Human Landscape: A Review Of Field-Level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Integrating Socio-Economic Indicators Into Conservation”**

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is challenging at best when an organization has a single objective (conservation, economic development, healthcare improvements, etc.). Yet increasingly, organizations are implementing programs with dual or multiple integrated objectives, for example the integration of conservation and socio-economic development or poverty alleviation. USAID's Global Conservation Program (GCP) supports a partner-driven learning group focused on the integration of socio-economic considerations into land/seascape level conservation. This group (including Enterprise Works/Vita (EWV), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and African Wildlife Foundation (AWF)) has consolidated learning from discussions and reviews with 60 plus field practitioners on integrating conservation and socio-economics through field-level M&E systems. This review has revealed that:

- **Staff:** Many groups have no dedicated M&E staff to advise field practitioners on appropriate M&E tools, especially in the socio-economic area. Even large organizations with dedicated M&E staff do not necessarily interact with all field programs.
- **Resources:** While donors and organizations are increasingly requesting more data, project timeframes and budgets do not provide adequate resources to deliver on requests. Projects working in isolation too often conclude they are doing something wrong in that they can't collect and analyze all the data requested. The reality is that the data requests do not match the resource allocations.
- **System Development and Indicator Selection:** Confusion over process, outcome, and impact indicators is common. Many programs include process and outcome indicators, but few have impact indicators. Impact indicators should be built-in from the start even if funding cycle may not be long enough to allow for impact results. M&E system reviews need to start with the basics to guide field teams and use simple tools to assist field teams to set baselines and identify appropriate indicators.
- **Scale:** Frequently conservation and livelihood/economic interventions focus on group-level interventions, but often M&E tools and systems aren't designed to monitor/measure at this scale.
- **Attribution:** The need to document changes versus worrying about can a single project take credit for progress. Many programs shy away from collecting data since they feel they cannot “prove” the project was the cause of the change.

This breakout group will discuss M&E review results, provide a forum for discussion and will introduce several useful tools/studies addressing these challenges including: USAID/GCP's “Starting Guidance for Field Practitioners in Integrating Conservation and Socio-Economics Through Field-Level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems”; WCS's Parks and People Study and; EWV's Group Baseline and M&E Method and Document.