
SHARE

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This step in the Conservation Standards cycle involves sharing lessons and formal products with key internal and external audiences. It also involves giving and receiving feedback and promoting a learning culture. Encouraging learning within your project team, as well as with partners and interested parties, is crucial. The insights gained through reflection will be valuable for each step in your next project cycle and will provide learning opportunities for everyone involved. It is also important to promote learning at an institutional level and, more generally, across the conservation community. With this in mind, the Conservation Standards include practices that your project team and organization could adopt to help foster learning and sharing.

1 5A. Document What You Learn

As you go through the process described in the Conservation Standards, you should document the knowledge your team has gained on a routine basis and contribute that knowledge to the appropriate evidence base. To a large degree, you will have already generated many results and lessons in Step 4, based on the information and evidence needs you identified throughout the cycle. Here, you should make sure that you document those lessons (and track unanswered information needs) in a manner that suits your team so that they are available in the future to your team, your organization, and the conservation community as a whole.

You can capture these results and knowledge in many ways (e.g., informal or internal documentation, reports to funders or interested parties, handwritten log). This documentation is often challenging to do in the face of daily work pressures and deadlines. As such, choose the methodology that is easiest for your team to maintain over time and also try to ensure that your team or organization provides both time and incentives to do this work. One simple option for your team is to use online documents and spreadsheets to store a running list of lessons learned that all project team members can access and edit over time (Figure 23).

If you document the evidence you generated and your lessons learned, you will be able to better remember from year to year what you have done, what worked, what didn't work, and what you plan to do in the future (Refer back to Step 4A for reminders on data management). This will help your current project team over the long term and will ensure that new project staff have a record of what you did and what you learned. Importantly, it will also help the team avoid repeating past mistakes. If you use project management software like Miradi, you can record comments to ensure that knowledge becomes part of the project's historical record.

2 5B. Share What You Learn

The Conservation Standards are iterative, and you should consider this Share Step throughout the cycle. Documenting and sharing what you have learned will help practitioners working under similar conditions or using similar approaches benefit from your experience, avoid the types of problems you have encountered, and ultimately, more effectively achieve their conservation goals.

Before deciding how to share what you've learned, your team should determine which audiences should be aware of your lessons. At a minimum, think about what you need to share with your team, interested parties, donors or funders, and the broader conservation community. To effectively reach these and other key audiences, you need a clear communications and dissemination strategy. You should already have this strategy in place, based on your work in earlier parts of the cycle (Steps 2-4). As a reminder, your communications strategy should clarify what

evidence and which lessons you wish to communicate to priority audiences (based on their interests), the best format to reach each key audience, and the means for developing and distributing your communications products. When sharing lessons, you should provide clear management recommendations (based on your analyses) to the right people and necessary details to help support your recommendations and interpret results.

For internal audiences (e.g., project team and partners), you can use informal communication, such as email, meetings, or project chat channels to regularly share lessons and foster a learning environment.

How and what you share with interested parties will depend on the needs, interests, and requests of those audiences. You may plan an informal discussion, a sharing workshop, invite feedback virtually, or join the interested party at one of their existing events. It's also important to consider privacy when sharing information broadly, as interested parties may have different comfort levels with what is shared. It is wise to consider how sharing or not sharing may impact local needs and/or the relationships you have built. You should also ensure information is shared with accessibility in mind across your audiences.

For sharing lessons and information with the broader conservation community, there is a range of alternatives, including contributing to evidence [libraries](#) (e.g., [the Conservation Actions and Measures Library](#)), [publishing in scientific journals](#), [authoring](#) gray literature, posting lessons on your website or in email lists, sharing learning via social media, teaching a course or guest lecturing, and telling your stories at workshops and conferences. Consider using technology like StoryMaps, dashboards, and other spatial tools to visualize your information in a compelling way. More generally, to exchange knowledge and lessons and gather insights from others' experiences, it can be very helpful to join a **community of practice** or email list.

Good conservation practice involves fostering a performance and learning culture within your project team, across your organization and partners, and among conservation practitioners around the world. A performance and learning culture at these levels is important to ensure that all parties learn and benefit from your team's experience. Although this is listed as the last step, it really is something you and your organization need to cultivate throughout the cycle (as an overarching principle and a key concept to Close the Loop). To most effectively apply the Conservation Standards, you need to work in an environment that promotes transparent, evidence based conservation and adaptive management. This means that you, your team, and your organization should be regularly reflecting, seeking feedback, and providing feedback. That feedback could be formal or informal and might come from your team members or other staff members. Alternatively, it might come from external mechanisms, such as evaluations, which assess a project against its own stated goals and objectives, and audits, which assess a project against a set of process standards (e.g., the Conservation Standards). In creating a learning environment, it is important to be open to outside opinions that can give you fresh and insightful perspectives.

Fostering a learning environment is not easy. It requires leaders and donors who understand the need to reallocate scarce resources from immediate action to the long-term work of evidence-based conservation and adaptive management. It often involves enabling practitioners to take chances and question the conventional wisdom related to specific conservation tools and actions. It entails providing teams with the institutional security that innovation and questioning assumptions are valued in their organizations. And it requires a commitment to share both successes and failures with other practitioners around the world and to create true communities of practice. With this in mind, the Conservation Standards community itself benefits from sharing with one another our own experiences, challenges, and successes in applying the Conservation Standards within our organizations and agencies. Doing so helps us learn how to better institutionalize, improve, and adapt the Conservation Standards themselves.