

SCB IEWG 2022 mentoring program application

The Society for Conservation Biology's Impact Evaluation Working Group (SCB IEWG) is launching a new mentoring program to support people in their journey to learn and apply conservation impact evaluation methods.

What is the SCB IEWG?

The [SCB IEWG](#) advances biodiversity conservation efforts across the globe by working towards the adoption of counterfactual approaches to evaluating the social and ecological impacts of conservation interventions. Counterfactual-based impact evaluations are a suite of methodological approaches that are used to quantify the true impacts of different conservation interventions, i.e., the difference in social or ecological outcomes that can be causally attributable to a studied intervention. Counterfactual-based impact evaluations include Randomized Control Trials but also retrospective quasi-experimental approaches, in which the counterfactuals are identified after the beginning of the interventions based on assumptions about what would have happened in the absence of an intervention. The evidence base on the impacts of conservation interventions using counterfactual-based approaches has been growing over the past decade, although there remains substantial knowledge gaps (see this recent [review](#) on the effectiveness of forest conservation). To learn more about counterfactual approaches, take a look at [this foundational paper on conservation impact evaluation](#) as well as other papers from the IEWG's [reading list](#) and watch our [seminar series](#)!

What is the goal of the IEWG 2022 mentoring program?

The goal of the first edition of this program is to create a space for people who have started learning about counterfactual approaches to receive guidance on careers in impact evaluation, help build networks, and effectively learn and better apply the principles and research designs used in rigorous impact evaluations of conservation interventions.

Mentees

Mentees can be conservation practitioners, project managers, students, researchers, or anybody who has started learning about conservation impact evaluations. They may have no research background, or may already have taken courses on impact evaluation and/or causal inference. To be eligible as a mentee, applicants have to be currently preparing the design or analyzing an impact evaluation of a conservation intervention. Each mentee will be paired with a researcher familiar with impact evaluation approaches, based on shared interests and availability. The mentee should prepare goals about what they want to achieve during the mentoring program, while accepting that the mentor may not be able to support all the goals. Goals may include learning specific skills, improving confidence, exploring career development...

The paired mentees/mentors will be encouraged to arrange a virtual meeting to introduce each other, understand the needs of the mentee, and discuss how often they want to meet (e.g., 3 or 4 times over 6 months). The suggested duration of the program is about 6 months, but the

paired mentees/mentors are free to define their own frequency and duration based on their availability and interests.

Mentors

To be eligible as a mentor, you need to have completed at least one impact evaluation of a conservation intervention, and be willing to dedicate a portion of your time to discuss and provide advice to a learning mentee. The mentor can be expected to play different roles, such as guiding the mentee to access key resources and people, providing a trusted source of feedback to consolidate a research plan, or coaching the mentee to reach a specific goal. It is also an opportunity to learn about cool new projects, and develop your leadership and management skills!

The mentor can advise the mentee by guiding them in their career paths, exploring networking opportunities, understanding the challenges and opportunities of using impact evaluation to inform conservation policy, assessing the feasibility of research ideas, or suggesting the relevant literature and other resources to consolidate their research plan.

A mentor is not a substitute for a supervisor, a co-author, a training provider, or a consultant, but each pair can decide if and how they want to follow up. A mentee is not a research assistant.

Application

To be part of the mentoring program, please fill in [this form](#) below before October 21st, 2022. We encourage people interested in either becoming a mentee or a mentor to fill in this form, so we can enroll most interested mentees.

This is the first edition of the IEWG mentoring program and we strive to form about 10 pairs of mentees/mentors. You can apply to the mentoring program even if you are not yet a member of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB). The selected pairs will be contacted before the end of October 2022.

The personal data collected through this form will be destroyed at the end of the mentoring program.

If you have any questions or difficulties, please contact Seb Costedoat at scostedoat@conservation.org

Other resources:

This is the first edition of the IEWG mentoring program but interested mentees or mentors can take a look at the information for mentors and mentees on the program guide of the Conservation Social Science Mentoring Program offered by the the Society for Conservation Biology's Social Science Working Group (SSWG), that has been used as a model: <https://scbsocialscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/SSWG-Mentoring-Program.pdf>