

Webinar: ["Session 2A: Financial Resilience for Protected Areas"](#)

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Questions & answers by Jim Barborak, Co-Director of CSU's Center for Protected Area Management

1. How can we better deal or communicate with the government when they say that they want to protect and conserve natural resources, but the reality seems very different?

Response: From talking the talk to walking the walk is often a challenge for conservationists! When you say "government" you could be talking about anything from rangers and field staff of protected areas all the way up to ministers and presidents, but I assume in this case you are talking about higher level government environment officials. What has worked in some countries and situations is to really work to demonstrate the values and economic importance of protected areas, in areas such as water supply, disaster prevention, generation of foreign exchange and local jobs and income from tourism and outdoor recreation, etc. Also, have field days and get key individuals in government who might be indifferent to funding needs out to protected areas and neighboring communities that depend on them can also work. What is important is to have clear and concise arguments that could resonate with particularly important individuals. It is also important to know communication and marketing techniques to successfully share those messages.

Here is an IUCN document on the subject:

<https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2004-057.pdf> and here is a Europarc document on the subject: https://www.europarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/communicating_values_and_benefits_workshop_April-09.pdf.

Here are several references reviewing protected area benefits:

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-36-en.pdf> and <http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p312491/pdf/CHAPTER6.pdf>

2. Getting money is vital, but how can we improve the efficient use of the money inside the organization? I.E. how to avoid wasting money in non-vital things?

Response: That is an excellent comment. This is also an area where biologists, foresters and others from the conservation field without an economics, business administration or accounting background often, despite their best efforts, have problems. It is very important to have individuals with those skills on your teams. For projects funded from outside sources, often they require different types of audits to ensure funds are well spent and to reduce problems of this sort, and that is another good reason for doing your best to spend in appropriate ways on appropriate things that were in your proposal in the first place. Something I would highly recommend to all conservationists involved in managing major projects and initiatives is to build their skills in project management through short courses, available free online training, and in some cases, by getting certification in project management. Here is one source: <https://cmp-openstandards.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/WildTeam-2017-PMWC-manual-v2.0.pdf>. The University of Kent

has an MS program in this: <https://www.educations.com/study-abroad/university-of-kent/conservation-project-management-msc-1244910> and a number of universities in the UK and US in particular now offer master's degrees in conservation leadership which include project management skill building. Here is a link to the Conservation Project Management Manual of the Conservation Leadership Programme: <https://www.conservationleadershipprogramme.org/media/2014/09/ConservationProjectManual.pdf>

3. Does organizing the Support Trust for protected areas to combine private and government money might have the sense to support the survival of the PAs? Any positive experience?

It sounds like you are asking whether it is feasible and appropriate to combine public and private sources of funding to meet the needs of protected areas. Absolutely! Even protected area systems in relatively wealthy countries also rely heavily on philanthropy. However, mixing the public and private money is often complicated from legal and accounting perspectives. That is why even in many wealthy countries specific NGOs, foundations and trusts are created to assist governments with meeting funding needs for parks and reserves. However, often the private partner will do something like buy land, or vehicles, or pay for a construction project; they then hand over the title, keys or completed project to the government, or buy supplies. In this way they keep a clean paper trail and so does the government without mixing resources from the public and private sector. In fact, most successful protected areas and agencies use a wide range or a "menu" of public and private sources of support and do not depend 100% on any one institution or source for their funding. A good institutional source of information about conservation finance in general is: <https://www.conservationfinancealliance.org/>. Here is a good new guide to conservation finance in general:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e1f17b37c58156a98f1ee4/t/5e8c97ecf33f8960fc2cbda3/1586272239963/Conservation+Finance+Framework.pdf>

Also, here are two good publications on conservation trust funds:

<https://www.conservationfinancealliance.org/practice-standards-for-ctfs> and

<https://www.conservationfinancealliance.org/efk-home> and a general one from WWF on conservation finance:

http://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_guide_to_conservation_finance.pdf

4. How can we improve the financial management skills of protected areas in the daily training of wildlife conservationists? It seems to play a bigger role in management today.

You are correct that protected areas staff, even if they are seasoned professionals, often lack good financial management skills. It is of course important that public agencies and NGOs have, among their staff or permanent consultant specialists with accounting, business and financial management skills. However, aside from them, it is also important that conservationists with other professional backgrounds also build their financial management

skills. There are a good number of good and often free online courses to assist in this. BIOFIN has a self-guided course on biodiversity finance available online at:
<https://www.learningfornature.org/en/courses/biodiversity-finance/>

One useful publication is a guide to project management for conservationists from the Conservation Leadership Program which can be found here:
<https://www.conservationleadershipprogramme.org/media/2014/09/ConservationProjectManual.pdf>

5. It would be interesting to hear your recommendations for existing good practices, methodologies, tools, and guidance for the assessment of ecosystem services.

Response: Evaluation of ecosystem services and developing systems for charging users for services they receive and taking proceeds from those funds to pay for conserving those services is a rapidly evolving field. Here is a bibliography with good information on valuing ecosystem services and turning those services into financial flows to benefit conservation:
<https://www.conservationfinancealliance.org/payment-for-environmental-services> and here is a best practices guidelines document from the UK:
<https://www.cbd.int/financial/pes/unitedkingdom-bestpractice.pdf>.