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A strategy of innovative approaches and recommendations to **maximize capacity development in the next decade**

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A promising future

When Aichi Target 11 is reached, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas of the planet will be under the management of an increasingly diverse family of protected area staff and stewards. In order to meet this huge responsibility and to meet the complex environmental and social challenges facing protected areas in the 21st Century, a whole new approach to capacity development is needed, in terms of quality, focus and accessibility.

Our vision for meeting this vast capacity challenge is *“a world where institutions and individuals apply state of the art knowledge, skills, and best practices to effectively manage and equitably govern all types of protected areas, including territories governed by indigenous peoples and local communities.”* Protected area jobs need to be recognised as distinct and valued professions and occupations, while capacity development approaches and initiatives must encompass and be relevant to the global diversity of protected areas, custodians and systems of governance. The starting point for achieving this vision is to formulate a shared platform of core technical and knowledge capacities and cultural competencies necessary to enable effective protected area management, to bring about a long-term, systematic change in the quality of governance and leadership, to upgrade the status and capacities of managing organisations, and to build the individual sense of connection and ownership that underpins effective PA management. Fulfilling this vision is only possible through making capacity development integral to management of all protected areas and protected areas systems and to national and international funding priorities.

The current situation

All relevant international conventions and agreements (e.g. CBD, UNESCO-WHC, Ramsar, UNESCO-MAB Programme) recognise that capacity development is essential for effective, efficient and equitable management and governance of protected areas, for achievement of their conservation and wider objectives, and for them to act as natural solutions to address challenges such as climate change. Considerable investments in capacity development in the last decade have led to some major steps forward, notably development of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, but overall progress has been very patchy and often not durable; it has been estimated that only around 20% of all protected areas are currently under good management regimes. In terms of capacity, this is due to a number of factors:

- Management and governance of today’s protected areas presents increasingly complex and diverse challenges that demand an ever-widening range of competences and skills from hard-pressed PA directors, technical staff, rangers and community members. Many of these people lack crucial competencies and access to the means to develop those competencies.

- Most protected area management organisations suffer from limited human and financial resources and are often marginalized in policy and decision-making processes. Many also lack the integrated framework of systems, norms and standards to be as effective as they could be. This results in limited organisational capacity to cope and adapt to changing circumstances, while institutional and professional recognition is often not adequate to support development of necessary capacities within organisations and their personnel.
- The diversity of recognised managers and stewards of protected areas has widened to include indigenous peoples, local communities, civil society organisations, private owners and consortia of diverse managers of collaboratively managed areas. The specific capacity needs and contributions of these groups are inadequately considered.
- Capacity development is often equated just with training. In fact, capacity development is far broader than that: *it is about actively and systematically supporting a process of transformational change, thereby strengthening the competences of people, institutions, and society over time to achieve specific objectives.* To be effective, capacity development is a long-term effort, with the goal of enabling individuals, organizations, states and societies to make continued and best possible use of abilities, networks, social relationships, skills, and knowledge, including traditional knowledge and culturally appropriate management practices.¹
- A lot of capacity development activity is donor-driven and donor reliant, leading to needs assessments that are focused on project objectives, and in limited, short-term capacity development activities. Too often this results in rapid decay of the benefits of capacity development initiatives.
- The methods and tools used for individual capacity development have focused primarily on short-term training, neglecting numerous other learning methods that may be more appropriate, affordable and sustainable. These include work place learning, peer to peer learning, mentoring, communities of practice, e-learning, and provision of material to enable self-directed learning. Importantly, many of the methods currently used may not be optimal for the diversity of learners and professionals now engaged in PA management, including indigenous and community managers. More widely, managing entities are often underdeveloped as ‘learning organisations’, committed to building and making best use of the capacity of their staff.
- In many countries, protected area work is not recognised as a distinct profession or vocational occupation requiring specific skills, access to separate qualifications or clear paths for professional development and career advancement. Many dedicated, skilled and experienced staff members are leaving protected area work because of difficult working conditions and lack of opportunities for personal, professional and career development.

Evaluation of capacity development, when undertaken, focuses mainly on inputs and outputs rather than outcomes, impacts or performance. There are no widely used reliable and replicable mechanisms to test what changes are being caused by capacity development.

Recommendations for change

Change is clearly needed at different levels to ensure that capacity development can effectively improve management and governance of protected areas. We need to establish the foundation for long-term protected area capacity development programmes and products that will assist countries to more effectively and equitably manage their systems of protected areas and enhance their ability to meet commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Programme of Work for Protected Areas (POWPA) and the Aichi Targets. The recommendations fall into three major categories: Strategic Planning; Cross-cutting; and Lines of Action.

¹ Capacity development is defined by OECD (2006) as the process by which individuals, groups and organizations, institutions and countries develop, enhance and organize their systems, resources and knowledge; all reflected in their abilities, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives. UNDP (2008) defines capacity development as ‘the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time’.

Strategic planning

Recommendation 1: To advance a Road Map for Capacity Development (RMCD) that will guide the development of capacity at different levels to enable and support the transformational change required to mainstream protected areas into greater society goals, resulting in firmly positioning them as an essential tool for achieving conservation and broader development objectives.

Recommendation 2: Recognize the links between the individual, organizational and societal capacities and the need for strategies and programmes to address all three. Capacity development should be planned, implemented, and evaluated in strategic, aligned and integrated ways to reach these three levels for more effective and sustainable impact.

Recommendation 3: To advance new partnerships and strong commitments that would help with the implementation of the Road Map for Capacity Development in the context of The Promise of Sydney. This will involve: working with the donor community to establish strategies for project design and funding that foster long term, locally owned and sustainable forms of capacity development; reaching out to other sectors to exchange experience and know-how in capacity development; ensuring wide availability of cumulative experience, outputs and outcomes from capacity development activities; and promoting the adoption of minimum standards and innovations across PA entities.

Cross-cutting

Recommendation 4: To initiate programmes that address the intangible aspects of capacity, such as social acceptance of conservation and protected areas, 'political will', institutional cultures, relationship building, and cultural factors that support protection and sustainable management and personal motivation and willingness to support protected areas.

Recommendation 5: To encourage and enable improved local ownership and direction of capacity development, based on comprehensive participatory needs assessments and leading to appropriate, affordable and sustainable national/local strategies and actions.

Recommendation 6: To strengthen capacities of protected area organizations of all types to recruit, engage, develop, and support people in ways that will maintain, improve, and sustain commitment and performance.

Recommendation 7: To promote and support an accessible diversity of suitable learning approaches, techniques, tools materials and support mechanisms (reaching far beyond training) to support long-term capacity development for individuals and organizations across all protected area categories and governance types, including indigenous and community-conserved areas.

Lines of action

Recommendation 8: To promote and support recognition of protected area managers, stewards and custodians from all types of PAs 'professionals' through systems and tools for professionalization that strengthen performance in PA management through competent individuals and effective organizations.

Recommendation 9: To ensure that capacity development initiatives address the needs of the full diverse range of protected area managers, managing entities, categories and governance systems. In particular: to identify and meet specific capacities and capacity development needs of indigenous and local community PA stewards; to address the needs of co-managers of multifunctional protected areas and other partners new to PA management; and to build the capacities of other sectors to integrate protected areas into their plans and activities (in particular spatial planning, forestry, agriculture, water management, law, and disaster management).

Recommendation 10

To develop a standard, globally relevant system for measuring and assessing capacity development in terms of input, reaction, learning, behaviour change and impact. This is essential if we are to produce the evidence needed to make the case for the centrality of CD to enhancing the ability of people, organizations, and enabling environments to support overall protected area goals.

Key partnerships needed

Implementing these recommendations globally will require the active engagement of the following groups:

- IUCN Global Protected Areas Programme
- World Commission on Protected Areas
- Other IUCN Commissions
- IUCN Regional Offices implementing key activities on CD
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre
- International NGOS
- Bilateral and multi-lateral donors who have significant influence on capacity development (e.g. GEF, EU, World Bank, UNDP, UNEP, regional development banks, GIZ etc.).
- Organizations representing indigenous peoples and local communities
- Private sector organizations related to protected areas and natural resources and with experience in institutional strengthening and capacity development
- PA professional organizations such as the International Ranger Federation
- Educational institutions including training centres, vocational education colleges and universities

Ensuring that the recommendations are further developed and promoted should be achieved using the foundation provided by the following partners:

- American Museum of Natural History (USA)
- EC/ACP/IUCN Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme (BIOPAMA)
- Global Parks (International)
- Protected Area Learning Centre, University of Tasmania (Australia)
- Latin American School for Protected Areas of the University for International Cooperation (Costa Rica)
- Capacity Development Programmes of Regional Institutions including South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), Central Africa Protected Areas Network (RAPAC), and Caribbean Environment Programme/Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (CEP/SPAW)
- Coastal Resources Centre, University of Rhode Island (USA)
- Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) (Tanzania)
- Réseau des Educateurs et Professionnels de la Conservation (Madagascar)
- Center for Protected Area Management & Training, Colorado State University (USA)
- Global Partnership for Professionalizing Protected Areas Management