Gathering new ideas

A series of ‘ideas gathering’ workshops between September 2010 and March 2011, has been highly effective in highlighting areas of interest shared by CCI partners, organisations within CCF and research groups in Cambridge University, identifying ‘hot topics’ for discussion and exploring potential opportunities for collaborative work.

More than 80 people came to a series of seven workshops held within each of the CCI partners and the University between August 2010 and March 2011. Additional ideas were also gathered as part of the Cambridge Conservation Forum (CCF) Winter Symposium in January 2011.

The first part of each workshop gave a brief overview of CCI and the current suite of collaborative projects within the Shared Challenges Programme. The second part was a brainstorming session to generate new ideas for future projects in order to help us to predict and explore new issues.

These workshops generated over 340 ideas, ranging from specific projects to broad thematic areas and suggestions of ways to build networks of people with shared interests across Cambridge.

What happened next?

Some of the ideas and the contacts made during the workshops directly led to collaborative projects. For example, collaborative activities centred on climate change impacts on wildlife and IPBES were first suggested at the workshops at BTO and BirdLife. Shared Challenges catalyzed meetings based on these before project champions made successful applications to the CCI Collaborative Fund in May 2011.

Running workshops across all the CCI partners also identified new thematic areas of common interest which later became Shared Challenge projects, such as linking development, poverty and biodiversity which led to a meeting in March 2012. Other ideas related to existing Shared Challenges projects, such as remote sensing, biofuels and REDD+. More general topics highlighted for discussion and debate included the UK government’s ‘Red Tape Challenge’, population growth, food security and ways to most effectively communicate biodiversity conservation.
Catalyzed project

Gathering new ideas for collaboration

### Key activities

The Programme held eight ideas gathering workshops in:

2. British Trust for Ornithology (BTO): 20th September 2010
3. BirdLife International: 23rd September 2010
5. University conservation discussion group: 26th January 2011 in the Geography Department
6. UNEP-WCMC: 31st January 2011
7. IUCN and TRAFFIC: 7th February 2011
8. The RSPB: 8th March 2011

### Highlighting common themes

The individual ideas were each assigned a series of keywords and these were used to produce a word cloud, or ‘Wordle’ highlighting the most common shared themes:

The broader analysis of the common themes formed part of the background material for a meeting of the ‘Conservation Research for Policy and Practice’ Task Force on the 28th November 2011 which started to outline priority areas for collaborative research between the University’s Cambridge Conservation Research Institute and the CCI conservation organisations.

### Conservation impact

These workshops have been invaluable in identifying a number of new shared areas of interest and led to the development of projects related to climate change impacts on wildlife, IPBES and poverty and development. The information gathered is being updated and will form the basis for selecting future areas of collaboration.

Photo credits: John Harding

Figure: The word cloud above was produced using ‘Wordle’ which can be used to look at the frequency of words in any block of text - [www.wordle.com](http://www.wordle.com)