

THE CCI STRATEGY 2012-2020

Executive Summary

The Cambridge Conservation Initiative is a unique collaboration between the University of Cambridge and leading biodiversity conservation organisations in and around Cambridge. CCI seeks to transform the global understanding and conservation of biodiversity and the natural capital it represents and, through this, secure a sustainable future for all life on Earth. The CCI partners together combine and integrate research, education, policy and practice to create innovative solutions for society and to strengthen conservation leadership and capacity across the world. Over the period 2012-2020, CCI will:

- increase the effectiveness of conservation actions by catalysing innovative and interdisciplinary collaborations that deliver sustainable solutions for natural resource management;
 - enhance global conservation leadership and knowledge exchange through capacity building, training and networking;
 - develop new thinking, ideas, tools and techniques to improve and integrate conservation practice, policy and research;
 - create a momentum to draw in others to respond rapidly and effectively to the major biodiversity conservation challenges;
 - establish a distinct internationally renowned centre of excellence for conservation with global convening power and fostering collaboration beyond organisational and disciplinary boundaries
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The Global Challenge

Creating and maintaining the conditions under which people and other life forms can live sustainably is the greatest challenge facing society today. The founders of CCI attach great importance to the intrinsic value of biological diversity – the genes, species and ecosystems that make up life on Earth. Based on a wealth of evidence, CCI also recognises that conserving biodiversity is central to sustainable economic development (especially food and energy production), vital for improving human health, wellbeing and prosperity, and essential for living with increasingly rapid environmental change, especially global warming.

Environmental awareness has never been greater, conservation science is at its most advanced and the policies, practices and organisations created to conserve biodiversity have never been more numerous and effective, yet biodiversity loss is more rapid and more widespread than at any other time in human history. Addressing this unprecedented loss requires innovative approaches to biodiversity conservation which, together with existing conservation efforts, must transform how the world manages and sustains the natural resources upon which humanity depends. In recognition of the global importance of biodiversity, the world's nations have come together under the Convention on Biological Diversity to implement a strategic plan aiming to "take effective and urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity in order to ensure that by 2020 ecosystems are resilient and continue to provide essential services, thereby securing the planet's variety of life, and contributing to human well-being, and poverty eradication". To deliver this strategy, parties to the Convention have agreed a set of goals with targets (the so called Aichi Targets) to be met by 2020. Delivering these targets will require concerted efforts across all sectors of society and CCI intends to make a significant contribution to achieving the Aichi Targets.

The Opportunity for CCI

Cambridge is home to a rich diversity of conservation organisations and networks, spanning the public, private and voluntary sectors. The University of Cambridge has more than 20 research groups working in conservation-related research and provides a wide range of education opportunities in conservation from undergraduate teaching, through graduate training to executive education. Six University departments (Zoology, Plant Sciences, Geography, Land Economy, Judge Business School and the Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership) are founder members of CCI.

Also based in or around Cambridge are nine independent conservation organisations and networks:

- Cambridge Conservation Forum – a broad network of conservation researchers and practitioners;
- BirdLife International – a global partnership of national NGOs;
- the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre – an arm of the United Nations;
- the British Trust for Ornithology – a scientific research organisation;
- the Tropical Biology Association – an NGO dedicated to building conservation capacity in the tropics;
- Fauna and Flora International – the world's first international conservation organisation;
- TRAFFIC – the global wildlife trade monitoring network;

- IUCN, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature – the world’s oldest and largest global environmental network;
- RSPB – the largest wildlife conservation organisation in Europe.

This strength in depth in conservation enables CCI to come together as a unique collaboration of expertise and experience. From within this broad Cambridge conservation community, the six University departments and nine conservation organisations have created CCI as a way of achieving more effective interdisciplinary, collaborative approaches to the study and conservation of biodiversity. These nine are founder members of CCI and further information on each is given in Annex A.

CCI’s distinctive contribution

CCI’s distinctive contribution to conservation derives from the unique combination of a world class university that is active in conservation research and teaching, with the world’s largest cluster of conservation organisations that focus on biodiversity research, policy and practice. Building on each partner’s existing programme of conservation work, CCI joins these organisations together to tackle complex and challenging issues with innovative approaches, using a multi-disciplinary approach that cannot be achieved by any one organisation alone.

CCI is uniquely placed to feed new thinking and training into worldwide conservation practice and policy through the partner conservation organisations and their networks. Similarly the experience, knowledge and information from on-the-ground implementation of policy and practice is fed into CCI’s research and teaching.

Based on this, CCI adds value to biodiversity conservation impacts by:

1. capitalising on the critical mass of skills and expertise that exists amongst the world-leading organisations in Cambridge working on conservation issues
2. working beyond organisational boundaries through co-location and closer collaboration and convening
3. integrating research, policy development, capacity building to transform biodiversity conservation practice through authoritative insights and influence
4. creating a momentum to draw in others to respond rapidly to the big biodiversity conservation challenges.

Vision

Our vision is to secure a sustainable future for biodiversity and society through an effective partnership of leaders in research, education, policy and practice.

Mission

Our mission is to deliver transformational approaches to understanding and conserving biodiversity and the wealth of natural capital it represents.

Strategic Objectives

- To increase the effectiveness of conservation actions by catalysing innovative and collaborative interdisciplinary work that delivers sustainable solutions for natural resource management.
- To enhance global leadership and knowledge exchange through capacity building, training and networking.
- To foster and champion a comprehensive understanding of the values of biological diversity in order to address the urgent need for sustainable biodiversity conservation.
- To engage with and provide analysis to inform decision-making by government, industry and civil society in local, national and international contexts.
- To find new ways of working beyond organisational boundaries through co-location and closer collaboration and convening.

How CCI works with others

As a collaboration CCI, partners together are committed to helping others in:

- Achieving greater impact on biodiversity conservation
- Aiming to evaluate these impacts in a measurable way
- Operating with integrity and independence
- Delivering authoritative support using on our evidence base, scientific rigour, collective insight and innovative approaches
- Sharing a high level strategic understanding drawn from a wide set of perspectives
- Linking policy and research to provide options and recommendations on delivering outcomes, blending academic and practical approaches
- Using a strong convening power to access a large pool of expertise with experience at local and global scales
- Offering integrated and bespoke support based on your needs
- Building their own capacity around biodiversity conservation

Values and Principles

CCI has been created by the partners to complement existing conservation efforts. It aims to do so by the partners collaborating together, and with others. In doing so CCI partners commit to:

- Achieving greater impact on biodiversity conservation through working together
- Operating with integrity and transparency
- Strengthening each CCI partner so that it can deliver its own priorities better
- Enabling each CCI partner to address new priorities that they cannot do alone by collective working and co-location
- Creating a critical mass of knowledge, skills, ideas and capacity as a global resource
- Taking a rational, evidenced-based approach

- Collaborating when necessary, efficient and mutually beneficial to do so
- Ensuring that what we do together is greater than the sum of the parts
- Managing resources cost-effectively, attract new and additional resources for the conservation of biodiversity and distribute costs and benefits openly and fairly among collaborators
- Anticipating and mitigating reputational risks and internal conflicts.

Structure and Governance

CCI is a strategic collaboration between independent organisations, each with its own identity, constitution and governance. CCI partners have agreed to work closely together under a shared strategy and set of operational procedures. In joining CCI, each organisation subscribes to a set of shared principles and signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the other CCI partners.

CCI has no separate legal identity but its overall direction and collaborative programmes are overseen by the CCI Steering Committee comprised of representatives of each CCI partner. The guidance of CCI activities is carried out by a series of Committees and Advisory Groups which may be reviewed and changed by the partners, through the Steering Committee, from time to time. CCI staff are employed by individual CCI partners as agreed by the CCI Steering Committee..

CCI Programme Activities

CCI has two broad areas of programme activities:

1. Research/policy/practice interface

Under this area CCI partners draw together a wide range of practitioners, policy experts, researchers and other stakeholders to address major conservation issues, creating conservation solutions, highlighting new challenges and opportunities, and delivering new ways of integrating conservation research, policy and practical action for the benefit of biodiversity. Through the CCI Collaborative Fund for Conservation, resources are available to CCI partners and their collaborators to facilitate such activities along with a growing body of CCI tools and models for collaborative working. Over the period of this Strategy, CCI partners are committed to developing and implementing a small number of major CCI collaborations at this interface in addition to facilitating and catalysing a wide range of smaller projects.

2. Capacity building and leadership

CCI is committed to providing world-class learning and leadership opportunities for those who want to understand biodiversity and ecosystems and the central role they play in the planet's life support systems. As a key CCI collaboration, a Masters degree in Conservation Leadership has been established to train future conservation professionals and draws on the rich and diverse skills, knowledge and expertise available across CCI partners. CCI supports the growing network of Student Conferences in Conservation Science, originating in Cambridge, and is building a range of capacity building activities to encompass leadership development, research training, and business and policy forums, for a wide variety of audiences.

CCI Conservation Campus

CCI is creating a unique global centre to further conservation understanding, knowledge and expertise. The campus will house a University of Cambridge Conservation Research Institute along with a diversity of conservation organisations and will offer a wide range of opportunities for others to participate in shared programmes, activities and events. It will provide an intellectually stimulating environment that drives debate and knowledge exchange; exceptional support and facilities; access to a large pool of expertise in the environmental and social science and practice; and excellent linkages to a wide array of institutions, organisations and networks worldwide.

Themes and Scope

The interdisciplinary approach and scope of CCI is focussed around five fundamental themes:

A. The values of nature

- Reconnecting people and nature.
- Quantifying, monitoring and promoting the intrinsic, economic, social, political and biological values of biodiversity and ecosystems.
- Assessing the costs and benefits of conservation.
- Changing policy frameworks to ensure that environment and biodiversity have appropriate weighting alongside other indicators.

B. Biodiversity conservation and human needs

- Promoting strategies that address biodiversity conservation and alleviate poverty. .
- Improving institutional, political and legal frameworks of conservation policy.
- Understanding the significance of the public's changing ideas about nature so as to improve conservation strategies.
- Analysing and strengthening mechanisms that underpin the reciprocal links between ecological and social change.

C. Drivers and processes of biodiversity loss

- Identifying, measuring and combating the drivers of ecosystem change and biodiversity loss.
- Understanding and addressing the impacts on nature of changes in water and land use, in food supply and demand, in energy resources and in patterns of energy use.
- Evaluating the trade-offs between biodiversity, poverty and development, and the mechanisms that drive these at local and international levels.
- Analysing public and private sector responses to biodiversity conservation challenges and the forces driving change.
- Evaluating and supporting the most effective means of reversing the decline in biodiversity.

D. Climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem services

- Assessing and reducing the current and future impacts of climate change and other rapid environmental change on biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Predicting the impact on biodiversity of technological responses to global warming.
- Assessing the implications of a low-carbon global economy for the way conservation is practiced.

- Proposing and promoting sustainable solutions to future environmental changes.

E. Indicators of biodiversity, environmental change and sustainability

- Integrating diverse expertise to create effective and widely endorsed indicators to measure biodiversity, environmental change and sustainability.
- Building up and maintaining a reliable body of knowledge on biodiversity conservation and issues affecting it, and sharing that with conservation agencies, governments and businesses.
- Drawing together, adding value to and promoting the best use of environmental data sets for conservation.

Delivering the Strategy

This strategy sets out an ambitious vision to tackle a major global challenge – the totally unsustainable depletion of the world’s biological diversity. Delivering the strategy requires institutions, and the people who work in them, to cross traditional boundaries between research, policy and practice, between disciplines and between cultures. It involves taking risks, exploring new ways of working and embracing new ideas. In adopting this strategy, all CCI partners are committing to work more closely together in the belief that this will make a significant difference to biodiversity conservation. To measure the impact of the CCI collaboration they develop and implement a five year plan of activities, targets and high level performance indicators.

“The Cambridge Conservation Initiative is an extraordinary marriage between outstanding practical conservationists and inspiring intellectual thinkers which will shape the future of life on Earth. There is nothing more important in the world today than what you are doing here.” Sir David Attenborough at the launch of CCI.

“CCI is a powerful catalyst. Embracing students as well as established practitioners and academics, the genius of CCI is its innovative way of integrating research, policy, and action in one of the world’s greatest, ideas-rich environments.” Professor Dame Alison Richard, Vice-Chancellor Emerita, University of Cambridge.

„I support the Cambridge Conservation Initiative because it aims to enable the emergence of innovative and potentially game-changing tools and approaches to tackle global conservation challenges by bringing together multidisciplinary teams of dedicated and international conservation leaders and their networks” André Hoffmann, Chair of the MAVA Foundation, on his decision to support CCI.

ANNEX A – CCI Founder Organisations

Departments of the University of Cambridge

The University of Cambridge is ranked amongst the world's top five universities and undertakes a broad range of research and teaching in conservation.

Zoology – Wide-ranging work in ecology and conservation includes conservation science, aquatic ecology, pathogen evolution and evolutionary ecology. Research focuses particularly on applied questions in conservation, epidemiology and resource management. The department leads undergraduate teaching in conservation. (www.zoo.cam.ac.uk)

Plant Sciences – Research spans plant and microbial sciences. Conservation-related work includes forest ecology and conservation, tropical ecology, mathematical modelling of plant-pathogen interactions, taxonomic studies, and photosynthesis and metabolism. The department houses major international collections of plant diversity. (www.plantsci.cam.ac.uk)

Geography – Research clusters focus on society and environment, development and political ecology, culture and demography, environmental processes, landscape modelling and climate change. The department provides Masters courses in conservation. The department also hosts the Scott Polar Research Institute. (www.geog.cam.ac.uk)

Land Economy – Core research in economics, law and planning focuses on policies and regulations for the management of land and natural resources. There is particular expertise in the areas of biodiversity and land policy in less developed countries, rural and land management policy in developed countries, and climate change mitigation. (www.landecon.cam.ac.uk)

Judge Business School – JBS provides innovative business management and entrepreneurial learning across a portfolio of undergraduate, graduate and executive programmes. Research encompasses organisational analysis and governance, information systems, finance and accounting, management science and economics, international business, and energy and environment. (www.jbs.cam.ac.uk)

Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership – CPSL works with business, government and civil society to build the capacity of leaders to address global sustainability challenges. Seminars, leadership groups and partnerships aim to transform public and private sector policies and practices and build greater understanding of our interdependence with the natural world. (www.cpsl.cam.ac.uk)

Conservation Organisations

The Cambridge area has the largest geographical concentration of conservation organisations on earth, including government bodies, intergovernmental agencies, non-governmental organisations (both local and international), and others. This rich density and diversity of policy advisers, practitioners and researchers offers a unique and powerful mix of knowledge, experience and information, as well as a local, national and global outreach through their extensive networks. Nine of these conservation organisations and networks are CCI's founder partners:

BirdLife International is a strategic global partnership of conservation organisations in over 100 countries, working to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, and to promote sustainability in the use of natural resources (www.birdlife.org).

British Trust for Ornithology is an independent scientific research trust specialising in impartial evidence-based knowledge and advice about populations, movements and ecology of birds and other wildlife (www.bto.org).

Cambridge Conservation Forum is a network that links the diverse Cambridge-based community of conservation practitioners and researchers working at local, national and international levels (www.cambridgeconservationforum.org).

Fauna & Flora International acts to conserve threatened species and ecosystems worldwide, delivering global and regional programmes of conservation and community projects (www.fauna-flora.org).

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network. It helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects; and bringing together governments, NGOs the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice (www.iucn.org).

RSPB speaks out for birds and wildlife, tackling the problems that threaten our environment. It is the largest wildlife conservation organisation in Europe, with over a million members. It works to secure the conservation of wildlife through research, education, habitat management and advocacy. RSPB is the BirdLife International partner in the UK (www.rspb.org.uk).

TRAFFIC is a global wildlife trade monitoring network that works to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature (www.traffic.org).

Tropical Biology Association is dedicated to building the capacity and expertise of people and institutions to conserve and manage biodiversity in tropical regions (www.tropical-biology.org).

United Nations Environment - World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is the specialist biodiversity assessment arm of the United Nations Environment Programme, the world's most foremost intergovernmental environmental organisation. The Centre delivers scientific analysis to the UN, multi-lateral environmental agreements, national governments, organisations and companies to use in the development and implementation of their policies and decisions (www.unep-wcmc.org).