

From assessment to action

How SAGE enables local
solutions for equitable
governance in conservation

Charlotte Legh-Smith, Jérémy Davis,
Phil Franks and Naira Dehmel

Working Paper

April 2026

Biodiversity; Governance

Keywords:

Participatory action research,
biodiversity and conservation, equity,
community rights

About the authors

Charlotte Legh-Smith, research consultant, IIED.

Jérémy Davis, senior communications officer, IIED.

Phil Franks, principal researcher, IIED.

Naira Dehmel, researcher, IIED.

Corresponding authors: Phil Franks, phil.franks@iied.org; and Charlotte Legh-Smith, charlotte.leghsmith@iied.org

Acknowledgements

This publication builds on data from 49 Site-level Assessments of Governance and Equity (SAGE) of protected and conserved areas (PCAs) across 19 countries. We thank all the organisations, facilitators and participants who made their assessment data available for this review. The assessments were all supported by varying funding sources. We explicitly acknowledge the contributions of the six organisations co-leading the Scaling up Equitable Governance in Area-based Conservation (SEGA) initiative, funded by the UK government through Darwin Initiative, who conducted a majority of included SAGE assessments: Conservación Amazónica, Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association, Madagascar National Parks, Madagasikara Voakajy, Regional Community Forestry Training Centre (RECOFTC) and Honeyguide. This publication has been funded by UK International Development from the UK government. However, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.

Published by IIED, April 2026


Charlotte Legh-Smith, C, Davis, J, Franks, P and Dehmel, N (2026)
From assessment to action: how SAGE enables local solutions for equitable governance in conservation. IIED, London.

iied.org/22710iied

ISBN: 978-1-83759-197-8

International Institute for Environment and Development
44 Southampton Buildings, London WC2A 1AP, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399
www.iied.org

 www.linkedin.com/company/iied

 www.facebook.com/theIIED

Download more publications at iied.org/publications



IIED publications may be shared and republished in accordance with the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International Public License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

Under the terms of this licence, anyone can copy, distribute and display the material, providing that they credit the original source and don't use it for commercial purposes or make derivatives. Different licences may apply to some illustrative elements, in which instance the licence will be displayed alongside. IIED is happy to discuss any aspect of further usage. Get more information via www.iied.org/about-publications

IIED is a charity registered in England, Charity No.800066 and in Scotland, OSCR Reg No.SC039864 and a company limited by guarantee registered in England No.2188452.

What kind of actions do local actors suggest to improve social equity and governance at their conservation sites? This research presents a thematic analysis of 2,252 actions proposed through 49 Site-level Assessments of Governance and Equity (SAGE) of protected and conserved areas across 19 countries. These actions were suggested by Indigenous Peoples, local communities, protected area managers, government authorities and nongovernmental organisations as practical strategies to address identified governance challenges through SAGE's participatory, actor-led methodology. Spanning 20 categories, the actions range from fundamental actions to transformational.

Contents

Abbreviations	4	4 Discussion: implications for advancing equitable governance in protected and conserved areas	28
Summary	5	4.1 From principles to practice	28
1 Introduction: SAGE as a tool for building collective action	8	4.2 Common actions for specific contexts	29
1.1 Overview of SAGE	9	4.3 Actions for diversity	30
1.2 SAGE's theory of change	10	4.4 Shared learning across sites	30
1.3 Three phases of SAGE	10	4.5 Tackling equity at its roots	30
2 Methodology: from site-level actions to thematic analysis	12	5 Conclusion: building equity through action and learning	32
2.1 Dataset	12	Related reading	34
2.2 Development of thematic categories	13	References	35
2.3 Analysis across equity principles, regions and countries, and actor groups	14		
3 Results: common actions to address site-specific challenges	15		
3.1 The 20 action categories	15		
3.2 Fundamental action categories	20		
3.3 Principle-level patterns	20		
3.4 Regional and country-level patterns	23		
3.5 Actor group-level patterns	25		

Abbreviations

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
IP	Indigenous Peoples
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LC	Local communities
NGO	Nongovernmental organisation
PA	Protected area
PCA	Protected and conserved area
SAGE	Site-level Assessments of Governance and Equity
SEGA	Scaling up Equitable Governance in Area-based Conservation

Summary

Equitable governance has become a central objective of global conservation policy, with frameworks such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Global Biodiversity Framework requiring that all protected and conserved areas (PCAs) be 'equitably governed' by 2030. Yet a persistent gap remains between these high-level commitments and what is happening on the ground. How equity is understood, and the kinds of practical solutions that actors see as feasible, often vary widely across local contexts.

This working paper addresses that gap by presenting a comparative analysis of more than 2,250 actions proposed through almost 50 Site-level Assessments of Governance and Equity (SAGE) of PCAs across 19 countries. These actions were suggested by Indigenous Peoples, local communities, protected area managers, government authorities and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) as practical strategies to address identified governance challenges through SAGE's participatory, actor-led methodology.

To make sense of these actions, they were grouped into 20 thematic categories and analysed across three dimensions:

- Ten SAGE equity and governance principles
- Variation across regions and countries, and
- Variations across different actor groups.

Grouping the analysed actions into 20 thematic categories offers practical entry points and strategies to advance equitable governance in PCAs, as well as lessons and insights.

This paper is designed for conservation practitioners and policymakers interested in advancing equity in PCAs, as well as facilitators and organisations using or considering SAGE. For practitioners, it offers a synthesis of locally generated ideas that may inspire action in their own contexts. For policymakers and funders, it highlights the types of support that site-level actors are asking for, pointing to areas where investment can make a difference. And, for current and future SAGE users, it demonstrates how site-level results can be compared across contexts to inform learning and improve practice.

Key findings

Fundamental action categories

Across all ten SAGE equity and governance principles, three categories were the most frequently proposed: **awareness, capacity building and information sharing**. Their widespread presence suggests that many sites may view them as fundamental entry points for strengthening governance. They focus on building a shared understanding of rights and responsibilities, developing the skills and confidence needed for effective participation, and promoting transparency in decision making. Figure 1 (page 6) shows the 20 action categories to improve governance and equity proposed by the site-level actors of the 49 PCAs that conducted the SAGE assessments.

The frequency of these fundamental categories could indicate that they are perceived as important foundations for advancing equity. But it is also likely that actors more easily thought of such actions, as they are comparable with other conservation practices of environmental sensitisation with which actors are already familiar.

In contrast, categories that might be considered more transformative — such as **leadership strengthening, integration of Indigenous knowledge, values and institutions and political support and respect** — appeared far less often. Their limited presence could reflect challenges of feasibility, the sensitivity of addressing power dynamics, or simply the difficulty of proposing such changes within a participatory assessment process. While less common, their appearance across multiple sites points to deeper governance aspirations, even if these are not prioritised as immediate actions.

Figure 1. The 20 action categories to improve governance and equity proposed by actors from the 49 SAGE sites



Principle-level patterns

Mapping actions against the ten SAGE governance principles shows how site-level actors interpret and respond to equity challenges in practice. The three fundamental categories — awareness, capacity building and information sharing — dominate across all principles, especially respect for rights, participation in decision making, and transparency and accountability. Their prevalence indicates that actors view them as important groundwork that helps to build understanding of rights, develop the skills needed for meaningful participation, and improve transparency and trust. While not always stated explicitly, the way these actions are framed implies that they are seen as conditions that make further governance improvements possible.

Other principles show more tailored emphases. Under the dispute resolution principle, actions are clustered around conflict management. Under mitigation of negative impacts and equitable sharing of benefits, actions more often focused on livelihoods, resource management and compensation, pointing towards concerns with distributional equity. Meanwhile, the coordination and collaboration principle was strongly associated with partnerships and institutional

strengthening-type actions, hinting at the importance of more coherent and inclusive governance structures.

Regional and country-level patterns

The fundamental categories of awareness, capacity building and information sharing also appear consistently across regions. At the same time, distinct patterns highlight how local governance histories, policy environments and socioeconomic realities shape what actors emphasise.

- In the Eastern African sites (Kenya, Madagascar, Seychelles, Tanzania, Uganda), there was a broad spread of categories, with strong emphasis on the fundamental categories, alongside procedural concerns such as rule of law and accountability.
- In Southern Africa (Lesotho, Zambia, Zimbabwe), stakeholders placed a similar emphasis on fundamental categories, complemented by higher attention to resource management and livelihoods, linking procedural and distributional equity.
- In Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Vietnam), the distribution was more even across categories, with communication emerging

strongly alongside awareness and capacity building, reflecting emphasis on dialogue and interaction.

- In South American sites (Bolivia, Colombia), a strong presence of awareness and capacity building, paired with leadership and institutional strengthening, pointed to a focus on building governance capacities and representation.
- In Europe (Greece, United Kingdom), the action profiles were more limited, with Greece emphasising awareness and inclusive decision making, and the UK focusing on stakeholder engagement and communication.

These patterns confirm that while certain action categories form a common foundation across contexts, others are highly context specific. Such contrasts highlight the value of cross-site comparison, while also underscoring that equitable governance cannot be pursued through a one-size-fits-all model, but must be shaped by the specific institutional, political and socioeconomic conditions of each site.

Actor group-level patterns

In line with the overall trend, all actor groups most frequently proposed actions under the fundamental action categories. In parallel, some differences appear to reflect the distinct positions and experiences of different groups.

- Women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples more often suggested actions linked to participation, leadership and recognition. This may indicate a particular concern with being more heard and gaining influence in governance processes.
- Institutional actors such as NGOs and government agencies more frequently put forward actions linked to communication, partnerships and coordination, which could relate to their existing roles in facilitation and outreach.
- Youth groups placed additional emphasis on land-use planning.
- Indigenous groups highlighted actions connected to the integration of traditional knowledge.

While there are broad areas of convergence, different groups brought forward actions that resonated with their specific experiences and governance roles. In particular, actions suggested by typically more marginalised groups were mentioned less often across all groups. This emphasises the need to include their voices in assessments and planning processes.

Looking ahead: towards more equitable governance

The findings highlight that there is no single formula to achieving equity in conservation governance, but that approaches need to be adapted to local realities. While more practical and feasible fundamental actions may serve to enable further, more transformative actions, the analysis also confirms that addressing social equity implies much more than purposefully allocating conservation benefits and mitigating costs.

Tools such as SAGE contribute by turning broad equity principles into concrete ideas for action, generating insights that can inform both site-level practice and national and international support. Further analysis is needed to better understand the enabling conditions and barriers for the successful implementation and transformative potential of such practical actions to achieve lasting change. Opportunities for peer-to-peer exchange, particularly among underrepresented actors, may be valuable for sharing strategies and addressing common challenges.

1

Introduction: SAGE as a tool for building collective action

Equitable governance is increasingly recognised as essential to the success of protected and conserved areas (PCAs). Global targets such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Target 3 now require conservation areas to be ‘equitably governed’ (CBD, 2022a). Yet putting this into practice remains difficult. Complex social and political contexts mean that ideas of equity, rights and participation vary widely.

The Site-level Assessments of Governance and Equity (SAGE) was developed to help address this challenge. SAGE enables Indigenous Peoples, local communities, protected area managers, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and government authorities to jointly assess governance and equity at the site level, and to identify challenges and develop practical actions to address them. Its value has been recognised in global policy: the CBD monitoring framework now includes the “number of protected areas that have completed a site-level assessment of governance and equity (SAGE)” as an indicator (CBD, 2022b). Importantly, SAGE is not only an assessment tool: it also creates space for dialogue and joint problem-solving, grounded in the perspectives of local actors.

This working paper presents a thematic analysis of 2,252 actions proposed through 49 SAGE assessments across 19 countries, including 16 under the Scaling up Equitable Governance in Area-based Conservation

(SEGA) initiative.¹ Rather than fully developed or implemented strategies, they are ideas for action that appear from collective discussion during participatory workshops and build the basis for further action planning. Together, they provide insights into how different actors suggest how to approach equity in practice, the kinds of actions they consider feasible, and the themes that recur across sites.

Our analysis is guided by four objectives:

- Identifying trends in proposed governance actions across sites
- Exploring how actions align with SAGE’s equity and governance principles
- Examining how local contexts and actor perspectives are reflected in the kinds of actions proposed, and
- Supporting peer learning through cross-site synthesis.

¹ See www.iied.org/scaling-equitable-governance-area-based-conservation-sega

This paper is designed for conservation practitioners and policymakers interested in advancing equity in PCAs, as well as facilitators and organisations using or considering SAGE. For practitioners, it offers a synthesis of locally generated ideas that may inspire action in their own contexts. For policymakers and funders, it highlights the types of support that site-level actors are asking for, pointing to areas where investment can make a difference. And for current and future SAGE users, it demonstrates how site-level results can be compared across contexts to inform learning and improve practice.

1.1 Overview of SAGE

SAGE is a participatory methodology developed by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and partners to assess and support improvements in governance and equity within PCAs. SAGE recognises that perceptions of governance quality and fairness can vary widely among and within PCA actors (Martin et al., 2014) and is therefore designed for a multi-actor-led deliberative assessment process that reflects diverse perspectives, encouraging joint reflection and collaboration.

SAGE uses a tailorable multiple-choice questionnaire to guide participatory self-assessment. The process is actor led, meaning that it is completed directly by PCA actors rather than external evaluators. This approach promotes ownership of the process and allows for meaningful deliberation between groups, building shared understanding and fostering commitment to collective governance improvement.

The assessment is guided by a framework of ten principles for effective and equitable governance (see Table 1). These principles are informed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) global framework on protected area governance, as well as academic literature on good governance and social equity in conservation (Franks and Booker, 2018; Schreckenberg et al., 2016; Zafra-Calvo et al., 2017). Each principle is assessed using five diagnostic questions, with four descriptive response options representing ascending levels of governance quality. Lower scores signal weaker perceived governance performance.

Crucially, the SAGE framework is designed to be flexible and adaptive to the local context. Sites may choose to remove certain principles due to time or relevance and the questions and response options can be modified to reflect local priorities and language. This ensures that the process remains grounded in the lived experiences and realities of those managing and affected by the PCA.

SAGE is more than a tool for assessment: it is a platform for action-orientated dialogue, grounded in the

belief that equitable governance is an evolving practice that requires inclusive participation, transparency and willingness to adapt. As such, it also underpins a broader theory of change in which strengthened governance leads to more legitimate, just and effective conservation outcomes.

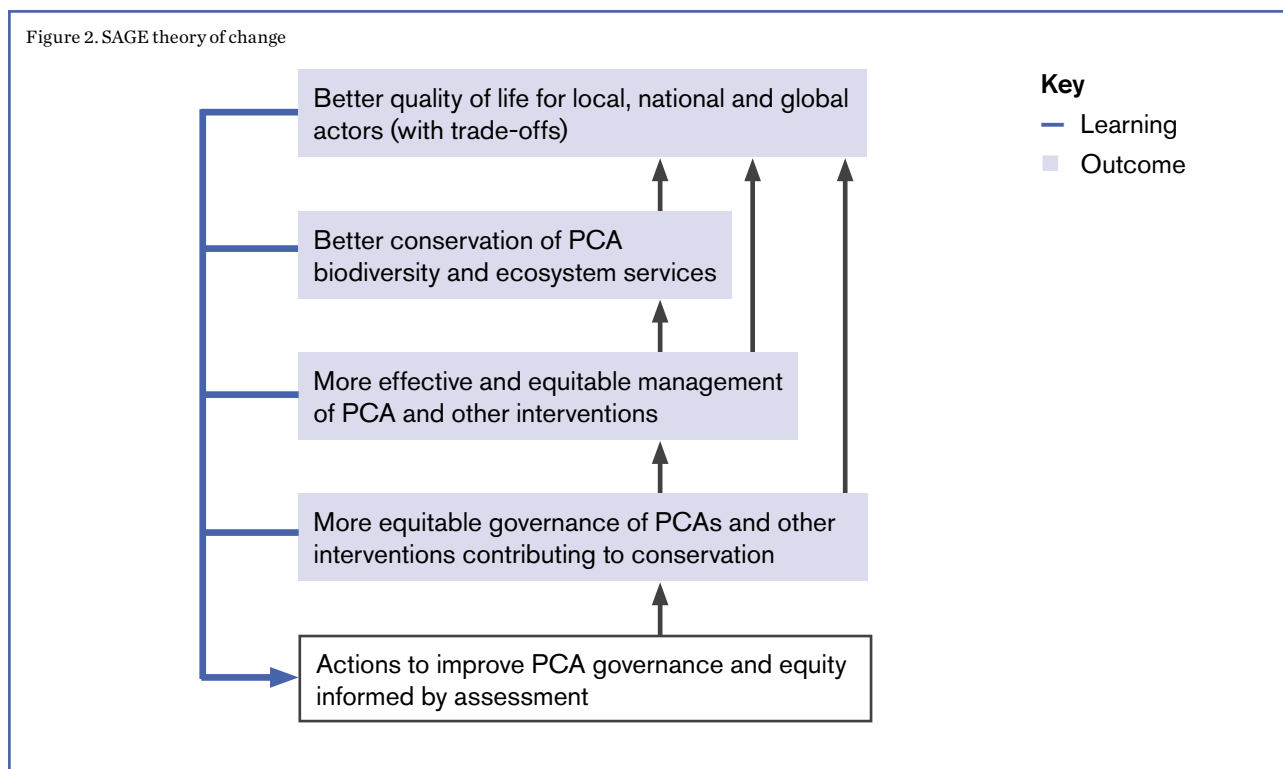
SAGE is designed with two complementary objectives. First, it aims to support site-level actors in identifying and implementing concrete measures to strengthen governance and equity within their PCAs. This is based on the understanding that more equitable governance not only enhances fairness and legitimacy but also contributes to improved conservation and social outcomes over time. Second, SAGE generates robust, context-grounded data that can inform oversight and planning at higher governance levels. This includes enabling authorities to monitor and improve governance across PCA systems, to inform the development and application of social safeguards and quality standards (such as the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas)² and to support national and international reporting. Notably, SAGE is recognised within the CBD's monitoring framework as an indicator of progress toward Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework that emphasises that protected areas must be "equitably governed" (CBD, 2022a; 2022b).

Table 1. The ten SAGE principles of effective and equitable governance

Equity: recognition	1. Recognition and respect for the rights of community members
	2. Recognition and respect for all relevant actors and their knowledge
Equity: procedure	3. Full and effective participation of all relevant actors in decision making
	4. Transparency, information sharing and accountability for actions and inactions
	5. Access to justice including effective dispute-resolution processes
	6. Fair and effective law enforcement
Equity: distribution	7. Effective mitigation of negative impacts on community members
	8. Benefits equitably shared among relevant actors
Other governance	9. Achievement of conservation and other objectives
	10. Effective coordination and collaboration between actors, sectors and levels

² See <https://iucngreenlist.org>

Figure 2. SAGE theory of change



1.2 SAGE’s theory of change

The theory of change underpinning SAGE suggests that implementing targeted actions to improve governance will lead to more equitable governance outcomes. In turn, this is expected to enhance the effectiveness and fairness of PCA management, thereby contributing to improved biodiversity conservation, strengthened ecosystem services and ultimately, a better quality of life for local, national and global actors (see Figure 2).

This theory rests on four key assumptions:

- 1. Conservation outcomes contribute to human wellbeing.** Following the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) conceptual framework (Díaz et al., 2015), it is assumed that enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem services improve quality of life and wellbeing.
- 2. Better governance leads to better conservation.** Improvements in governance effectiveness and equity are expected to result in more successful biodiversity outcomes (Hockings et al., 2006).
- 3. Equity supports effectiveness.** Academic studies have shown that more equitable governance is linked to stronger conservation and management outcomes (see for example Ostrom, 1990; Clarke and Jupiter, 2010; Gaymer et al., 2014; Dawson et al., 2021).
- 4. SAGE enables governance improvements.** By identifying governance challenges and facilitating the design and implementation of solutions, SAGE is

assumed to actively drive improvements in governance and equity. This final assumption is the primary focus of the analysis presented in this report.

1.3 Three phases of SAGE

SAGE is structured into three phases: preparation, assessment and taking action (see Figure 3, page 11). The methodology and accompanying guidance for each phase have been refined through iterative feedback from facilitators and actors involved in implementing SAGE assessments.

1.3.1 Preparation

The process begins with an orientation session for potential convenors and key actors, introducing them to the SAGE methodology and its objectives. A feasibility check ensures that all relevant actor groups are willing to engage fully and that the assessment will not exacerbate existing tensions.

Following feasibility confirmation, the lead facilitator, supported by the convenor and a range of local actor representatives, conducts an actor analysis to identify all relevant groups to involve. A site profile is then developed collaboratively, and the SAGE questionnaire is adapted to reflect local contexts and cultural realities.

1.3.2 Assessment

This phase begins with training on group facilitation and the SAGE methodology for between two and five assistant facilitators. Actor groups identified during

Figure 3. SAGE phases: preparation, assessment and taking action



preparation as sharing similar interests and perspectives in relation to the PCA (for example, community women, community men, local government representatives, NGO staff, PCA managers) meet separately to complete the adapted SAGE questionnaire. Group discussions provide supporting evidence and suggest ideas for action to address identified issues.

The following day, a synthesis workshop is held. Here, the facilitator shares an initial analysis of results, allowing all actor groups to understand each other's perceptions. Where there are divergences, the actor groups explain to each other the reasons behind their responses. Rather than convincing each other to change their opinions, focus lies on creating dialogue and mutual understanding and to propose further actions that could help reduce misunderstanding between the actors in future. From this, a detailed SAGE report summarising findings and proposed actions is then produced and shared with all participants and relevant actors.

1.3.3 Taking action

The final phase focuses on moving from assessment to implementation. Building on the results of the assessment and synthesis workshop, this phase involves four broad steps:

- **Communicating results** — ensuring that findings and proposed actions are shared back with all participating actor groups and relevant actors.
- **Action planning** — refining and developing action ideas into more concrete proposals through collaborative planning.
- **Action support** — identifying the resources, partnerships and facilitation needed to take actions forward.
- **Monitoring** — tracking progress and reflecting on lessons learnt to inform future governance improvements.

This phase is designed to ensure that SAGE does not stop at evaluation, but contributes to practical, locally grounded governance change. Its iterative, actor-led nature, combined with structured follow-up steps, positions SAGE as both a diagnostic and catalytic tool for strengthening equitable governance in PCAs.

2

Methodology: from site-level actions to thematic analysis

This paper presents a comparative thematic analysis of 2,252 ideas for action proposed through 49 SAGE assessments conducted across 19 countries. These actions emerged from the discussions of SAGE participants as they responded to the SAGE questionnaire. Whenever a governance or equity challenge was identified by the assessment in separate groups, as well as during the synthesis workshop, actors were asked what could be done to improve the situation.

To make the large number of suggested actions digestible and comparable across sites, all actions were coded into 20 thematic categories according to their intent, topic and method (see Figure 1). This categorisation makes it possible to identify both commonly suggested governance strategies (for example, awareness, capacity building, information sharing) and less frequent proposals that point to deeper reforms (for example, leadership strengthening, political support, integration of Indigenous knowledge).

Patterns were then examined across SAGE's ten equity principles, as well as the variation between actor groups and across different regions and countries. This approach provides a structured overview of how equity is being approached in practice, while allowing comparison across diverse contexts.

2.1 Dataset

The dataset comprises actions from 49 sites across 19 countries, covering eight global regions (see Table 2 and Figure 4, page 13). During each assessment, participants used the SAGE framework to assess governance strengths and weaknesses against ten equity principles. Group discussions then generated suggested actions to address gaps.

The breadth of this dataset demonstrates SAGE's adaptability across regions and governance contexts. It provides a unique comparative perspective on how different actors articulate priorities for more equitable governance and offers an empirical foundation for identifying both shared concerns and context-specific strategies.

Table 2. Summary: regional and national distribution of sites and actions from 49 SAGE sites, alphabetical by country name

COUNTRY	REGION	NO. SITES	NO. ACTIONS
Bolivia	South America	5	110
Cambodia	Southeast Asia	2	56
Cameroon	Central Africa	2	36
Colombia	South America	2	40
Greece	Southern Europe	1	6
Indonesia	Southeast Asia	1	47
Kenya	East Africa	8	406
Lesotho	Southern Africa	2	53
Madagascar	East Africa	5	338
Nepal	Southeast Asia	3	175
Nigeria	West Africa	1	54
Philippines	Southeast Asia	2	54
Seychelles	East Africa	1	38
Tanzania	East Africa	5	227
Uganda	East Africa	1	96
United Kingdom	Northern/Western Europe	1	6
Vietnam	Southeast Asia	1	85
Zambia	Southern Africa	5	360
Zimbabwe	Southern Africa	1	62

2.2 Development of thematic categories

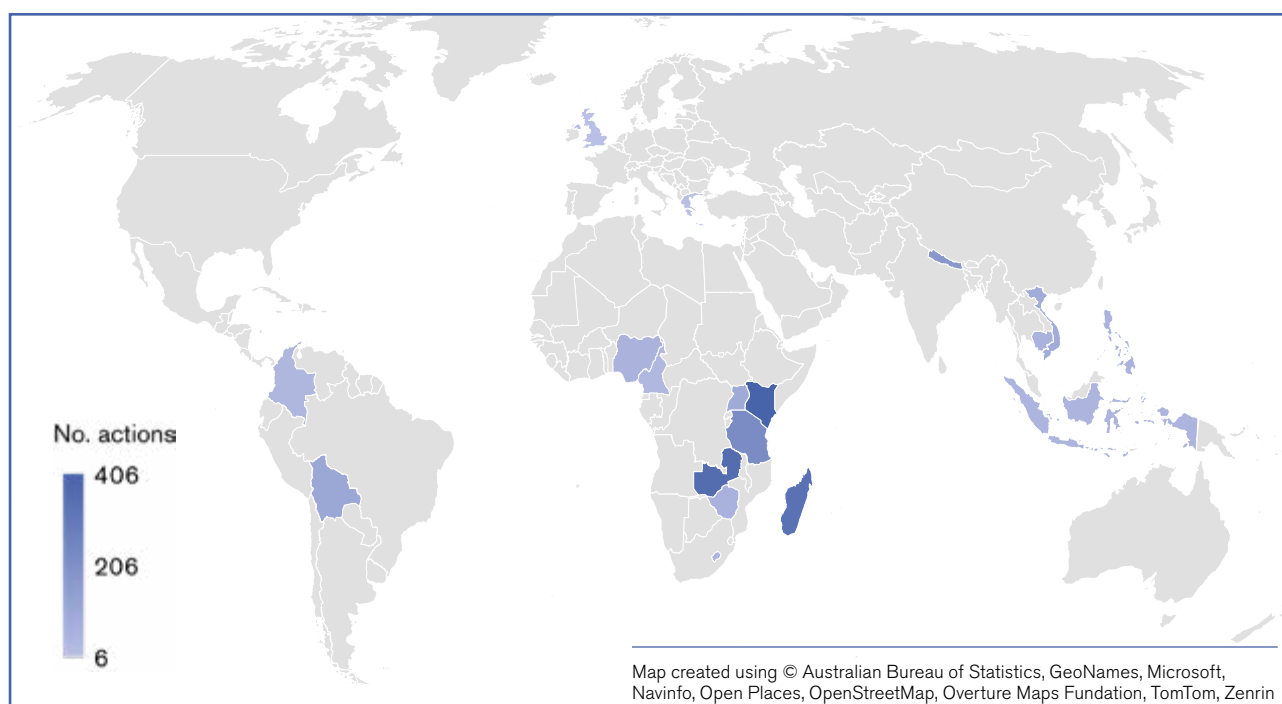
The development of thematic categories was a key step in making sense of the 2,252 actions proposed across the SAGE assessments. The initial phase of coding involved grouping similar actions based on topic, method, intended outcome and governance focus. Actions were sorted into preliminary themes, which served as a foundation for further refinement. In cases where an action addressed multiple issues or strategies (for example, combining awareness-raising with institutional reform), it was divided and coded under each relevant theme to ensure that all aspects were captured.

Once these initial themes were established, the analysis focused on identifying overlaps and conceptual connections between them. Many themes shared similar objectives or underlying approaches and were therefore consolidated into broader, more inclusive thematic categories. This step helped minimise redundancy, enhance clarity and ensure that each final category reflected a distinct equity or governance priority.

A practical example is the distinction between **awareness** and **capacity building**. Both often involve education or training, but the coding differentiated between actions primarily aimed at sharing or improving understanding and those aimed at developing skills or capacities for participation. For instance:

- Actions such as 'Provide information sessions on rights to land use' or 'Deliver community workshops on conservation rules' were grouped under **awareness**, as their main purpose was to improve access to information and foster understanding.

Figure 4. Geographic distribution of proposed actions through SAGE by country



- Actions such as ‘Train local monitors in conflict resolution’ or ‘Establish programmes for youth to practice traditional knowledge’ were grouped under **capacity building**, as they emphasised strengthening skills and long-term empowerment.

It is important to note that there were multiple possible ways to categorise actions, such as grouping by thematic content or actor orientation. We chose to focus on intent and method, as this provided a consistent framework for comparison across a very diverse dataset and allowed both convergence and variation to be analysed systematically.

Following thematic coding and refinement, the categories were reviewed and validated through peer discussions with SEGA country partners. These consultations helped refine definitions, confirm contextual relevance, and adjust terminology to improve consistency and applicability across regions. The result was a framework of 20 thematic action categories that collectively capture the diversity of strategies proposed to strengthen equitable governance in PCAs.

2.3 Analysis across equity principles, regions and countries, and actor groups

First, action categories were analysed in relation to SAGE’s ten equity and governance principles (see Table 1). These principles are often grouped under three broad dimensions of recognition, procedure and distribution. This lens makes it possible to see what kinds of actions site-level actors put forward to address each principle, and which strategies they most often connect with particular governance concerns. By clustering actions under each principle, the analysis highlights where actors see practical entry points and

how some principles may be approached through overlapping or complementary strategies. Further, mapping actions in this way also helps reveal potential sets of strategies that can be combined to strengthen governance across principles, offering insights for facilitators and policymakers.

Finally, actions were examined across geographical contexts and by actor groups. Looking at actions through these lenses does not provide a complete explanation of differences, but it helps to identify patterns that may be influenced by social roles, governance arrangements or political and cultural contexts.

Exploring actions by region and country draws attention to how broader contexts — such as legal frameworks, institutional capacity or histories of conservation — may shape the kinds of actions that emerge. Examining actions by actor group allows us to see how priorities may differ depending on lived experiences and positions in governance systems.

The analysis by actor groups was conducted only for the 11 most recent SAGE assessments (five from Kenya and three each from Nepal and Madagascar). For this, actors were aggregated into ten types of actor groups: community members/groups, Indigenous Peoples, local government, management, men’s groups, women’s groups, NGOs, partners and investors, tourism, and youth groups.

Together, these comparisons help situate site-level findings within wider patterns, making it possible to recognise where approaches resonate across contexts and where they are more context specific. This in turn provides a basis for reflection on how facilitation, support and cross-site learning might be adapted to different settings.

3

Results: common actions to address site-specific challenges

The analysis of 2,252 proposed actions reveals distinct patterns in how site-level actors suggest ways to strengthen equitable governance. The 20 identified action categories summarise the kinds of actions that are proposed overall and thus provide a useful glossary for practitioners to review and consider when thinking about how to best address governance and equity at their own sites. A small set of fundamental action categories — awareness, capacity building and information sharing — were consistently proposed across sites and under nearly all ten SAGE principles. Their widespread presence indicates that these types of actions are commonly seen as relevant and practical entry points for improving governance.

By contrast, some categories appeared less frequently. These include leadership strengthening, integration of IP and LC knowledge, values and institutions, political support and respect, and monitoring, research and documentation. While less common in the dataset, these categories stand out for pointing towards more complex or politically sensitive aspects of governance, such as demand for better leadership, whose knowledge is considered valuable or not, or demands for institutional accountability.

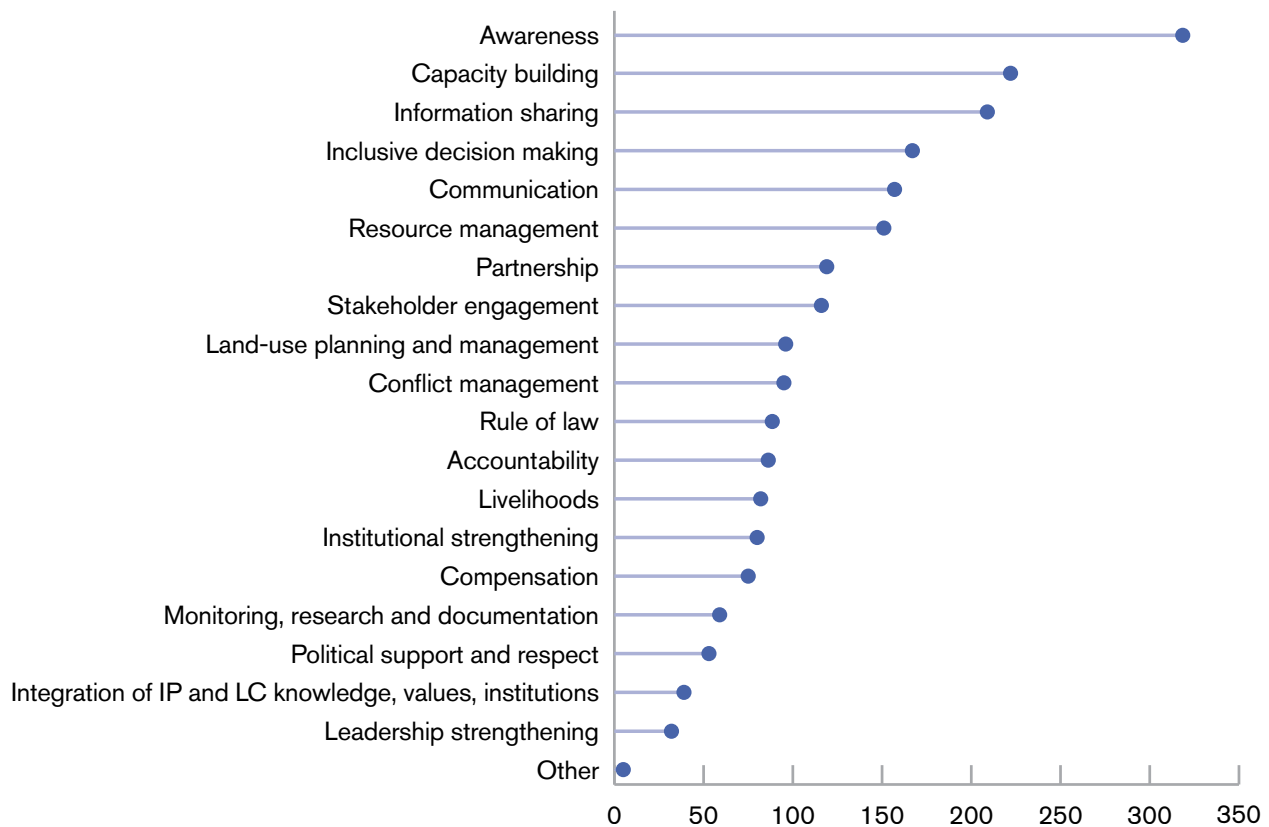
The contrast between frequently and less frequently proposed categories is one of the central findings of this analysis. It shows which kinds of strategies were most widely emphasised across contexts, and which were raised in more specific circumstances. The following sections explore these patterns in more detail, beginning with presenting the 20 action categories, followed by presenting and discussing the most frequently proposed categories and examining how they vary across SAGE's equity principles.

3.1 The 20 action categories

The 20 action categories present the breadth of actions suggested by the site-level actors to improve different aspects of equitable governance across the 49 SAGE sites. In the following sections, each category is presented with a brief definition, an illustrative example of an action proposed by actors during the SAGE assessments, and the initial sub-themes that were consolidated to form the final category.

Figure 5 (page 16) shows the total number of actions reported within each category across all 49 sites, highlighting which categories are most frequently emphasised in site-level prioritisation.

Figure 5. Frequency of proposed actions under each category based on data from 49 SAGE sites



1 Awareness



Definition: actions that target understanding, knowledge or recognition of key issues, values or processes. These actions focus on sharing information, raising consciousness and improving access to knowledge. The emphasis is on helping people know, rather than on teaching them how to do something.

Example of action:

‘Increasing awareness among community members about their human and resource rights in the PCA using posters, barazas [public meetings], films and radio programmes.’

Included sub-themes:

- Cultural celebration
- Digital outreach
- Education (conveying knowledge)

2 Information sharing



Definition: actions that focus on the exchange and transparency of information and knowledge between actors through relevant, timely and transparent resources.

Example of action:

‘Improving the timely delivery of information to Wildlife Management Area (WMA) actors through various methods such as formal letters, advertisements and increasing transparency in the reporting system by adhering to deadlines.’

Included sub-theme:

- Transparency

3 Capacity building

Definition: actions to strengthen the skills, abilities, resources or systems that actors need. These actions focus on developing practical competencies, improving confidence and enabling sustained involvement. The emphasis is on equipping people with the tools and capabilities to take action, make decisions and fulfil responsibilities.

Example of action:

'Providing financial management training to village leaders to ensure they can effectively utilise the community's financial allocation in alignment with the planned objectives.'

Included sub-theme:

- Education (teaching how to **do** something)

4 Stakeholder engagement

Definition: actions that aim to enable and facilitate the meaningful engagement of actors in governance and management processes. These actions aim to create inclusive, accessible and supportive environments that allow actors to contribute to governance, planning and management.

Example of action:

'Identify and prioritise funds for workshops bringing all actors together to discuss how they could be actively engaged in the management of the protected area.'

5 Inclusive decision making

Definition: actions that refer to the equitable inclusion of diverse individuals and groups in decision making. It involves ensuring that all actors have a fair, meaningful and sustained opportunity to participate in decisions.

Example of action:

'Inclusive planning with inclusion of people from women's and marginalised groups to make their voices heard and demands fulfilled.'

Included sub-themes:

- Diversity
- Gender equity
- Equally distributed actions
- Representation
- Community representation

6 Communication

Definition: actions that aim to improve how actors interact, exchange ideas and understand one another across linguistic, cultural, institutional or professional boundaries. These actions focus on strengthening and facilitating two-way inclusive dialogue, fostering mutual understanding and enabling meaningful participation.

Example of action:

'Providing proper translation and interpretation during meetings so that all actor groups can contribute equally to discussions and decision making.'

Included sub-themes:

- Communication
- Dialogue
- Feedback mechanisms
- Inclusion of a neutral person

7 Partnerships

Definition: encompasses actions that strengthen cooperation, coordination, collaboration and joint decision making among diverse actors. It includes efforts to build trust, integrate multiple forms of knowledge and promote co-management and shared responsibility, all aimed at enhancing inclusivity and effectiveness.

Example of action:

'Establish a PCA multistakeholder forum, uniting all actors and stakeholders in the PA with a calendar of events to discuss community conservation issues and gather recommendations from stakeholders.'

Included sub-themes:

- Coordination
- Co-management
- Cooperation
- Collaboration

8 Leadership strengthening



Definition: actions that target how actors guide, influence and represent others in governance and management processes, strengthening the structures, relationships and dynamics that enable effective leadership, both formal and informal. Management committees play a particularly important role here, as they provide a core governance structure through which leadership is exercised, coordinated and held accountable.

Example of action:

'The board and management should be trained on communication including information dissemination.'

Included sub-themes:

- Operational efficiency
- Management committee
- Decentralising

9 Institutional strengthening



Definition: actions that focus on the capacity, structures, systems and legitimacy of institutions involved in protected area governance. This includes how institutions function, make decisions, engage with communities and uphold laws and agreements.

Example of action:

'Facilitating advocacy meetings to engage the government in reducing bureaucracy in the compensation process for affected community members, with the aim of improving efficiency and responsiveness.'

Included sub-themes:

- Policy development
- Regulatory framework

10 Rule of law



Definition: actions ensuring compliance with laws, rules, regulations, standards or agreed norms within and around protected areas. It involves the processes and actions taken to compel adherence, prevent violations and respond to infractions.

Example of action:

'Establish a 'conservation police' mechanism (patrolling to prevent illegal harvesting or management of forests) where a community based anti-poaching unit (CBAPU) should be actively mobilised, to strengthen monitoring and enforcement of conservation rules.'

Included sub-themes:

- Compliance
- Restrictions
- Illegal activities
- Deterrence mechanisms
- Improved security
- Enforcement

11 Accountability



Definition: ensuring that all actors fulfil their responsibilities, meet agreed goals and uphold obligations through transparent, fair and consistent decision making. These actions should aim to promote transparent reporting, clarify who is responsible for what and support mechanisms that track whether obligations and goals are being met.

Example of action:

'Conducting follow up with community representatives and village leaders in the implementation of their activities within the PCA, ensuring accountability, trust and clear communication with all stakeholders.'

Included sub-theme:

- Performance management

12 Monitoring, research and documentation



Definition: actions referring to the systematic processes of tracking, investigating and recording information to support transparency, accountability, learning and informed decision making in protected area governance.

Example of action:

'Implement a monitoring and evaluation system for all community empowerment programmes in the PCA.'

13 Conflict management



Definition: actions to identify and address conflicts and disagreements between actors/organisations/wildlife/natural causes and recognising that conflicts arise. These include proactive measures to prevent conflicts from escalating, as well as strategies for managing and resolving conflicts that have already emerged and finding sustainable solutions that address the underlying causes of the conflict.

Example of action:

'Technical and financial support to improve the existing complaint mechanism and application of alternative dispute resolution options based on traditional knowledge, practices and the mediation of elders.'

14 Integration of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' knowledge, values and institutions



Definition: actions recognising, respecting and incorporating the knowledge, values, practices and institutions of Indigenous Peoples and local communities into protected area governance and management.

Example of action:

'Promote preservation of Tharu traditional knowledge through the Tharu Cultural Museum by engaging in discussions with stakeholders and identifying, documenting and planning activities and allocating a dedicated budget.'

15 Political support and respect



Definition: actions that promote mutual respect, uphold rights and responsibilities and strengthen political commitment to fair and just governance.

Example of action:

'To empower village governments to engage community members before utilising community funds and ensuring effective decision making in the management of funds derived from conservation activities.'

Included sub-theme:

- Human rights
- Property rights

16 Compensation



Definition: actions that involve fair financial support or other appropriate redress for individuals or groups negatively affected by environmental impacts/project initiatives/conflicts etc. These actions aim to address harm, restore equity, support livelihoods, incentivise conservation and build trust.

Example of action:

'Advocating for legislative reform to improve compensation mechanisms for victims of human-wildlife conflict, moving towards a more flexible and immediate financial or material support.'

Included sub-theme:

- Incentives

17 Land-use planning and management



Definition: actions regarding the planning, regulation and coordination of how land is used and managed. It involves making decisions about how land is utilised, whether for agriculture, urban development, conservation or other purposes.

Example of action:

'Implement zonation by identifying sensitive areas within the marine protected area, marking riparian zones and creating accessible beach entry points.'

Included sub-themes:

- Boundary management
- Natural resource management
- Conservation efforts

18 Resource management



Definition: actions that focus on how financial, material, human or technical resources are distributed, accessed or mobilised to support governance, management or community wellbeing.

Example of action:

'Strengthen strategies to protect resources by designating anchoring spaces for boats and encouraging compliance.'

Included sub-themes:

- Funding
- Equipment use
- Benefit distribution mechanisms

19 Livelihoods



Definition: actions that support or enhance people's ability to sustain a means of living in ways that are environmentally, socially and economically viable. Emphasis is placed on enabling long-term, inclusive and resilient livelihood strategies.

Example of action:

'To establish alternative agriculture practices to encourage community members not to cultivate crops favoured by wildlife and in turn protect their livelihoods.'

Included sub-themes:

- Development of alternative livelihoods
- Promote ownership
- Employment opportunities

20 Other



Definition: actions that do not clearly fit into the above categories but were considered important by PCA actors during discussions and prioritisation.

3.2 Fundamental action categories

The analysis shows that three action categories (**awareness, capacity building and information sharing**) were the most frequently proposed across all sites. Their prominence highlights the emphasis actors place on actions that transfer fundamental knowledge, skills and information as the basis for equitable recognition, procedure and distribution in PCAs. For the remainder of this paper, we thus refer to these as the 'fundamental action categories'.

- **Awareness:** actions to strengthen shared understanding of rights, responsibilities and conservation values.
- **Capacity building:** actions to develop the skills, resources and confidence needed for meaningful engagement.
- **Information sharing:** actions to improve transparency and trust by ensuring timely and accessible information.

The frequency of these categories suggests that they are widely recognised by diverse actors as relevant and feasible ways to address governance concerns. They represent common priorities across contexts, even if the specific focus varies by site or actor group.

By contrast, other categories, such as **leadership strengthening, integration of IP and LC knowledge, values and institutions, or political support and respect** appeared less often and tended to arise in more specific contexts. As they appear to hold the potential to address more deeply rooted equity challenges, we call these 'transformative action categories'. These distinctions are explored further in the following sections.


3.3 Principle-level patterns

Examining actions through the lens of SAGE's ten equity principles highlights which aspects of governance actors most often sought to address and what kinds of strategies they associated with each principle. This provides a practical view of where site-level actors see entry points for strengthening equity in PCAs.

As for the overarching analysis, the fundamental action categories were consistently present across almost all principles. Similarly, the transformative action categories appeared less frequently across principles. Figure 6 (page 21) shows the frequency and distribution of actions identified across 49 SAGE sites, categorised into the 20 action categories and mapped against the ten equity principles.

To situate the principles within broader debates on equity, it is useful to note their alignment with the commonly used **equity dimensions of recognition, procedure and distribution**. The principles of respect for rights and for actors relate to the dimension of recognition. Participation, transparency, dispute resolution, and fair law enforcement relate to the dimension of procedure. And mitigation of negative impacts and benefit sharing relate to the dimension of distribution. The principles of coordination and collaboration, and achievement of conservation objectives, are additionally included as other non-equity related governance issues. This alignment is provided here as context; the analysis that follows focuses on the patterns of actions proposed under each principle.

Figure 6. Frequency and distribution of actions identified across 49 SAGE sites mapped against ten equity principles



Category / Principle	Respect for rights	Respect for actors	Participation in decision making	Transparency, information sharing and accountability	Dispute resolution	Fair and effective law enforcement	Mitigation of negative impacts	Equitable sharing of benefits	Achievement of conservation and other objectives	Coordination and collaboration
Awareness	79	43	19	58	30	40	27	15	7	2
Information sharing	39	3	56	45	20	11	1	28	2	4
Capacity building	43	32	22	32	16	29	26	14	6	2
Stakeholder engagement	9	11	43	6	4	4	11	20	3	5
Inclusive decision making	14	17	49	19	8	7	8	41	1	3
Communication	20	37	46	15	7	8	6	9	0	9
Partnership	6	20	17	14	10	17	17	3	3	12
Leadership strengthening	5	1	7	3	1	9	3	3	0	0
Institutional strengthening	12	11	8	11	9	3	6	11	4	5
Rule of law	7	7	2	6	6	32	18	9	1	0
Accountability	2	9	9	24	7	15	9	12	0	0
Monitoring, research and documentation	1	16	3	7	6	5	5	10	4	2
Conflict management	3	2	3	18	58	6	5	0	0	0
Integration of IP and LC knowledge, values and institutions	3	24	1	3	6	1	0	0	1	0
Political support and respect	14	14	2	1	1	19	1	1	0	0
Compensation	14	16	1	11	7	0	26	0	0	0
Land-use planning and management	14	7	2	29	1	2	20	18	2	1
Resource management	18	18	3	15	5	12	41	32	6	1
Livelihoods	12	11	3	4	1	9	16	25	1	0
Other	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0

3.3.1 Respect for rights

Under this principle, the most frequently prioritised categories were awareness (25.1%), capacity building (13.7%) and information sharing (12.4%).³ The emphasis lies on enabling actors to understand, claim and exercise their rights.

Examples: *'Capacity building on fundamental rights of Indigenous communities'* and *'Provide training to community members on land-use rights and responsibilities'*. Actions under Principle 1 commonly focus on rights education and empowerment.

3.3.2 Respect for actors

Key categories include awareness (14.3%), communication (12.3%), capacity building (10.7%), integration of IP and LC knowledge, values and institutions (8.0%) and partnership (6.7%). Actions here emphasise mutual respect, cultural recognition and inclusive dialogue.

Example: *'Protected area management should come closer to the community and need to learn more about traditional knowledge and practices'*. Such actions highlight a concern with building trust and valuing different knowledge systems.

3.3.3 Participation in decision making

The main categories were information sharing (18.9%), inclusive decision making (16.5%), communication (15.5%) and stakeholder engagement (14.5%). These reflect efforts to widen participation and strengthen transparency in decision-making processes.

Examples: *'Better information sharing, capacity building of women and youth to participate'* and *'Regular meetings with stakeholders to improve decision-making transparency'*. Actions here call for empowerment strategies to enhance meaningful participation, particularly among marginalised groups.

3.3.4 Transparency, information sharing and accountability

The most frequent categories were information sharing (13.9%), awareness (18.0%), capacity building (9.9%), accountability (7.4%) and land-use planning and management (9.0%). Actions often aim to ensure that decisions, budgets and plans are accessible to communities.

Example: *'The administration must provide the community with detailed information on the progress of activities.'* This points to efforts that build trust and accountability.

3.3.5 Dispute resolution

This principle was strongly associated with conflict management (28.6%), followed by awareness (14.8%) and information sharing (9.9%). The actions show a mix of direct conflict-resolution strategies and supporting measures to build mutual understanding.

Example: *'Establish an independent dispute-resolution committee to advise local people.'* This suggests efforts to institutionalise fair, impartial mechanisms that empower communities to resolve conflicts effectively.

3.3.6 Fair and effective law enforcement

Frequent categories included rule of law (14%), awareness (17.5%), capacity building (12.7%) and political support and respect (8.3%). This suggests that enforcing laws justly requires both legal compliance and strong fundamental awareness and capacity. Notably, many actions were directed at law enforcers themselves, with a focus on training in rights-based and non-violent approaches.

Example: *'Constant trainings to scouts and law enforcers on fairer law enforcement techniques and human rights to reduce on abuse cases.'* This shows that 'effectiveness' is often framed not only in terms of compliance, but also in terms of how laws are enforced.

3.3.7 Mitigation of negative impacts

The top categories were resource management (16.6%), awareness (10.9%), capacity building (10.5%) and compensation (10.5%). While some actions focused on technical solutions, many also addressed governance processes such as ensuring fair compensation or improving community involvement in mitigation.

Examples: *'Support communities to access compensation in a fair and transparent manner'* and *'Strengthen community involvement in planning for human-wildlife conflict mitigation'*. This suggests that reducing negative impacts often requires governance adaptations, not only technical fixes.

3.3.8 Equitable sharing of benefits

Actions under this principle focused most on inclusive decision making (16.3%), resource management (12.7%), livelihoods (10.0%) and information sharing (11.2%). These categories point to an emphasis on ensuring that benefit-sharing is not only about material distribution, but also about who is included in shaping decisions and how information is communicated.

Examples: *'Define benefit-sharing strategy with gender sensitivity and consideration of all societal strata'* and *'Support local livelihood initiatives linked to conservation, ensuring equitable access across'*

³ Percentages refer to the share of all actions proposed under each principle, not of the action category overall.

*different community groups*¹. Rather than only calling for technical or financial mechanisms, these actions highlight the role of inclusive governance processes in making benefit-sharing fair and legitimate. They show how site-level actors connect material benefits with broader questions of participation and recognition.

3.3.9 Achievement of conservation and other objectives

Although fewer actions were proposed under this principle, partly due to it being less frequently emphasised in assessments, the main categories were awareness (17.1%), capacity building (14.6%) and resource management (14.6%). This suggests that when actors link governance to conservation outcomes, they often do so through the same fundamental strategies of awareness and capacity building, rather than through entirely distinct measures.

Examples: *'Build capacity of the community on the grazing plan to enhance implementation'* and *'Provide training to fishers on sustainable harvesting practices and conservation rules'*. These illustrate how actors framed conservation effectiveness as dependent on strengthening local capacities and knowledge, rather than as separate from equity considerations.

3.3.10 Coordination and collaboration

This principle was strongly associated with partnership (26.1%), communication (19.6%), stakeholder engagement (10.9%) and institutional strengthening (10.9%). The emphasis here is on building strong cooperative structures and shared governance frameworks.

Examples: *'Coordinate with all stakeholders through annual planning meetings'* and *'Establish joint platforms between communities, NGOs and local government for conservation planning and monitoring'*. These actions highlight how actors see coordination not just as an abstract principle, but as something requiring structured processes, clear communication channels and institutional arrangements that support ongoing collaboration.

3.4 Regional and country-level patterns

Examining actions across regions and countries highlights how local contexts shape responses to shared governance challenges. Regional and national patterns reveal different entry points, possibly shaped by factors such as governance systems, institutional capacity and sociopolitical settings, which influence what kinds of actions are emphasised or seen as relevant in each case.

Nonetheless, across nearly all regions and countries, **awareness, capacity building, and information sharing** dominate as the most frequently suggested categories. At the same time, **leadership strengthening or integration of IP and LC knowledge, values and institutions** were less frequently proposed.

The number of sites and countries varies significantly across regions, and in some cases a single country represents the entire region (for example, Nigeria for West Africa, Cameroon for Central Africa, Greece for Southern Europe and the UK for Northern/Western Europe). The following observations therefore reflect patterns in the dataset rather than generalised regional trends (see Figure 7, page 24).

3.4.1 East Africa (Kenya, Madagascar, Seychelles, Tanzania, Uganda)

Actions are widely distributed, with strong emphasis on awareness (15.2%⁴), capacity building (10.4%), and information sharing (10.1%). Livelihoods (4.1%) and resource management (6.4%) also appear, though less prominently, alongside attention to procedural themes such as rule of law (5.4%) and accountability (4.4%). This pattern underscores the combination of fundamental strategies with elements of distributional and procedural strengthening. At the country level, Seychelles stands out for its very high emphasis on awareness (26.3%⁵) and information sharing (23.7%), while Tanzania prioritised capacity building (18.1%), showing how some sites drove the prominence of these categories in the regional profile.

3.4.2 Southern Africa (Lesotho, Zambia, Zimbabwe)

Like East Africa, the most common categories include awareness (10.7%), capacity building (8.7%), and information sharing (8.6%), complemented by relatively higher emphasis on resource management (10.5%) and livelihoods (3.0%). This balance suggests the prominence of distributional concerns around benefits and natural resource use. Zambia showed a relatively balanced distribution across categories, while Zimbabwe emphasised stakeholder engagement (14.5%) and political support and respect (11.3%), highlighting some of the diversity within the region.

3.4.3 Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Vietnam)

Here, the distribution is more even. In addition to awareness (14.8%), there is notable emphasis on communication (11.8%) and information sharing (9.9%), pointing to a stronger focus on dialogue and interaction

⁴ Percentage of actions under the category for the region.

⁵ Percentage of actions under the category for the country.

Figure 7. Regional emphasis of action categories as a percentage of per regional action counts



Category / Region	Central Africa	East Africa	Southern Africa	West Africa	South America	Southeast Asia	Northern/Western Europe	Southern Europe
Awareness	14%	15%	11%	6%	16%	15%	0%	33%
Information sharing	6%	10%	9%	6%	9%	10%	0%	0%
Capacity building	6%	10%	9%	9%	15%	10%	0%	0%
Stakeholder engagement	19%	4%	9%	6%	1%	5%	33%	0%
Inclusive decision making	0%	5%	6%	7%	2%	4%	0%	17%
Communication	0%	6%	4%	6%	5%	12%	33%	0%
Partnerships	8%	5%	4%	7%	9%	7%	0%	17%
Leadership strengthening	6%	1%	2%	0%	3%	1%	0%	0%
Institutional strengthening	3%	4%	2%	0%	8%	4%	0%	0%
Rule of law	14%	5%	5%	2%	3%	6%	0%	0%
Accountability	6%	4%	5%	2%	3%	4%	0%	17%
Monitoring, research and documentation	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%	0%	0%
Conflict management	11%	3%	6%	9%	7%	4%	17%	17%
Integration of IP and LC knowledge, values and institutions	0%	2%	1%	0%	3%	2%	0%	0%
Political support and respect	0%	2%	6%	9%	1%	3%	17%	0%
Compensation	0%	2%	3%	2%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Land-use planning and management	0%	6%	4%	4%	6%	1%	0%	0%
Resource management	6%	6%	11%	7%	6%	4%	0%	0%
Livelihoods	0%	4%	3%	17%	2%	2%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

between actors. Capacity building (9.5%) also features consistently. Together, these highlight a procedural emphasis on fostering inclusive engagement. Country examples help explain these patterns: Indonesia and the Philippines showed particularly high levels of communication (12–17%), while Cambodia prioritised information sharing (14.3%), underscoring the regional emphasis on dialogue and exchange.

3.4.4 South America (Bolivia, Colombia)

The most frequent categories are awareness (15.7%) and capacity building (14.5%), accompanied by leadership strengthening (8.3%) and institutional strengthening (7.6%). Compared to other regions, this points to a stronger emphasis on developing skills, leadership and institutional capacities alongside fundamental awareness. At the national level, Bolivia

emphasised capacity building (16.4%) and land-use planning and management (10.9%), while Colombia's actions were weighted toward awareness (25.0%), explaining the dual emphasis on fundamental actions and institutional strengthening at the regional scale.

3.4.5 Central Africa (Cameroon)

The profile is narrower but distinct, with emphasis on awareness (13.9%) and rule of law (13.9%), alongside stakeholder engagement (19.4%) and conflict management (11.1%). Although based on a small number of sites, this suggests that legal frameworks and dispute resolution were especially prominent themes in this context.

3.4.6 West Africa (Nigeria)

The Nigerian site emphasised livelihoods (16.7%), together with capacity building (9.3%), inclusive decision making (7.4%) and conflict management (9.3%). While not representative of the whole region, this profile suggests a strong focus on distributional and procedural concerns.

3.4.7 Southern Europe (Greece)

Actions here concentrated on a small number of categories, most notably awareness (33.3%), inclusive decision making (16.7%), and accountability (16.7%). This indicates a more limited spread across categories, likely reflecting site-specific dynamics.

3.4.8 Northern/Western Europe (UK)

Similarly, the small number of actions recorded focused on stakeholder engagement (33.3%), communication (33.3%), and accountability (16.7%). Narrow in scope like the Greek sites, these actions clearly emphasise procedural engagement over other governance themes.

Taken together, these results reaffirm that the fundamental categories dominate across regions, but they also show how some sites emphasise specific priorities: distributional concerns in large parts of Africa, communication in Southeast Asia, or leadership and institutional strengthening in South America.

3.5 Actor group-level patterns

Examining actions by actor group provides insight into how different actors highlight governance priorities based on their positions, responsibilities and experiences within PCAs. Figure 8 (page 26) shows the action categories emphasised by different actor groups (as a percentage of total actions within each group), aggregated across 11 SAGE sites. This

heatmap visualises how different actor groups (for example, women, men or youth) emphasise action categories, based on the proportion of actions falling under each category within that group. Darker shades represent higher percentages, indicating stronger emphasis. While **awareness**, **capacity building**, and **information sharing** are again prominent across nearly all groups, further exploration shows where priorities diverge. These divergences point to how different groups emphasise specific aspects of equity, whether participation, recognition or distribution, depending on the challenges they face or the opportunities they perceive.

3.5.1 Women's groups

Women's groups emphasised awareness (9.3%⁶), capacity building (9.3%), and information sharing (9.3%), but stand out for their stronger focus on inclusive decision making (14.7%). Notably, women were the only groups to consistently call for women's participation, stressing the importance of being actively invited, listened to and included in governance spaces.

3.5.2 Youth groups

Youth groups (including both young women and young men) prioritised awareness (14.6%) and inclusive decision making (19.5%), with additional emphasis on land-use planning and management (9.7%). They uniquely proposed youth-specific roles in governance, which other groups did not highlight. At Kiborgoch in Kenya, youth proposed grazing plans and restoration activities under land-use planning and management, linking ecological restoration with opportunities for greater youth involvement in decision making about resources.

3.5.3 Indigenous Peoples

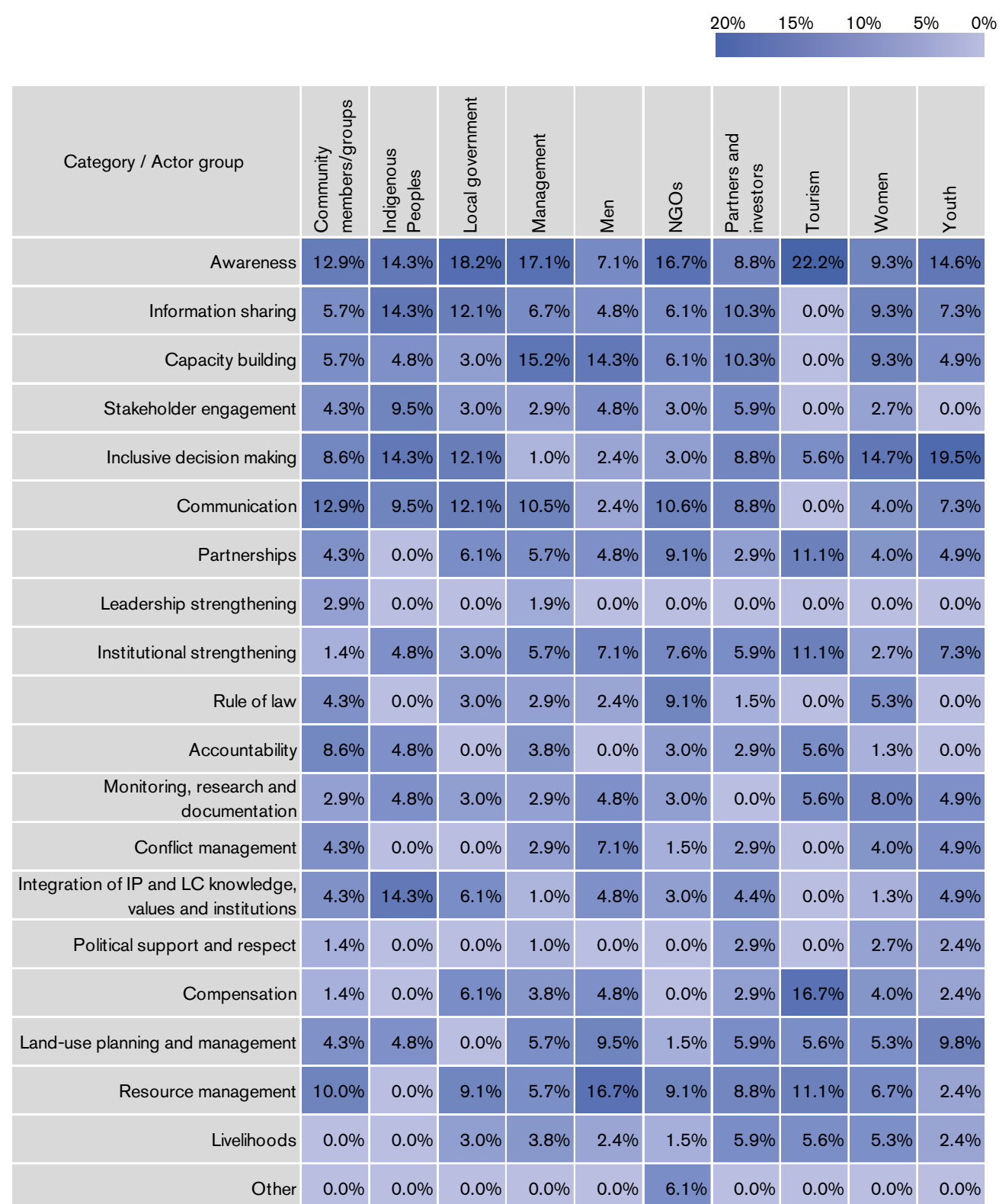
Indigenous Peoples gave equal weight to awareness (14.3%), inclusive decision making (14.3%), information sharing (14.3%) and integration of IP and LC knowledge, values and institutions (14.3%). This pattern underscores their combined focus on recognition and participation, ensuring that traditional knowledge systems are respected and represented in decision making.

3.5.4 Community members

Community members again emphasised awareness (12.9%) and communication (12.9%), followed by resource management (10.0%) and inclusive decision making (8.6%). This combination shows that, within this group, actions often link information-related categories with practical concerns about resources and participation.

⁶ Percentages represent the share of actions proposed within each group, allowing comparison of emphasis across groups.

Figure 8. Emphasis on action categories as a percentage of total actions within each actor group aggregated across 11 SAGE sites



3.5.6 NGO actors

NGOs placed highest emphasis on awareness (16.7%), followed by partnership (9.1%), rule of law (9.1%), and resource management (9.1%). In Andasibe, Madagascar, NGOs proposed ‘Advocacy with partners

to encourage the development of sustainable alternative activities, thereby reducing dependence on threatened natural resources’. This illustrates how their proposed actions often combine awareness and advocacy with resource-oriented measures.

3.5.7 Management actors

Management actors emphasised awareness (17.1%), capacity building (15.2%) and communication (10.5%). These results indicate a concentration on categories that relate to information provision and skill strengthening.

3.5.8 Local government actors

Local government actors prioritise awareness (18.2%), information sharing (12.1%), inclusive decision making (12.1%) and communication (12.1%). This reflects a spread across categories associated with transparency and participation.

3.5.9 Partners and investors

Partners and investors focused on capacity building (10.3%) and information sharing (10.3%), followed by inclusive decision making (8.8%), communication (8.8%) and resource management (8.8%). At Mara Ripoi, Kenya, investors proposed employing additional rangers and convening stakeholder workshops, showing an interest in strengthening capacity while creating shared spaces for engagement.

3.5.10 Tourism actors

Tourism actors stand out for their strong emphasis on awareness (22.2%), with additional actions in compensation (16.7%), partnership (11.1%), institutional strengthening (11.1%) and resource management (11.1%). In Chitwan, Nepal, the tourism group proposed 'Awareness raising through social media and hoarding boards, included in school curricula'. This shows an orientation toward community outreach and building support for conservation-compatible tourism.

Across actor groups, **awareness**, **capacity building** and **information sharing** remain the most widely emphasised categories. However, the distinctive contributions of marginalised or community-based groups are striking, especially women, youth and Indigenous Peoples. These groups consistently highlighted inclusive decision making, often in ways that other groups did not, underscoring their demand for a stronger voice and recognition in governance processes. Importantly, such proposals are not reflected as strongly in the overall dataset, suggesting that frequently proposed categories are not necessarily the most urgent, but rather the most widespread. Less commonly proposed actions — such as women's demands for women's participation, youths' proposals for youth involvement or Indigenous Peoples' emphasis on knowledge integration — may represent overlooked priorities that other actors did not raise.

By contrast, institutional actors such as NGOs, management and local governments focused more on procedural measures and partnerships, reflecting their roles in enabling frameworks and facilitating community engagement rather than directly receiving benefits. Tourism actors and investors emphasised outreach, benefits and stewardship, reflecting their interest in building supportive relationships and sustaining conservation activities.

Taken together, these results reveal both convergence and divergence across actor groups. While there is broad agreement on the importance of awareness raising, capacity strengthening and information access, differences in emphasis highlight the varied ways actors experience and seek to address governance challenges. Recognising these differences is key: advancing equitable governance will require not only procedural improvements that benefit all, but also greater responsiveness to the priorities voiced most strongly by marginalised groups.

4

Discussion: implications for advancing equitable governance in protected and conserved areas

The analysis of 2,252 ideas for actions from 49 SAGE assessments reveals both convergence and diversity in how site-level actors identify ways to strengthen equity in PCA governance. These proposals do not represent fully prioritised strategies or implemented measures, but they offer a detailed picture of the kinds of actions actors consider feasible and relevant in their contexts. Taken together, they show how equitable governance can be advanced in practice across principles, regions and actor groups, and they highlight both common entry points and more context- or group-specific priorities.

4.1 From principles to practice

Across the ten SAGE principles, fundamental action categories recur consistently. **Awareness, capacity building, and information sharing** appear across nearly all principles. Their prominence suggests that strengthening knowledge, skills and communication is

viewed as relevant to a broad spectrum of governance challenges, not just procedural principles: they also recur under respect for rights, equitable benefit sharing and even conservation objectives, where actors connected equity outcomes to improved local understanding and capacity. This suggests that improving equitable governance is not achieved through single isolated actions, but rather through interconnected efforts that build understanding, strengthen capacity and enable active, informed participation while delivering tangible benefits.

Whether these fundamental categories should be considered 'preconditions' for deeper change cannot be determined directly from the dataset. However, their widespread prioritisation indicates that they are often viewed as practical and immediate entry points. By enhancing knowledge and skills, and by making information more accessible, these actions can help establish the trust and capability needed for wider participation in governance.

The overall distribution of categories highlights a strong procedural emphasis, suggesting that many PCAs focus on building inclusive and transparent decision-making processes as a pathway toward broader equity. While recognition was mostly addressed by awareness-raising actions, fewer actions focus directly on formal legal rights and structural power imbalances, pointing to a potential gap for facilitators and actors to address during assessments. With relation to distribution, the high number of resource-management and livelihood actions underscores the importance of practical, local measures to ensure that conservation does not impose disproportionate costs and that communities receive fair benefits, while equally highlighting the importance of community empowerment and inclusive decision making.

Less frequently proposed, yet potentially very impactful, categories such as **leadership strengthening**, **political support and respect** and **integration of IP and LC knowledge, values and institutions** point toward deeper transformations. These often involve engagement with formal institutions, shifts in power sharing or the cultural and institutional recognition of marginalised knowledge systems. For example, leadership-related actions may involve creating more inclusive community committees or supporting underrepresented groups to hold leadership positions. While holding elections may appear straight forward, ensuring that previously underrepresented actors are taken seriously and can effectively gain voice can be more challenging. Similarly, actions on political support often call for governments or decision-makers to recognise and back community-led governance initiatives, while those on IP and LC knowledge, values and institutions require conservation actors to reconsider and question the basis of their own knowledge. These steps go beyond improving participation to reshaping how authority, legitimacy and recognition are distributed.

While these actions are less commonly proposed, their relative absence does not indicate a lack of importance. Instead, they may be less easy to think of, or to think of as feasible, by actors who are used to a certain status quo. Yet the more frequently proposed actions related to strengthening awareness, building skills and creating spaces for dialogue could make it easier to later pursue more deeper-level institutional, structural and politically sensitive changes. Strategically sequencing actions can be a key factor in making transformative change towards more equitable governance possible. Starting with more practical actions that people are comparatively used to and comfortable with can help create the enabling conditions for more transformative actions in the long run.

4.2 Common actions for specific contexts

The fundamental categories of **awareness**, **capacity building** and **information sharing** also recur across all regions. This consistency suggests that, regardless of context, site-level actors commonly identify these types of actions as necessary for strengthening equitable governance.

Yet the dataset also highlights distinctive emphases that point to contextual differences. In Southeast Asia, for example, **communication** emerges more strongly than elsewhere, alongside consistent attention to **awareness** and **capacity building**. This pattern suggests that actors in these sites associate equity not only with being informed but also with building dialogue and exchange between groups. By contrast, in South America, categories such as **leadership strengthening** and **institutional strengthening** feature prominently alongside awareness, indicating an emphasis on governance capacities and representation as part of equity concerns.

The single-country cases show how site-level experiences can shape distinct action combinations. In Cameroon, actions concentrate on **rule of law** and **dispute resolution**, a narrower but more legalistic emphasis than in other regions. In Nigeria, the prominence of **livelihoods** and **resource management** highlights a stronger orientation toward benefit-sharing and tangible socioeconomic outcomes. In Seychelles, very high levels of **awareness** and **information sharing** stand out, reflecting a focus on building shared understanding. Meanwhile, in Tanzania, **capacity building** is particularly prominent, showing how single-country profiles help explain some of the variation within broader regional trends.

These contrasts show that, while some action categories are widely shared across sites, others emerge strongly only in particular contexts. This underlines two key insights from the dataset:

1. Equity in governance cannot be pursued through a single, standardised model: actors in different settings highlight different priorities.
2. These varied emphases reflect distinct governance landscapes, shaped by institutional capacities, political dynamics, socioeconomic conditions or histories of participation.

For facilitators, donors and practitioners, this diversity highlights the value of cross-site learning while remaining attentive to local contexts: sites can draw inspiration from shared categories while also recognising the distinct governance challenges and strategies emerging at specific sites.

4.3 Actions for diversity

Looking at which actions were suggested by different actor groups highlights both convergence and divergence in the kinds of actions proposed. Across nearly all groups, **awareness, capacity building and information sharing** remain central, pointing to their broad relevance as practical steps for strengthening governance. Yet beyond this shared emphasis, groups vary in the kinds of priorities they bring forward, reflecting their positions, responsibilities and lived experiences within PCAs.

Marginalised or community-based groups stand out for the way they bring forward issues of inclusion and recognition. Women's groups consistently highlighted **inclusive decision making** more strongly than others, making explicit the need for women's participation in governance spaces. Youth groups also emphasised inclusion but in ways distinct to their generational role, for example by proposing youth-specific responsibilities in land-use planning and restoration. Indigenous Peoples placed equal weight on **inclusive decision making, information sharing, and the integration of IP and LC knowledge, values and institutions**, underscoring the importance of linking recognition of knowledge systems with participation in decision making. These emphases are less visible in the aggregate dataset, but they represent distinctive contributions that would otherwise risk being overlooked.

By contrast, more formalised or institutional actors tended to emphasise categories aligned with their operational or facilitative roles. NGOs often proposed actions around **partnership, rule of law, and resource management**, reflecting their position as intermediaries that connect communities with wider governance frameworks. Management and local government actors emphasised **awareness, capacity building and communication**, which align with responsibilities for implementing policies, ensuring compliance and engaging citizens. Tourism actors and investors, while fewer in number, tended to emphasise outreach and tangible benefits, combining **awareness** with categories such as **compensation** or **resource management** that link conservation with community support.

Taken together, these differences highlight how actors articulate varying governance priorities. While broad categories common across all groups suggest areas of widespread relevance, the distinct articulations between actors emphasise the importance of participatory assessment and planning processes that pay attention to marginalised voices. Without the inclusion of women, youth and Indigenous Peoples, the call for stronger participation and recognition by these groups would have gone ignored. Conversely, community members get a chance to better understand institutional actors'

concerns over on procedural aspects, collaboration and resource management to fulfil their mandates.

These findings also underline an important point for interpretation: the categories most frequently proposed across groups are not necessarily those of greatest urgency or importance, but those that recur most widely. Less common actions, such as demands for women's or youth-specific participation, or calls for Indigenous knowledge integration, may reflect concerns that are highly significant to those groups, even if they do not dominate the dataset overall. Recognising both the convergence and divergence across actor groups therefore provides a fuller picture of how equity is understood in practice, and points to the value of using SAGE not only to identify shared entry points but also to bring less visible priorities into focus.

4.4 Shared learning across sites

The diversity of proposed actions across sites, countries and actor groups reinforces that equity in governance cannot be approached through a single model. Instead, it must be contextualised, adaptive and inclusive of different perspectives. While certain categories — particularly **awareness, capacity building and information sharing** — appear consistently, others such as **livelihoods** and **conflict management** are less frequently prioritised. This variation highlights both the broad relevance of some action areas and the more context-specific nature of others, underscoring the importance of maintaining flexibility in tools like SAGE while still grounding them in a strong equity framework.

The thematic categorisation developed in this study provides a shared language that can help practitioners and facilitators compare, communicate and learn across contexts. Sites facing similar challenges, such as the exclusion of women, limited capacity or political interference, can benefit from exchanging strategies and experiences.

4.5 Tackling equity at its roots

Finally, a critical reflection emerging from this work is the need to consider both conceptual and contextual dimensions of equity. Conceptual equity refers to how equity is understood and framed. While international frameworks such as the CBD's voluntary guidance for equitable governance (CBD/COP/DEC/14/8) often distinguish recognitional, procedural and distributional dimensions (Schreckenberget al., 2016), these are not universally interpreted (Ruano-Chamorro et al., 2024). Many SAGE actions, particularly those around awareness and information sharing, focus on clarifying rights, responsibilities and governance processes. These point to the locally perceived

need for shared understanding as a basis for more equitable governance. Dominant narratives that frame equity mainly in terms of benefit sharing or access to procedures can overlook such deeper, more relational aspects of governance. These can be sidelined when governance frameworks reduce equity to measurable indicators such as the distribution of material benefits or number of meetings held.

Yet even the suggested actions discussed in this paper were formulated from within the widespread three-dimensional framing of equity. The presented results should thus be understood as limited by this specific interpretation of equity. Alternative interpretations — including more culturally specific or historically rooted understandings of justice — could point to very different actions to address deeply engrained conservation-related injustices (Martin et al., 2016).

Contextual equity highlights the structural, political and historical conditions that shape whether and how actors can participate in, benefit from and be recognised in governance processes. These include legal exclusion, weak institutions and enduring power structures, many of which have been documented as core bottlenecks in scaling community-based conservation. For instance, Pienkowski et al. (2025) identified elite capture, inflexible governance rules and inequitable decision-making processes as recurrent constraints across initiatives in East and Southern Africa, limiting both adoption and effectiveness of community-based conservation initiatives.

Similarly, Pearse et al. (2025) emphasise how deep-seated marginalisation and exclusionary governance practices in wider society continue to undermine environmental justice across many contexts. These barriers are often too entrenched to be resolved directly through tools like SAGE, which may be limited in their ability to navigate deep power dynamics, even as they begin to surface issues through locally driven assessments. Conceptual frameworks of equity acknowledge these contextual challenges (McDermott et al., 2013), yet addressing them in practice requires better understanding, more widespread consideration, political will, sustained attention and systems-level support.

In many SAGE assessments, contextual equity concerns are visible in action proposals that call for institutional strengthening, political support or leadership reform. These are not simple or one-off interventions, but long-term commitments to confronting deep-rooted governance challenges. Such proposals highlight that while SAGE can generate practical entry points, implementation will often run up against deeper systemic barriers. Through iterative reflection during implementation, actors can identify which strategies are most feasible, where adaptations are needed and what underlying conditions must be addressed for actions to succeed. Progress therefore depends not only on technical improvements or community capacity, but also on the broader institutional and political environments in which conservation takes place.

5

Conclusion: building equity through action and learning

The purpose of this analysis has been to take a deep dive into the kinds of actions that site-level actors propose to address equity and governance challenges in PCAs. By analysing more than 2,250 proposed actions from almost 50 SAGE assessments, grouped into 20 thematic categories and examined across principles, geographies and actors, the study provides insights into how equity may be improved in practice from the ground up. The focus has been on understanding the types of actions that local actors themselves put forward as practical solutions. Several conclusions stand out:

1. The large number of action categories represents a great breadth in actions that can be purposed to address different aspects of governance and equity. Despite the 20 thematic categories covering a wide range of challenges and strategies, it should not be forgotten that they are a succinct summary of the site-level actors' suggestions, each composed of diversity and detail in specific strategies and priorities. The 20 common action categories present a useful glossary for inspiration. But creativity and political sensitivity are required to adapt and tailor them to specific site contexts.
2. The widespread presence of awareness, capacity building and information-sharing actions suggests that many sites see strengthening knowledge, skills and communication as fundamental actions to strengthen equity. These measures appear feasible, immediately actionable and relevant across governance concerns.
3. Regional- and country-level variation shows that while equity cannot be pursued through a single model, common categories provide a baseline for comparison and exchange. Southeast Asia's emphasis on communication, South America's focus on leadership and institutional strengthening, and most of Africa's prioritisation of livelihoods and resource management highlight how governance challenges and entry points diverge across contexts.
4. Actor-group patterns reveal whose priorities are most at risk of being overlooked in aggregate analysis. Women, youth and Indigenous Peoples consistently emphasised participation, representation and recognition, often in ways that other groups did not. Paying attention to these contributions is critical for ensuring that governance processes respond to diverse perspectives rather than only to the most frequently mentioned categories.
5. The results highlight persistent gaps. Recognition and distribution remain less visible compared to procedural measures, particularly in relation to formal rights, tenure and structural power imbalances. Gender and inclusivity are implicit in the SAGE framework but surface most clearly through the

At the same time, they are not sufficient on their own: categories linked to deeper shifts in power — such as leadership strengthening, political support and knowledge integration — are much less frequent, underscoring areas that may require targeted facilitation and support.

proposals of specific groups themselves, suggesting that more explicit attention may be needed in both facilitation and analysis.

Conservation practitioners and other site-level actors can use SAGE to ground complex governance discussions in fundamental, practical and locally relevant actions. With sufficient political will and endurance, they can also work to strengthen deeper-level enabling conditions, such as trust, dialogue and institutional support, that make more ambitious transformative actions possible. The SEGA initiative provides an opportunity to connect sites, amplify marginalised

voices and build communities of practice that share lessons not only from successes but also from barriers and adaptations.

Equitable governance is not achieved through one-off actions or uniform templates. It is an evolving process shaped by context, contested meanings of equity, and the structural conditions that enable or constrain change. By documenting the actions that actors themselves propose, SAGE offers a unique window into how equity can be locally pursued, and into the opportunities for strengthening governance through action, reflection and shared learning.

Related reading

Franks, P (2023) Site-level Assessment of Governance and Equity (SAGE) for protected and conserved areas: manual for SAGE facilitators. IIED, London. www.iied.org/21461iied

IIED, Scaling up Equitable Governance in Area-based Conservation (SEGA), www.iied.org/scaling-equitable-governance-area-based-conservation-sega

Pinto, R and Dehmel, N (2023) SAGE and its early contributions to improvements in governance of area-based conservation. IIED, London. www.iied.org/21316iied

Dehmel, N (2025) Insights from equitable governance assessments in conservation areas around the world, *Conservation Biology*, 40(1), e70101. doi:10.1111/cobi.70101.

References

- CBD (2022a) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: Draft decision submitted by the President. Agenda item 9A, 15th meeting Part II, Montreal, Canada, 7–19 December 2022. CBD/COP/15/L.25.
- CBD (2022b) Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: draft decision submitted by the President. Agenda item 9B, 15th meeting Part II, Montreal, Canada, 7–19 December 2022. CBD/COP/15/L.26.
- Clarke, P and Jupiter, SD (2010) Law, custom and community-based natural resource management in Kubulau District (Fiji), *Environmental Conservation*, 37(1), pp.98–106. doi:10.1017/S0376892910000354.
- Dawson, NM, Coolsaet, B, Sterling, EJ, Loveridge, R, Gross-Camp, ND, Wongbusarakum, S, Sangha, KK, Scherl, LM, Phuong Phan, H, Zafra-Calvo, N et al. (2021) The role of Indigenous peoples and local communities in effective and equitable conservation, *Ecology and Society*, 26(3), 19. doi:10.5751/ES-12625-260319.
- Díaz, S, Demissew, S, Carabias, J, Joly, C, Lonsdale, M, Ash, N, Larigauderie, A, Adhikari, JR, Arico, S, Báldi, A and Bartuska, A (2015) The IPBES Conceptual Framework — connecting nature and people, *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 14, pp.1–16. doi:10.1016/j.cosust.2014.11.002.
- Franks, P and Booker, F (2018) Governance Assessment for Protected and Conserved Areas (GAPA): early experience of a multi-stakeholder methodology for enhancing equity and effectiveness. IIED, London. www.iied.org/17632iied
- Gaymer, CF, Stadel, AV, Ban, NC, Cárcamo, PF, Ierna Jr, J and Lieberknecht, LM (2014) Merging top-down and bottom-up approaches in marine protected areas planning: experiences from around the globe, *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems*, 24(S2), pp.128–144. doi:10.1002/aqc.2508.
- Hockings, M, Stolton, S, Leverington, F, Dudley, N and Courrau, J (2006) Evaluating effectiveness: a framework for assessing management effectiveness of protected areas. 2nd edition. IUCN, Gland and Cambridge.
- Martin, A, Gross-Camp, N, Kebede, B, McGuire, S and Munyarukaza, J (2014) Whose environmental justice? Exploring local and global perspectives in a payment for ecosystem services scheme in Rwanda, *Geoforum*, 54, pp.167–177. doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2013.02.006.
- McDermott, M, Mahanty, S and Schreckenber, K (2013) Examining equity: a multidimensional framework for assessing equity in payments for ecosystem services, *Environmental Science and Policy*, 33, pp.416–427. doi:10.1016/j.envsci.2012.10.006.
- Ostrom, E (1990) Governing the commons: the evolution of institutions for collective action. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511807763.
- Pearse, R, Schlosberg, D, Rickards, L, della Bosca, H, Moraes, O and de Kleyn, L (2025) Compounding barriers to environmental justice, *Local Environment*, 30(11), pp.1–16. doi:10.1080/13549839.2025.2471005.
- Pienkowski, T, Clark, M, Jagadish, A, Albert, A, Brar, M, Breedveld, T, Chinangwa, L, Gohil, D, Irumba, D, Kanaan, R et al. (2025) Diagnosing scaling bottlenecks in 10 community conservation initiatives in South and East Africa, *Conservation Biology* (preprint). doi:10.1111/cobi.70149.
- Ruano-Chamorro, C, Gurney, GG, Mangubhai, S, Fox, M, Lau, J, Naisilisili, W, Dulunaqio, S and Cinner, JE (2024) Perceived equity in marine management and conservation: exploring gender intersectionality in Fiji, *Biological Conservation*, 296, 110692. doi:10.1016/j.biocon.2024.110692.
- Schreckenber, K, Franks, P, Martin, A and Lang, B (2016) Unpacking equity for protected area conservation, *Parks*, 22(2), pp.11–26. doi:10.2305/IUCN.CH.2016.PARKS-22-2MdK.en.
- Zafra-Calvo, N, Pascual, U, Brockington, D, Coolsaet, B, Cortés-Vázquez, JA, Gross-Camp, N, Palomo, I and Burgess, ND (2017) Towards an indicator system to assess equitable management in protected areas, *Biological Conservation*, 211(A), pp.134–141. doi:10.1016/j.biocon.2017.05.014.

What kind of actions do local actors suggest to improve social equity and governance at their conservation sites? This research presents a thematic analysis of 2,252 actions proposed through 49 Site-level Assessments of Governance and Equity (SAGE) of protected and conserved areas across 19 countries. These actions were suggested by Indigenous Peoples, local communities, protected area managers, government authorities and nongovernmental organisations as practical strategies to address identified governance challenges through SAGE's participatory, actor-led methodology. Spanning 20 categories, the actions range from fundamental to transformational.

IIED is an international policy and research organisation working with partners globally to build a fairer, more sustainable world. Together, we challenge the destructive economic models, unjust power dynamics, entrenched mindsets and protectionist laws that perpetuate poverty, suppress rights and hinder progress towards a thriving world. We explore solutions to complex economic, social and environmental crises, using research, action and influencing to tackle the root causes of climate change, nature loss and inequality.



International Institute for Environment and Development
44 Southampton Buildings, London WC2A 1AP, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399
www.iied.org

Funded by:



Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

Funded by the UK government through the Darwin Initiative. However, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of this donor.



Knowledge
Products