WWF and IIED working together to support learning for conservation

iied

Climate-Smart People-Centred Conservation

A new framework for socially-just conservation in a changing climate

Policy pointers

1. Climate-smart people-centred conservation (CSPCC) is an all-embracing approach to conservation that brings together climate change and human wellbeing into all conservation programming for lasting legacy.

2. Effective implementation of CSPCC requires that the principles which underpin the existing approaches of climate-smart and people-centred (and pro-poor) conservation are explicitly considered and addressed throughout the conservation programme cycle of define-design-implement-analyse/adapt-share and the development of an integrated strategy that reflects both approaches.

3. While few of the individual CSPPC principles are new, assembling them into one comprehensive framework provides a unique lens for thinking about priorities within conservation programming in the face of competing demands from different stakeholders, as well as establishing a common foundation for reflection and learning across programmes.

4. The CSPCC framework enables policy makers and practitioners to make clear choices over "business as usual conservation" or approaches that proactively seek to tackle climate change, human wellbeing and social justice goals.

Summary

WWF-UK, through its portfolio of programmes supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has pioneered an approach to conservation which has dual climate change and human wellbeing objectives – an approach it termed "climate-smart, pro-poor conservation". Working with WWF-UK, IIED started by developing an analytical framework for "climate-smart pro-poor conservation" to help the different programmes reflect on the relative emphasis they placed on different climate-smart and pro-poor principles and the extent to which they combined the two approaches. A process of mapping, workshopping and reflection highlighted strengths and weaknesses associated with the framework – not least the fact that some countries and/or programmes reject the term "pro-poor" for various political or ideological reasons. Based on learning from this exercise a revised framework has been developed which makes a clear distinction between substantive and procedural principles, and between those that reflect a "do no harm" approach and those that actively strive to "do good". While there is little new in the individual climate-smart, people-centred and cross-cutting principles that have been identified, assembling them into one comprehensive, integrated framework is a new development that should help advance conservation programming by stimulating debate, and by providing a practical tool for reflecting on core objectives and ensuring alignment of programming strategies with these objectives and organisational policies. Learning from this experience, and making informed choices about principles that might have been over-looked or under-emphasised in the past can thereby help to strengthen programme design and implementation.

Introduction

WWF-UK describes the work of the portfolio of programmes that is supported with funding from DFID as "climate-smart, pro-poor conservation" (CSPPC). WWF-UK does not specifically define the term CSPPC but the overall objective of the portfolio of work is "to influence policies and practices so that they sustain or restore ecosystem services and tackle climate change, in order to secure and/or improve the wellbeing of poor women and men."

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) has been working with WWF-UK and associated country and regional programmes to explore the different ways in which CSPPC has been interpreted and applied, both in theory and in practice. Since WWF is the only organisation to use the specific term CSPPC, we reviewed the literature associated with its component parts - climate-smart conservation and pro-poor conservation – and we developed a draft analytical framework[1] for exploring the different emphases that the different WWF programmes place on each of the principles (see fig 1). This briefing presents a revised version of the framework (see fig 2) based on its testing by the WWF programmes, including three case studies in Tanzania, Nepal and Colombia.

---

[1] Roe, D (2016) Climate-smart Pro-Poor Conservation: An evolving framework for exploring conservation programmes. WWF Briefing, WWF-UK, Woking

Climate-Smart (CS) Principles	Pro-Poor (PP) Principles
1. **"Do good"**: Deliberately contribute to tackling climate change through conservation: a. Contribute to **building the resilience/adaptive capacity of local communities (CBA)** b. Enhance the capacity of ecosystems to **reduce climate vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities** *for people* **(EBA)** c. **Build ecosystem and species resilience** to climate change (conserve adequate and appropriate space to enhance adaptation capacity) d. Contribute to **climate change mitigation** through emission reductions and removals	1. **"Do good"**: Deliberately contribute to improving human well-being through conservation: a. Enhance **wellbeing of local people** at conservation sites b. Ensure delivery of ecosystem services critical for **wellbeing at the landscape level** c. Contribute to national <u>sustainable development</u>
2. Ensure that **project impacts are sustainable in a changing climate (climate proofing)**	2. Deliberately **target benefits at the poorest** or more vulnerable groups
3. **"Do no harm"**: Avoid or mitigate activities that may undermine resilience/adaptive capacity of people and ecosystems	3. "**Do no harm**": Avoid or mitigate negative social impacts that create or exacerbate poverty
4. Recognise **differences in distribution of climate change impacts** (between localities, between rich and poor, between men and women etc)	4. Recognise differences in distribution of social impacts of conservation (between men and women, rich and poor etc) ie **Social differentiation**
5. **Identify and manage trade-offs** (between adaptation and mitigation, with adaptation approaches, between CS and other goals)	5. **Identify and manage trade-offs** (between different groups of poor people, between different PP approaches, between PP and other goals)
6. **Adopt adaptive management and learning-by-doing** to reflect changing climate conditions and uncertainties	6. Ensure **equity in distribution of costs and benefits** at different levels and between different groups
7. **Reduce other environmental stresses** (so as not to exacerbate climate-induced impacts)	7. **Recognise and protect the rights** of marginalised groups, Indigenous Peoples and local communities
8. **Focus conservation goals on future conditions not past**	8. Focus conservation efforts on species and/or **sites that are important to poor people**
9. **Prioritise** actions based on **use of best available climate science and knowledge** (including Traditional Ecological Knowledge)	9. Ensure **participation** in decision making and access to information by poor, women, Indigenous peoples and other marginalised groups
Common Principles	
A. Understand the local/national context (past, present and future)	
B. Work across scales (local to global)	
C. Collaborate and communicate across sectors and disciplines	
D. Use ecosystem/landscape level approaches	
E. Tackle the policies, institutions and processes that present barriers to CS or PP achievements (create an enabling environment)	

Which CSPPC Principles have strongest emphasis in WWF Programmes?

The climate-smart principles that were given the strongest emphasis by WWF staff across the WWF portfolio were "prioritise actions based on use of best available climate science and knowledge"; "do no harm: avoid or mitigate activities that may undermine resilience/adaptive capacity of people and ecosystems"; and two of the "do good" principles: "contribute to building the resilience/adaptive capacity of local communities" and "enhance the capacity of ecosystems to reduce climate vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities for people."

Of the pro-poor principles, the two that were given strongest emphasis by WWF staff across the portfolio were the "do good" principle - "contribute to national sustainable development" and "ensure participation in decision-making and access to information". These were closely followed by another "do good" principle: "enhance well-being of local people at conservation sites."

The principles that were given the least emphasis across the programmes were:

- "Recognise differences in the distribution of climate change impacts"

- "Identify and manage trade-offs"

- "Focus on sites/species important to the poor"

In some cases, however, the low emphasis on these principles may simply have been a result of difficulties in understanding and translating these complex concepts into practice.

In terms of differences across the portfolio, the Latin American programmes placed far more emphasis on climate-smart principles than the African programmes. Nepal fell in between Latin America and Africa in its emphasis on climate-smart principles but emphasised pro-poor principles much more strongly than other programmes.[2]

A Revised Framework

Based on the discussions with the WWF programmes during the learning initiative, a revised framework of principles is now proposed (Fig 2). Key issues that are reflected in these changes include:

Pro-poor principles. In both Tanzania and Colombia the term pro-poor was considered inappropriate. In Tanzania, in political circles and elsewhere, emphasis is placed on addressing the needs and rights of "disadvantaged groups" rather than poor people per se. In Colombia, the most disadvantaged groups are Indigenous Peoples whom do not consider themselves poor, and indeed find the term offensive. Our proposal therefore is to use the term "people centred conservation" rather than "pro-poor conservation"[3]. This does nothing to clarify what the term actually means (which is articulated by the principles), but hopefully provides an overall framing that is more universally acceptable.

---

[2] In discussion at a PPA workshop WWF Nepal staff noted that they have a long history of pro-poor programming in Nepal and also that contributing to poverty reduction is a political imperative for the legitimacy of any type of NGO irrespective of their mission.

[3] The descriptor has been changed, but the derived principles remain those associated with the term "pro-poor" in the literature.

Climate-smart principles. The two adaptation principles in the draft framework have been merged into one principle on building human resilience. As separate principles they created a false dichotomy between community based adaptation (CBA) and ecosystem based adaptation (EBA) which both aim to enhance human resilience to climate change – largely by different means but good CBA may include elements of EBA and vice versa.

Sub-categories of principles. The climate-smart and people-centred principles have been divided into four groupings: "Do Good", "Do No Harm", "Deal with Risk and Uncertainty" and "Be Fair". This helps to give the overall framework more structure - distinguishing to a certain extent between substantive principles – in terms of well-being the choice to either meet a minimum standard of doing no harm or to proactively strive to do good - and procedural principles.

Common principles. These have been renamed as cross-cutting "best practice" principles to reflect the fact that they should be evident not just in both climate-smart and people - centred approaches but in good conservation practice more broadly. Some of the principles that were previously listed as specific to climate-smart conservation and/or pro-poor conservation have been moved into this category as they apply to conservation more broadly (for example the need to identify and manage trade-offs and the need to use the best available science and knowledge).

Plain English: The wording of many of the principles has been clarified to more clearly convey the meaning of the principle.

There is no recipe for how much emphasis a given conservation programme should place on each principle. That said, with this framework there is an important distinction to be made between the main principles (1-8) which should be applied at least to some degree by any programme that claims to be climate-smart and people centred, and the sub-principles (1.1-1.5) which are options, each of which can be applied at any level from zero to very strong emphasis.

Figure 2: A Framework of Principles for Climate-smart People-Centred Conservation

Climate-smart People-centred Conservation Principles		
Climate-smart Conservation Principles		**People Centred Conservation Principles**
1. Deliberately contribute to tackling climate change through conservation: 1.1 Deliberately use conservation to contribute to building the resilience of local communities to current and projected climate change. 1.2 Deliberately conserve adequate and appropriate diversity and space to build ecosystem and species resilience to current and projected climate change. 1.3 Deliberately use conservation to contribute to climate change mitigation through emission reductions and removals.	**DO GOOD** Do good can be interpreted at 3 different levels of ambition: • Human wellbeing/climate resilience is the primary objective of conservation • Human wellbeing /climate resilience is an important but secondary objective (co-benefit) of conservation • Improve human wellbeing/climate resilience to reduce threats to conservation	1. Deliberately contribute to improving human well-being through conservation: 1.1. Deliberately use conservation to contribute to national sustainable development. 1.2. Deliberately use conservation to contribute to ecosystem services critical for wellbeing at landscape level. 1.3. Deliberately use conservation to enhance wellbeing of local people at conservation sites. 1.4. Deliberately target benefits from conservation at the poorest or more disadvantaged groups. 1.5. Deliberately focus conservation on species and/or sites that are most important to local people.

2. Avoid or modify conservation-related activities that may increase the vulnerability of people or nature to climate change.	**DO NO HARM** • Human wellbeing/ climate resilience should not be negatively affected by conservation.		2. Avoid or modify conservation-related activities that may create or exacerbate poverty and/or marginalisation
3. Reduce non-climate threats to conservation such as pollution or habitat degradation that may increase climate change risks. 4. Adopt adaptive management and learning- by-doing to reflect changing climate conditions and uncertainties. 5. Focus conservation project design on future conditions, not just past, and on managing for change rather than for persistence to enhance sustainability of impacts in a changing climate. 6. Recognise differences in distribution of climate vulnerability and impacts between localities, communities, rich and poor, men and women and adjust conservation activities accordingly. 7. Ensure that climate vulnerable people participate in decision-making and have access to relevant information. 8. Use Traditional Ecological Knowledge to contribute to building climate resilience and/or climate change mitigation.	**DEAL WITH RISK & UNCERTAINTY**	**BE FAIR**	3. Recognise differences in distribution of social impacts of conservation between men and women, rich and poor, local and national levels and adjust conservation activities accordingly to promote equity 4. Recognise and promote the rights of communities, groups and individuals, including Indigenous Peoples, poorer people, women, and other disadvantaged groups 5. Ensure that Indigenous Peoples, the poor, women, and other disadvantaged groups participate in decision-making and have access to relevant information

Cross-cutting "best practice" conservation principles[4]
A. **Understand the local/national context (past, present and future)**
B. **Work across scales (local to global)**
C. **Collaborate and communicate across sectors and disciplines**
D. **Use ecosystem/landscape level approaches**
E. **Address the policies, institutions and processes that present barriers to CS or PP achievements**
F. **Identify and manage trade-offs between different approaches**
G. **Prioritise actions based on use of best available science and knowledge (climate science, biological science etc)**

---

[4] It is essential, in designing and implementing climate-smart people centred conservation interventions, that the "best practice" conservation principles are also applied.

Deliberately use conservation to contribute to building the resilience of local communities to current and projected climate change: *WWF Colombia has been working alongside farmers in three micro-catchments to implement climate-smart farming. In exchange for the reconversion of productive systems, the farmers receive advice and support on alternative farming practices that are climate resilient and beneficial to livelihoods – examples include planting avocados or blackberries and guinea pig or chicken farming.*

Ensure that climate vulnerable people participate in decision-making and have access to relevant information: *The SWAUM (Tanzania) programme's multi-stakeholder platform is a key mechanism for providing representatives of the poor and disadvantaged with the relevant information and opportunity to participate in dialogue with local decision makers. Many of these poor and disadvantaged are also vulnerable to climate change, and are able to share their concerns through the MSP.*
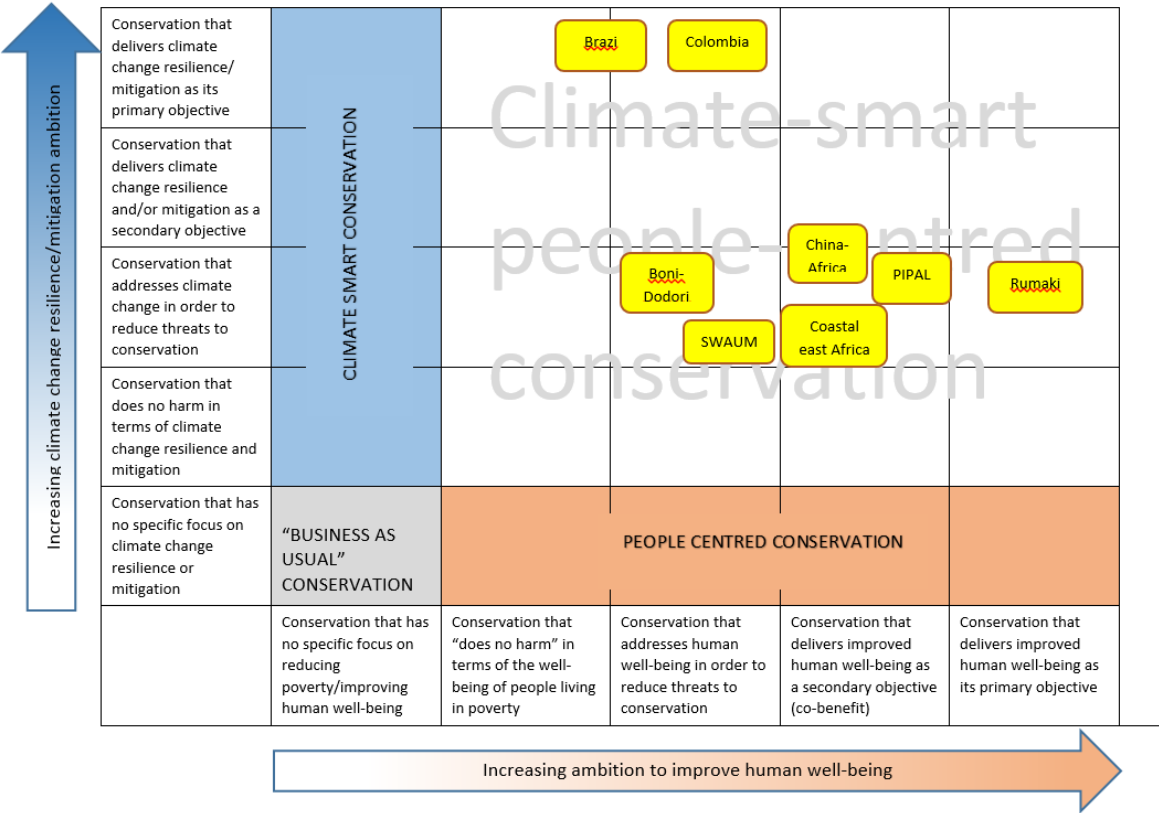
Avoid or modify conservation-related activities that may create or exacerbate poverty and/or marginalisation: *In Nepal, WWF colleagues noted that their conservation-related activities have led to an increase in human wildlife conflict (HWC). To ameliorate the negative social impacts of HWC, WWF Nepal has been supporting rapid response teams and providing compensation to those affected.*

A Typology for Climate-Smart, People Centred Conservation

The extent to which different conservation programmes emphasise different principles in the framework can be used to characterise their overall approach to CSPCC, and particularly the extent to which they actively seek to use conservation to address climate change or human wellbeing objectives (do good) as opposed to simply trying to avoid undermining these objectives (do no harm). A CSPCC typology can serve as a useful tool for highlighting differences in approach between different conservation programmes.

The CSPPC typology proposed in Figure 3 is based on the "do good" and "do no harm" sections of the framework of CSPCC principles. To qualify as climate-smart and people-centred, a programme should aim to at least do no harm in terms of resilience/mitigation and human well-being, ie sit within the white area. Programmes that sit in the bottom left hand corner of the matrix are those that have no climate change or human wellbeing ambitions. Those in the far left hand column have climate-smart ambitions but no human wellbeing ambitions and those that sit in the bottom row have human wellbeing ambitions but no climate-smart ambitions. Figure 3 provides an illustration of how different programmes have different emphases – the positions marked are those that participants at a WWF workshop held in May 2016 thought that their programmes occupied.

Increasing climate change resilience/mitigation ambition →

	CLIMATE SMART CONSERVATION				
Conservation that delivers climate change resilience/ mitigation as its primary objective		Brazi	Colombia		
Conservation that delivers climate change resilience and/or mitigation as a secondary objective					
Conservation that addresses climate change in order to reduce threats to conservation		Boni-Dodori	China-Africa / Coastal east Africa	PIPAL	Rumaki
			SWAUM			
Conservation that does no harm in terms of climate change resilience and mitigation					
Conservation that has no specific focus on climate change resilience or mitigation	"BUSINESS AS USUAL" CONSERVATION	PEOPLE CENTRED CONSERVATION			
	Conservation that has no specific focus on reducing poverty/improving human well-being	Conservation that "does no harm" in terms of the well-being of people living in poverty	Conservation that addresses human well-being in order to reduce threats to conservation	Conservation that delivers improved human well-being as a secondary objective (co-benefit)	Conservation that delivers improved human well-being as its primary objective

Increasing ambition to improve human well-being →

(Watermark text: Climate-smart people-centred conservation)

Conclusions

Using a framework of principles as the basis for facilitating learning and characterising the programming approach of a programme or project is common practice – for example in safeguards information systems for REDD+. Principles are also commonly used in a normative way to define standards to which a programme or project should conform – for example in certification schemes that assess performance against specific standards or in the operational policies of particular organisations. WWF itself has a number of organisation policies related to climate-smart and pro-poor programming that explicitly include specific principles or implicitly infer such principles. The framework proposed here uses principles in the former sense i.e. it is intended to be a characterisation rather than evaluation framework. It can help conservation programmes reflect on where the emphasis of their programming has been to date, and where it might go in the future (e.g. "Principle x is interesting and if we gave it more emphasis might help us achieve objectives A and B"). It also could be used in a normative sense (e.g "We must give more emphasis to this principle to fully align with organisational policies"), but this was not the original intent of either the framework or the broader learning initiative.

While there is little new in the individual climate-smart, people-centred and cross-cutting principles that have been identified, assembling them into one comprehensive, integrated framework is a new development. This should help to advance conservation programming by stimulating debate, and by providing a practical tool for reflecting on core objectives and ensuring alignment of programming strategies with these objectives and organisational policies. Learning from this experience, and making informed choices about principles that might have been over-looked or under-emphasised in the past can thereby help to strengthen programme design and implementation.

The CSPCC framework helps programmes reflect on and characterise their programmes. It doesn't prompt reflection on whether programme strategies are having the desired effect in terms of people-centred and/or climate-smart outcomes. This is potentially a useful next step that could enhance the value of this learning initiative.

Authors

The briefing has been written by Dilys Roe, IIED, based on a literature review prepared for WWF-UK by Dilys Roe, Phil Franks, and Francesca Booker (all IIED), with inputs from Rebecca Saunders and Mike Morris (WWF-UK).

Contact

Dilys Roe, dilys.roe@iied.org | Mike Morris, mmorris@wwf.org.uk or mike.morris.uk@outlook.com | Rebecca Saunders, rsaunders@wwf.org.uk or beckysaunders.consulting@gmail.com