Integrating Approaches to Deliver Conservation and Development Impacts at Scale:

Practitioner Guidance from a Decade of CARE-WWF Alliance Experience in Africa and Asia

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INTRODUCTION

The CARE-WWF Alliance is a pioneering partnership with deep experience implementing integrated conservation and development programs. Formed in 2008, the global partnership aims to empower the poor, especially women, and positively transform their lives and livelihoods, while protecting and restoring healthy, resilient ecosystems. In the last decade, the Alliance helped communities in Mozambique, Tanzania, and Nepal to develop and execute complementary strategies that create sustainable livelihoods and conserve natural resources and ecosystems.

In Mozambique, the Alliance worked with local communities to better manage coastal ecosystems where fisheries, mangrove forests, and smallholder agriculture support subsistence livelihoods. In Tanzania, the Alliance has empowered rural communities dependent on forests and smallholder agriculture systems with new practices that enable them to generate and save more income and better plan use and demand accountability around land and water resource management. In Nepal, CARE and WWF have partnered with local and national organizations in a long-term initiative that continues to build resilience to climate change in vulnerable communities and critical ecosystems.

Sustainable landscape experts, EcoAgriculture Partners, reviewed these three Alliance projects and interviewed key staff and stakeholders to capture lessons learned and approaches for integrating conservation and development at scale. This brief synthesizes the principles that underpin the Alliance's approach and offers practitioners two frameworks, containing strategies for integration cross-sectoral interventions and scaling up impacts, respectively.

Partnership Principles and Approach

The Alliance's overarching approach to integrated conservation and development programming is rooted in the *collaborative, adaptive management of social and ecological systems*. By implementing livelihood and ecosystem components, monitoring their status, and learning about their dynamics with stakeholders, the Alliance makes iterative adaptations to increase resilience in linked human and natural systems. Two key principles guide the Alliance's approach. *Sustainable management* emphasizes the maintenance of ecosystem services by conserving and restoring ecosystem structure and function. *Human rights* focuses on equality, equity and non-discrimination, with special attention to marginalized groups, like women, youth, indigenous peoples and the ultra-poor. Alliance experience suggests that applying these principles brings added value to people and nature.

Strategies for Integrating Conservation and Development Interventions

The approach and guiding principles manifest in the field in six ways. Together, they offer a menu of strategic options for integrating conservation and development in practice. Each of the six strategies is characterized in *Table 1*.

Table 1. *Framework of CARE-WWF Alliance Strategies for Integrating Conservation and Development Programming*

Integration strategy	What is being integrated	When to use	Why to use	How integration works in practice	CARE-WWF Alliance example
Co-equal conservation and development objectives	Joint goals reflect each sector's values and priorities	Project design	To identify ways to harmonize the needs of people and nature	Open dialogue about distinct values and consensus building on how to uphold both conservation and development values in programming	Work in Mozambique, Tanzania and Nepal demonstrates that socially inclusive and ecologically sustainable approaches add value through interventions that build resilience to climate change and other shocks and stressors.
Multi-scale, multidisciplinary analysis	Analytical approaches from different disciplines, linking distinct units of analysis	Project design and adaptive management	To provide a more holistic picture of the problem and potential intervention strategies	Use social and ecological assessments to develop a common framework that accounts for distinct units of analysis and creates space for cross-sectoral solutions	Community and ecosystem assessments (such as the Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment) were conducted to inform climate adaptation from community to watershed levels in Nepal.
Combined operational systems	Sectoral institutions' policies and operational approaches, such as budgeting or administrative systems	Project design, implementation and adaptive management	To streamline cross-sector operations	Transparent, written agreement on which aspects of each institution's policies or operational systems will be used or adapted to manage integrated programming	CARE and WWF established an agreement in Tanzania to divide indirect costs evenly, regardless of intra-institutional budget division, as an incentive for investing equally in partnership management
Implementation in a common geography	Sectoral interventions	Project design and implementation	To capture cross-sectoral benefits for both nature and people	Foster value addition through project implementation simultaneously or sequentially in the same community or geography, sometimes with the same beneficiaries	Conservation and development interventions were implemented in the same communities in Mozambique
Cross-sector interventions	Conservation and development interventions	Project design, implementation and adaptive management	To address social and ecological issues that are complex and often linked	A hybrid intervention is formed by developing and testing a theory of change about how complementary approaches from each sector work in concert to achieve social and ecological goals	Linking community- and ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change helped mainstream disaster risk reduction and adaptation planning at community and watershed levels in Nepal. Employing a rights-based approach to forest conservation empowered women through Community Forest User Groups in Nepal.
Sustainable intensification of production systems	Conservation and uses of land, water, and/or sea	Project design and implementation	To generate conservation and production benefits for farmers, herders, fishers and their communities	Integrates ecological functions and resilience into land- and seascape planning, including the design of protected areas, farming and fishing systems; for instance, agroecological production systems make best use of nature's goods and services while not damaging these resources	Community adoption of Climate Smart Agriculture practices built resilience of soils and crops to climatic changes while improving productivity in Tanzania and Mozambique. No-take zones created fish nurseries, ensuring sustainable stocks for nutrition insecure communities in Mozambique.

Strategies for Scaling Up Conservation and Development Impacts

The Alliance's overarching approach to scaling programs out and up to expand their reach and impact is rooted in *collaborative learning*. Co-learning by staff and diverse stakeholders in integrated programming is at the center of CARE-WWF scaling strategies.

Two key principles have guided the Alliance's approach to scaling. Inclusive *social learning* emphasizes the stimulation of shared understanding and innovation through group processes that engage actors from vulnerable populations to policy decision-makers. *Distributed responsibility for learning* emphasizes shared leadership in a common learning agenda to enable societal change processes.

These guiding principles have resulted in 11 generic scaling strategies that form a menu of strategic options for scaling up conservation and development impacts in practice. Three more strategies were added by EcoAgriculture Partners for delivering conservation and development benefits at a landscape scale. *Table 2* further characterizes each scaling strategy.

Table 2. *Framework of CARE-WWF Strategies for Scaling Integrated Initiatives*

Scaling strategy	When to use	Why to use	How scaling works in practice	CARE-WWF Alliance example
Build the evidence base through research with influential partners	Project design, monitoring, and evaluation	To develop common understanding by diverse stakeholders around the effectiveness of integrated interventions	Collaborative research with trusted partners produces evidence that integrated approaches work and increases the likelihood of successfully influencing government and other decision-makers	Joint research on no-take zones with the Ministries of Fisheries created buy-in for policy change in Mozambique.
Advocate for enabling policies	Project design, implementation and exit	To influence policy-makers to invest in synergistic, integrated approaches and policies	Collaborative policy advocacy increases the likelihood that different sectors will work together rather than inefficiently or at cross-purposes	Piloting Village Land Use Planning, capturing efficiency gains, and using that evidence to advocate for national policy changes enabled wider rollout of innovations across Tanzania.
Make the case for alignment with decision-maker interests	Project design, implementation and exit	To reduce risk for decision-makers in supporting policy change	Build influential champions by raising awareness about alignment with and/or benefits to decision-makers of a proposed policy or practice change	Diverse ministries advocated for the declaration of a new kind of protected area in Mozambique that allows for community participation in management and subsistence use of coastal ecosystems because it furthers both poverty alleviation and environmental objectives.
Train trainers and influencers	Project design, implementation and exit	To increase capacity and/or best practice adoption beyond the scope of those beneficiaries that the project can reach directly	Build the capacity of implementing partners to champion best practices and train or influence others to adopt them	Training government extension agents and community para-professionals through Farmer Field and Business Schools affirmed the power of demonstration and illustrated how training of trainers accelerated uptake of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices Tanzania.
Advocate for budget allocation	Project design, implementation and exit	To ensure capacity to deliver on the intention to integrate and scale through financial commitments by those with power of the purse	Where project and policy plans are not always accompanied by adequate implementation finances, advocate to ensure necessary rollout resources are budgeted and obligated	Following a capacity building workshop that cultivated champions for CSA in a district's Agricultural Ministry, trained officials successfully advocated for increased budget allocations to roll out national CSA Guidelines to the district's farmers.
Build capacity for legal enforcement	Project design, implementation and exit	To improve environmental or social outcomes, where policies are strong on paper but unenforced in practice	Analyze social and environmental policies and regulations that could be helpful in accelerating social and environmental goals, and target responsible government agencies at the appropriate level to improve their capacity for enforcement	Training district government officials, Village Natural Resource Committees, and Village Game Scouts in Participatory Forest Management laws and regulations, as well as how to enforce them, led to establishment of regular enforcement patrols and imposition of penalties for violations in Tanzania.
Promote participation in good governance	Project design, implementation and exit	To ensure inclusivity and fairness and build trust among stakeholders and in the governance system	Build capacity of rights bearers and duty bearers to increase accountability and support transparent governance systems	Facilitated dialogue between community leaders and Forest Department officials using CARE's Community Score Card led to clearer roles and responsibilities and improved accountability around natural resource and revenue management in Tanzania.
Pilot or demonstrate integrated approaches	Project design, implementation and exit	To show rather than tell that a cross-sector intervention approach is effective in advancing conservation and development outcomes	Generate experience and evidence that can be used to demonstrate and advocate for wider change	Farmer Field and Business School demonstration plots and community-based conservation learning visits led to best practice adoption in Tanzania.
Build shared standards or frameworks to improve environmental and social outcomes	Project design and implementation	To generate buy-in and improve the likelihood of stakeholder adoption	Engage influential end-users, like private sector companies, in the design of new standards or frameworks to improve social and environmental practices and outcomes	A new inclusive green growth performance assessment tool relied on input from public and private sectors, and civil society partners, for design and field testing, aimed at improving private sector adherence to the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) Centre's voluntary inclusive green growth standards.
Develop inclusive and sustainable value chains	Project design, implementation and exit	To improve production technologies, use markets to enhance opportunities for the poor and reduce the footprint of agriculture on the environment	Engage companies, farmers, processors and their associations to invest in crop systems that benefit smallholders and help sustain the ecosystems they depend on	A detailed market systems assessment that screened crops for sustainable productivity, livelihood security, and ecosystem conservation criteria has helped to facilitate the collaboration of multi-sector actors on the development of more inclusive and sustainable value chains in SAGCOT.
Employ systematic learning and strategic communications	Throughout project cycle	To understand what works and what does not in order to adaptively manage programs and to communicate strategically with practitioners and stakeholders	Hold regular meetings to reflect on project experience, to study intervention successes and challenges, and to synthesize and communicate lessons from research and experience	Proactive, strategic learning with diverse partners drove adaptive management to improve integrated planning for climate adaptation at watershed and local community catchment scales in Nepal. Capturing effective approaches in guidance documents, such as this training manual, has enabled others to adopt more integrated approaches.
Use maps for spatially explicit collaborative planning and management	Project design and implementation	To promote a common understanding of landscape problems and transparency in decision-making around proposed solutions	Spatial awareness facilitates effective scenario planning with stakeholders and generates specific information and insights needed for collaborators to determine the best geography for interventions	Employing satellite imagery in an innovative village land use planning process in Tanzania facilitated quick conflict resolution and increased time efficiency by almost 60%, delivering an inclusive plan for diverse land uses for communities across a common watershed.
Build and influence multi-stakeholder partnerships and platforms	Project design, implementation and exit	To achieve buy-in from appropriate bodies of government, companies and communities, and to supplement funds from private sector engagement	Deliberately engage in shaping multi-stakeholder partnerships and platforms with inclusive, transparent governance and strengthened facilitation and negotiation skills	The multi-sectoral Green Reference Group provides guidance and engages the parastatal SAGCOT Centre, private sector companies and government ministries to accelerate the adoption of inclusive green growth principles across the breadbasket of Tanzania.
Mobilize landscape finance	Project design and implementation	To achieve critical financing for implementing the diverse investments required for a sustainable landscape from farmers, public land managers, agribusiness firms, local entrepreneurs, and infrastructure developers	Collaboratively develop a Landscape Action Plan, and use LIFT to analyze the financing needs of priority investments in the landscape; sharpen business and project plans; scope potential financing for landscape investments; and define successful strategies to secure funding	N/A (see LIFT for a non-Alliance example)

A Call to Practitioners

These frameworks synthesize a decade of integrated conservation and development experience from programmatic implementation to monitoring, learning, and adaptation. The Alliance will continue to capture and share evidence, lessons, and effective strategies from on-the-ground and influencing work to advance a more just and sustainable world. Practitioners are encouraged to use these frameworks and other Alliance approaches as guidance to more effectively design, implement, or adapt new and existing integrated programs. Only by adopting integrated approaches will we accelerate delivery on the Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Climate Agreements, and Conservation of Biological Diversity goals critical to the future of people and the planet.

This learning series was co-authored by EcoAgriculture Partners and the Alliance.

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