



Fauna & Flora

Saving Nature Together

**Supporting Organisational Resilience
in Partners: Evidence for Impact**

July 2024



Group photo - shark monitoring training in Cabo Verde. © Annkathrin Sharp / Fauna & Flora

Impact evidence report from our Conservation Resilience Fund

Summary

This briefing shares the impact evidence from the first three years of Fauna & Flora's Conservation Resilience Fund, a fund established in 2021 with support from Arcadia to accompany our partners in becoming stronger, more flexible and better able to survive and thrive even during the most challenging future situations.

We have found impact evidence at three levels of change: 1) tangible adoption of skills, systems and practices 2) organisational independence and resilience 3) strengthened biodiversity conservation. Our work towards organisational resilience allowed each organisation to define its own priorities, where strong buy-in, leadership and teamwork allowed for a more substantial impact. Biodiversity conservation impact happens because of our ongoing, long-term, trusting partnerships.

Approach & Rationale

Working with in-country partners has long been at the heart of Fauna & Flora's work. We know local expertise is vital to have effective outcomes and legitimacy.

We also believe that strong organisations are crucial to achieve impact. Organisations are often seen as the vehicle that allows passionate experts to act on their goals.

Fauna & Flora's partnerships encompass both shared conservation action and accompanying partners as they build resilient organisations. Well-functioning, accountable, and credible organisations enable their motivated staff to use their skills to influence others and achieve the greatest possible outcomes for nature.

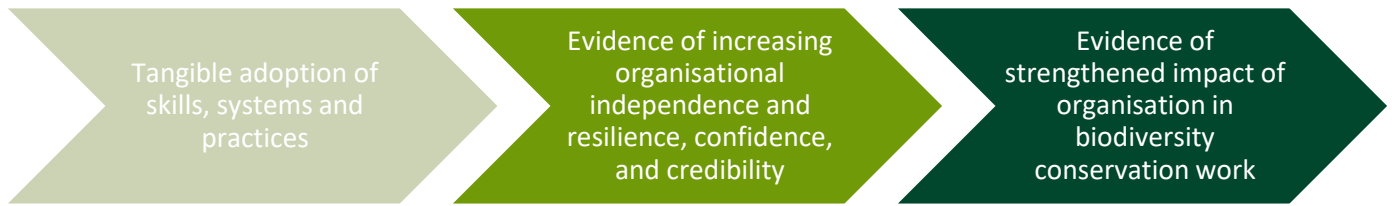
Foundations for impact

The Conservation Resilience Fund has allowed us to test the impact of several approaches to supporting organisational resilience. However, essential groundwork was needed before the impact could be seen.

First, we needed to build a shared understanding of strengths, gaps and priorities for organisational strengthening. For this, partners first explored 12 key themes and prioritised focal areas for their organisation. Examples of their chosen areas include financial management, strategic planning, internal communication, and fundraising.

After this, Fauna & Flora and partners organised and implemented activities to influence those focal areas. For example, having discussions, writing plans and policies, buying equipment, or enabling training sessions for staff. The Fund supported access to mentors and technical specialists, sub-grants, formal training programmes and peer-to-peer learning exchanges.

Our impact



We strongly believe that organisations must define what ‘resilience’ looks like for them. Every organisation is unique! However, to help us understand the Conservation Resilience Fund’s impact, we explored three levels of change:

Impact at Level 1: Tangible adoption of skills, systems and practices

What this level looks like

- New or updated tools and processes (like financial management systems, organisational policies, or strategic plans) being used in practice.
- Individuals applying newly acquired skills, like coaching, conflict management, proposal writing, or grant management.

What we found

This level of change was the most straightforward level to influence, and we found significant evidence of the Conservation Resilience Fund’s impact here.

For example, partners reported changes such as:

- Organisation leaders adapting their communication style depending on the situation, especially listening more to staff and adopting a ‘coaching’ approach rather than telling staff what to do.
- A new management structure to facilitate better workflow and increase efficiency by introducing a new Head of Operations, which has improved communication and has given the CEO more time for strategic decisions.
- Improved Board function through clearer job descriptions.
- Monthly management account reports being produced and reviewed as a normal part of operations.
- A new best practice for managing the largest ongoing project, aiding information flow for the most important tasks.



“We have come from nothing to a place where we actually recognise what our needs are... we are in a place now where we have a database, we are getting training for fundraising, welcome packs are created and we have forms for our regional representatives to ask for funds for them to go represent themselves, we have a brand-new website which will be in three languages. I don’t think any organisations would be able to tell you where the finish line is, which is also exciting as it makes you keep going. Every day is an exciting journey.” - Carlien Roodt, International Rangers Federation

Our impact (continued)

Level 2: Evidence of increasing organisational independence, confidence and credibility

What this level looks like

- Individuals and organisations proactively and independently applying new skills and processes with results for the long-term benefit of the organisation.
- Stronger networks, with more connections to ideas, people and other resources
- Recognition and respect from decision-makers, like government, donors, partners or the communities where they work

What we found

- At Ya'axché Conservation Trust, strengthened internal communication practices help staff understand why things happen at the organisation and encourage them to work together rather than in team siloes.
- After creating a strategic plan, writing policies, and buying office equipment, Zam Zam gained credibility as a reliable organisation for donors to support. The Executive Director directly credits the Conservation Resilience Fund with helping Zam Zam obtain a subsequent grant from the local government.
- With the strengthened confidence and skills of their new gender officer, the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association won a grant to promote gender equity and won a Gender Justice Charter Award from the International Land Coalition.
- When Fundación Cuero y Salado started using their staff management structure, staff were better able to complement each other's work.

Level 3: Evidence of strengthened impact of organisation in biodiversity conservation work

What this level looks like

- Organisations having broader, deeper or more sustained conservation impact, even when contexts change.
- Organisations sharing their expertise with others, locally, nationally or globally.

What we found

All partners involved in the Conservation Resilience Fund have ongoing shared conservation work with Fauna & Flora, so they are already delivering conservation impact, and sharing knowledge, skills, and learning. So, change at this level takes place through both organisational resilience-building and ongoing conservation work. Some examples of the impacts that partners reported at this level include:

- Fundação Príncipe onboarded an Executive Director from the island where they work. This new leader is well-placed for the organisation to have more sustained and relevant impact, particularly in terms of its legitimacy for national-level advocacy.
- Fundación Cuero y Salado reported that the long-term, trusting relationship with Fauna & Flora supported them in strengthening over time, with a positive conservation impact. With their strengthened protection, the threats facing Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge are stabilising and ecosystems are returning to their initial condition.
- Both Oceans Alive Foundation and Fundación Cuero y Salado reported that they used their strategies to find and prioritise good fit opportunities within their context.



"Resilience is more than just taking care of our day-to-day business; it is about investing time and resources in strategic actions that can have an impact over time." - Ana Paz, Fundación Cuero y Salado (FUCSA), Honduras



Participants at the Leadership Retreat in Cambridge. Credit: Bobbi Hope / Fauna & Flora

“We will continue to focus on building greater capacity within each of these areas as a core focus of our efforts... We hope that investing in the Conservancy’s people and process, as this grant has done, will ultimately help boost morale and increase productivity – both at an individual level and across the organization more broadly.” - Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya

Enabling conditions – How impact happens

How can we best have impact? Every organisation is unique, but, over the three years implementing this fund, we found some key enabling conditions for change:

Set the direction: Setting their own direction for organisational resilience strengthening gives organisations the confidence and energy to drive those changes forward.

Build buy-in: Buy-in and interest are crucial for skills or methods to be adopted in practice. We worked with some partners where key individuals simply were not interested; in these cases, there was less impact.

Be flexible: When partners can do what they need, in the way they need it, the work has more impact. This includes adapting plans during implementation.

Leadership is crucial: Supportive and visionary leaders play a significant role in applying skills for organisational impact, as does involving multiple levels of authority in change management.

Support both materials and skills: Partners benefit from having both the materials needed to run an organisation (software, an organisational chart, computers, policies, etc.) and the knowledge or skills to use them effectively.

Follow up and follow up: Organisational change takes time. Regular follow-up keeps the work on people’s to-do lists moving forward. It also helps people create new habits over time.

Teamwork makes the dream work: When the entire team works together, whether through a shared strategy or clearer communication flows, it cements change for deeper impact. Partners regularly reported the importance of teaming, coordination, and a shared vision for organisational resilience.

Take the time: Level 3 impact on biodiversity conservation is possible only in the context of long-term, trusting partnerships. It takes time for organisations to change in ways that contribute to conservation impact. Moreover, without trust, they may not be open to those changes.

We anticipate that changes will continue to emerge over time, as the effects of their work through Resilience Fund opportunities become apparent to partners and to us. Fortunately, Fauna & Flora’s long-term model of support means that we will continue to accompany partners on their onward journeys.

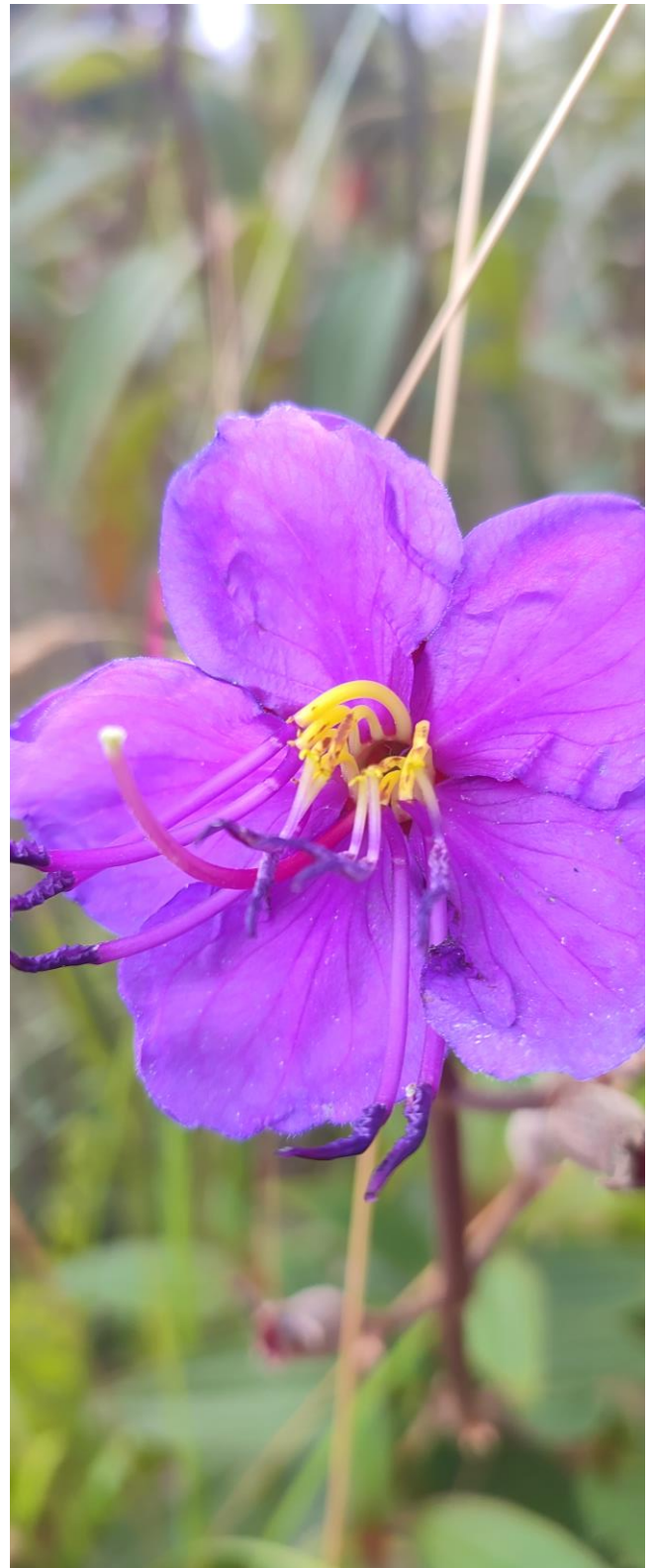
The authors

This document was produced by the Fauna & Flora's Partnerships and Organisational Development Programme, a cross-cutting team with a global remit, supporting staff and partners in all Fauna & Flora programming.

Our programmatic vision is a world where strong partnerships and resilient partners have resulted in our partner organisations achieving and sustaining their conservation goals.

Thank you!

We would like to thank Arcadia for their ongoing support towards our and our partners' conservation efforts.



Purple flower in Chhimantani National Park. Credit: Alfredo Gotine. Fauna & Flora

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