

CONSERVATION COLLECTIVE

THEORY OF CHANGE



A report by NPC
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CONSERVATION
COLLECTIVE

Foreword from our Founder

Well-directed philanthropic funding has a massive role to play in tackling the greatest challenge of our time – the ongoing breakdown of the Earth’s system on which we depend for everything. Worryingly, only a tiny proportion of total philanthropy is directed towards the environment.

The Conservation Collective encourages budding philanthropists to give money to the most effective grassroots initiatives, in the places that they love. Our fast-growing network of locally focused foundations has supported an extraordinarily exciting line-up of nature restoration initiatives across the world.

We’ve been delighted to be able to work with NPC, thanks to generous funding from MAVA Foundation, to create this Theory of Change. Created with input from everyone in the global network, it outlines why we do what we do, and how. Proving us with a robust framework to measure and report on the impact of our work at every level of our operations – project, foundation and centrally. It will be fundamental to ensuring we operate as effectively as possible and that we constantly improve what we do, helping us to scale fast enough to try and meet the greatest issue of our time.

I’m so proud to be able to support this movement and hope that you’ll find this Theory of Change enlightening.

Ben Goldsmith

Founder and Chairman of the Conservation Collective.



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1. THE CONSERVATION COLLECTIVE THEORY OF CHANGE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Conservation Collective is a global network of foundations rooted in their communities working together to:

Preserve, protect, and regenerate biodiverse ecosystems on land and below water.

Support local natural environments to prevent, slow down, and adapt to climate change.

The Conservation Collective’s theory of change is built on the central belief that people care deeply about protecting and restoring the places they know and love.

The Conservation Collective believes in the power of communities to identify local solutions to globally shared challenges. Member foundations work with community champions to identify and overcome the most important obstacles to change, provide a vehicle for collective action, and bring new funding for local environmental causes.

To achieve their goals, foundations highlight the ways in which the natural world and human life are interconnected. Their theory of change asserts that it is possible for people to behave in ways that are consistent with respect and care for the environment, whilst also caring for other aspects of their lives and their livelihoods. The Conservation Collective believes a ‘paradigm shift’ is possible, in which preserving and regenerating the natural world is no longer seen as a burden, but as a desirable good for people socially, culturally, and economically. This message resonates most when it is spoken by communities themselves.



The Conservation Collective’s model operates in defined areas - a locally based model - to encourage individuals and businesses who care passionately about their local area to give to their local foundation, which then gives grants to the best grassroots conservation initiatives. Their theory of change asserts that unrestricted and long-term funding for environmental projects enables grantees to be as impactful as possible. They actively seek institutional and individual donors, making a compelling case to them to support local environmental projects. Their theory of change asserts that



by visibly demonstrating tangible impact on the ground, momentum - or a ‘multiplier effect’ - builds, through which donations and support for environmental and climate solutions continue to grow naturally.

Aside from fundraising, local foundations fund and deliver projects to preserve, protect, and regenerate natural environments. Activities include influencing stakeholders like hotels, farmers and fishermen, raising awareness, influencing governments, and researching environmental issues and solutions. The ideal project is one delivered by communities themselves, but foundations will also deliver strategic projects directly to fill gaps. Independent funding and being part of the Collective helps foundations be bolder and take risks when deciding which projects to invest in. This can include kickstarting new initiatives that could ultimately lead to more significant and sustained change.

The results and lessons from each project are shared across the Conservation Collective network and beyond to improve understanding of what works and to help raise the profile of environmental action.

The global Conservation Collective movement supports foundations in several ways:

- Sharing the most pressing environmental issues and effective solutions from and with all foundations across the network.
- Promoting good practice and sharing inspiration to improve efficiency.
- Giving foundations a shared voice to enhance the reach and credibility of their work.
- Increasing each foundation’s profile with larger institutional funders to support their work with the local community.

“Everywhere you look there are brilliant, passionate people working to create positive environmental change. Often they work to advance their projects and campaigns with little or no budget. The aim of the local environmental re-granting funds of the Conservation Collective is to make it easy for individuals and local businesses to provide financial support to the most effective organisations working for the protection and restoration of the natural environment of the place that they love. Small amounts of funding, strategically directed, can supercharge this work – as we are seeing across the places in which we have created these funds.”

Ben Goldsmith, Chair and Founder of the Conservation Collective



2. HOW TO READ THIS THEORY OF CHANGE

This theory of change is divided into three closely connected sections:

- A. Environmental impacts.
- B. Achieving these impacts through social, cultural and economic outcomes
- C. Creating a global movement.

A. Environmental impacts

Section one sets out the Conservation Collective’s broad environmental impacts that it aims to achieve. We have kept this short and fairly high level as there is huge variety in what the Collective and the foundations do to support the environment, which would be impossible to fully capture. The aim of this section is to provide clear headings for the different types of environmental impacts foundations work on.

B. Achieving these impacts through social, cultural and economic outcomes

Section two describes the different ways that foundations pursue their environmental impacts. We have identified eight areas that foundations work on, from supporting communities to influencing governments. Under each heading we explain the context and need for the work, followed by a description of activities, how these activities are intended to work, and what outcomes are expected.

C. Creating a global movement

Section three describes how the Conservation Collective intends to support, enhance, and amplify the work of foundations and create a global movement for change.

The Conservation Collective’s theory of change is summarised in the diagram on the next page.



Summary: The Conservation Collective's theory of change



2.1. Environmental Impacts

The Conservation Collective brings people together to find local solutions to global challenges. It supports foundations around the world to:

Preserve, protect, and regenerate biodiverse ecosystems on land and underwater

Support local natural environments to prevent, slow down and adapt to climate change.

The Conservation Collective and its local foundations contribute to these goals by working towards the following environmental impacts.

- Preserving, protecting, and regenerating natural habitats
- Helping native species to thrive
- Reducing pollution / CO2
- Slowing down and adapting to climate change

The goals and impacts above are intended to reflect the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as much as possible.

Human life depends upon a healthy planet. The Conservation Collective therefore helps people adapt their behaviour to show greater respect and care for the natural world, and to have a more productive and sustainable relationship with it.

Preserving, protecting, and regenerating the natural world can benefit people socially, culturally, and economically. For example, tourists prefer to visit well-protected environments where nature is thriving. The natural world and human society do not need to be in opposition but can find balance.

In this context, the Conservation Collective and local foundations work towards the following social, cultural and economic outcomes:

- People have a greater appreciation of the natural world and its value.
- Governments, public institutions and media to act in ways that support the natural world.
- Businesses and employees to better preserve, protect and regenerate the natural world in the fields of agriculture and food, fisheries, tourism, and other businesses.



- Changes in public / consumer behaviour to better preserve, protect and regenerate the natural world.
- Reduced waste / better waste management.
- Increased use of low carbon technology and energy.



2.2 Meeting these Goals

This section describes the various ways in which local foundations work towards the outcomes and impacts described in section one.

Each foundation aims to be embedded within a local community. Because each community will have different needs, each foundation will collaborate with local stakeholders on the best route forward. This is the starting point for all foundations; hence we describe this aspect of their work first, followed by the imperative of raising money for environmental projects. After this, foundations have several options for how to pursue their goals and what they do is determined by local needs. Hence, a broad sequence of foundation activities can be described as follows:

Foundations achieve their goals by:

Core foundation activities:

1. Working through communities.
2. Encouraging more, and more effective, environmental philanthropy.
3. Funding and supporting projects that directly preserve, protect, and regenerate habitats and species; prevent, slow down, and adapt to climate change.

Additional foundation activities, depending on what is required locally:

4. Raising peoples' awareness of the natural world and its value.
5. Improving understanding of conservation issues and 'what works'.
6. Promoting and supporting collective action.
7. Helping businesses and consumers to act more sustainably
8. Influencing Governments and other institutions

2.2.1. Working through communities

The Conservation Collective believes that working closely with communities at the grassroots is the best way to achieve more profound and systemic change.

Foundations aim to operate in a special position in which they are embedded within their local communities whilst also maintaining enough of a strategic view to be able to identify the most pressing environmental issues, what activities are happening to address them and where the gaps are. This helps foundations make the right decisions and best use of resources.

To build trust and credibility it is essential that foundations are not seen as outsiders but are an integral part of the community. They must avoid competing with other local, regional, or national organisations who share the same interests. Foundations should work through grassroots activity, only acting directly where there are clear gaps in local civil society. Their aim should always be to build the capacity of local groups and coalitions to maintain ownership of initiatives. Local groups and other stakeholders should see foundations as important partners, independent and transparent in the community's best interests.

Within communities, foundations work with a wide range of local stakeholders, including local businesses, policy makers and other decision makers. Foundations need local stakeholders to understand and value their work so they can work with them to create the conditions for change and enable local solutions to global challenges. Representatives of key stakeholder groups therefore sit on each foundation's advisory board to provide technical and strategic insights.

'Local champions'	Donors	Local communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local NGO leaders • Environmental scientists and marine biologists • Sustainability orientated businesses • Campaigners • Volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second homeowners • Regular visitors (e.g., to villas, rentals, and hotels) • Local business and their owners • Local philanthropists • Non-local philanthropists with connections to the place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public • Visitors • Tourism and hospitality sector • Farmers and fishermen • School teachers and students • The media • Academic institutions and universities • Diving centres

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diaspora • Other foundations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunters • Relevant industries and corporates (e.g., energy/utilities/property) • Local Government/politicians
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Change can happen through the following ways of working:

- Independence and transparency
- Trusting relationships with partners
- Being embedded into local communities
- Supporting and developing local solutions to global problems
- Linking economic and environmental renewal
- Positivity, openness, and collaboration
- Empowering communities for a 'bottom-up' approach to environmental action
- Creating conditions for future change.

An important aim of foundations is to identify, support and collaborate with “**local champions**” advocating for environmental causes. These could include, for example, local activists, community group leaders, researchers, staff or trustees of local charities.

These champions have insight and passion but may not always have the skills, knowledge, resources, and access to decision-makers to make as much difference as they could. Foundations can empower them to make the greatest impact possible by sharing good practice and building their skills, knowledge, and connections.

Local champions, along with other community groups and grantees, are investing their own time and money into environmental causes. There is a risk they may become demotivated and put their efforts



into other things. To combat this, foundations celebrate peoples’ achievements and transferable learning with others. They also try to give champions a vision of success and reassure them that sustainability and conservation issues are steadily rising in global and local agendas.

Foundations investigate people’s motivations to engage in local networks and provide opportunities for people to do so. Not only does this motivate local champions, but it also creates more of them. This is critical to the Conservation Collective’s approach and may therefore sometimes drive foundations to fund projects that may not have the highest environmental impact but are important for building local capacity and commitment.

How we work to address global challenges on a local level	How this work leads to change occurring	The intermediate outcomes we want to achieve
Empowering local champions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We support local champions, NGOs, and communities to build on their assets by improving skills and knowledge • We share best practice and learning from across the world • We arrange study visits and the sharing of information. For example, by linking groups with similar projects to share successes and failures • We provide technical support: including appropriate equipment, study development, consultancy, etc. • We provide mentoring and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local communities are aware of good practice. • Local communities adopt / adapt good practice • Increased sharing of learning and good practice between partners • Groups have the resources they need to fulfil their potential • Local champions are motivated and as ambitious as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More effective action and projects by local community groups

Motivating local champions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We celebrate the achievements of local partners. • We work to understand motivations for engagement in local networks and provide opportunities for people to do so. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local champions find environmental work rewarding and enjoyable. • Local champions have financial and emotional support to invest in what they are doing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local champions remain active

2.2.2. Encouraging more, and more effective, environmental philanthropy

Communities need funding to help them preserve, protect, and regenerate their local environments. There are already many institutions and individuals who donate to environmental projects. However, there is always a need for more resources and the Conservation Collective believes that by sharing a compelling case and tangible solutions they can inspire existing and potential donors to donate more, and more effectively.

The Conservation Collective wants donors to give in two ways:

- **Unrestricted:** This empowers grantees to adapt their work in response to ongoing learning and changing needs
- **Long-term:** This allows grantees to plan for the future and act more strategically.

Foundations fundraise in two ways: by working with donors and potential donors directly, and by providing practical and technical assistance to local partners to help them raise money themselves.

The Conservation Collective plays a unique role in supporting local collaboration to address global challenges. Together, foundations, donors, and communities address obstacles, identify solutions and share inspiration. By demonstrating what works, providing a vehicle for collective action, and sharing inspiration, the Conservation Collective and its foundations encourage a ‘multiplier effect’, increasing donations to environmental and climate solutions.



How we work to address global challenges on a local level	How this work leads to change occurring	The intermediate outcomes we want to achieve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We engage and build relationships with individual donors (potential and existing). • We make a compelling case for environmental funding generally and for the types of funding that are most useful locally. • We make the case for flexible, unrestricted funding that trusts and empowers grantees to plan for the future. • We support local champions to maximise opportunities for funding, including capacity building and practical assistance (e.g., helping to fill in funders' application forms) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donors feel inspired and engaged with environmental causes. • Donors understand the need for sustained, unrestricted funding, to enable longer-term planning. • Local champions are active and effective in fundraising. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased donations to environmental causes via the foundation. • Increased donations to environmental causes direct to local partners/grantees. • Increased unrestricted donations or commitments to longer-term support.

2.2.3. Funding and supporting projects that directly preserve, protect, and regenerate habitats and species

Foundations give grants to people and institutions in local communities to run specific projects to preserve, protect, and regenerate the local environment and to prevent, slow down and adapt to climate change.

In any location, a wide range of projects are always possible, so foundations work with communities to help them assess different options. They share what's been learnt from other projects and locations to support local decision making.



Foundations aim to achieve tangible and demonstrable results which can be replicated in other communities across the world.

How we work to address global challenges on a local level	How this work leads to change occurring	The intermediate outcomes we want to achieve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work with communities to assess the different options for projects • We prioritise actions/projects based on our experience and a good understanding of what is needed • We fund specific projects such as conservation services, rehabilitation, restoration, signposting etc. • We embed flexibility in our work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective projects that achieve their objectives • Transferable good practice is shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible results in preserving, protecting, and regenerating biodiverse ecosystems on land and underwater

2.2.4. Raising peoples' awareness of the natural world and its value

Around the world, people are not sufficiently connected to their natural environment. Many are unaware of the climate and biodiversity challenges we are facing, how pressing these challenges are and how they can affect human life. In response, the foundations aim to:

- Increase awareness and appreciation of the natural world in their communities
- Encourage people to take a greater interest
- Help people better understand how their actions can make a difference
- Increase the number of 'local champions' who drive environmental causes.



To achieve these outcomes, foundations run awareness-raising campaigns to inspire new audiences and amplify the voices of local champions.

An important dimension to awareness-raising work is the Conservation Collective’s belief that economic prosperity and environmental sustainability do not need to be in opposition. Foundations encourage people to see the potential economic value of the natural world, and work with others to change economic norms and incentives to harmonise the economy and the environment.

The Conservation Collective is building a shared belief that change is possible, desirable, and will not harm people’s livelihoods. Foundations promote this view by outlining the economic case for supporting the environment in different circumstances and communities, and by challenging the assumption that short-term economic goals must always take precedence.

How we work to address global challenges on a local level	How this work leads to change occurring	The intermediate outcomes we want to achieve
Connection with the natural world		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We make the case for focusing on the environment • We engage communities through public events/exhibits • We raise awareness through educational and training campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We reach new audiences • Our messages engage and inspire people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater awareness and appreciation of the natural world across localities • Increased number of ‘local champions’ championing the environment • Increased collective support for projects and measures

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We amplify the messages of 'local champions' 		<p>that protect the environment</p>
<p>The economic case for supporting the environment</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We conduct research and analysis to make the economic case for focusing on the environment • We show how economic incentives could be changed to better serve the needs of the environment • We conduct individual advocacy with decision-makers, including to amplify the messages of local champions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We make a clear and compelling economic case for focusing on the environment and changing incentives • We reach and engage the right audiences with the economic case • Increased belief in our collective potential to change economic norms and incentives in our localities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased appreciation of the economic value of the natural world • Economic norms and incentives established that reflect both the economy and the environment

2.2.5. Improving understanding of conservation issues and 'what works'

Humanity is still learning how to address the environmental crises. We do not understand all the environmental issues communities are facing, nor which initiatives are most likely to work. Foundations therefore work with local partners to direct environmental action and projects to the most important local issues where the greatest change can be achieved. To achieve this, foundations fund research, build local capacity for learning, and share what they learn with partners locally and globally.

The type of research funded is important. The Conservation Collective is conscious that local communities need information and resources to act quickly, but also need support to create the conditions for future improvement. Foundations therefore focus on active grassroots learning, as well as longer-term research and evaluation.



By identifying obstacles and providing a vehicle for collective action to implement solutions, the work of the Conservation Collective and its foundations encourages a ‘multiplier effect’, increasing donations to environmental and climate solutions.

How we work to address global challenges on a local level	How this work leads to change occurring	The intermediate outcomes we want to achieve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We fund research and monitoring activities • We fund capacity building and provide hands-on support ourselves to build local capacity • We share learning locally, regionally, and globally to enable collective learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved data and evidence to support environmental initiatives • More learning shared across networks within local communities and beyond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental action and projects are directed at the most important issues and where the most difference can be achieved • A maturing evidence base about what issues are most pressing and the effectiveness of different interventions

2.2.6. Promoting and supporting collective action

The Conservation Collective believes in the benefits of collective action and collaborative working for the following reasons:

- Collaborative projects and coordinated action generally achieve better results than isolated efforts
- Collaboration can reduce competition for limited resources
- Collaboration can encourage further funding by giving a clear focal point for engagement with stakeholders and potential donors.

However, collaboration is difficult. People may lack the necessary networks, they may not be aware of opportunities to work together, or they may be unaccustomed to working in this way.



The Conservation Collective therefore seeks to persuade people of the value of working together, to make it as easy as possible to do, and to motivate and support collaborative efforts. Foundations identify gaps where stronger networks will support environmental action, and then bring people with similar interests or activities together.

How we work to address global challenges on a local level	How this work leads to change occurring	The intermediate outcomes we want to achieve
Nurturing connections		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We identify gaps where stronger networks would support environmental action • We help people network by bringing together people, businesses, NGOs and associations and encouraging alliances • We identify and develop opportunities/projects that people can work together • We spread the word through social media and community awareness raising • We link up people working on the same or similar issues where collaboration may be beneficial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New/ stronger connections/ alliances are formed • Working in alliance becomes easier to envisage, generating excitement and increased motivation • Key stakeholders identify 'win-win' projects to collaborate on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased collaboration focused on environmental issues at local level

2.2.7. Helping businesses and consumers act more sustainably

Foundations work with businesses and consumers to help them adapt their behaviour to have a more productive and sustainable relationship with the natural world. Foundations work on both the demand side and the supply side:

- **On the demand side**, consumers across the world make irresponsible choices that harm the environment. Often this is because they lack information or because sustainable products are too expensive, unappealing, or not available.
- **On the supply side**, businesses across the world could adopt more sustainable practices, but can lack information about what steps they can take, do not have sufficient financial incentives to change and/or lack support from their governments to change their ways of working.

In response, foundations make it easier for local consumers to shop sustainably by sharing information on how the environment is affected by their purchasing choices and encouraging people to buy local sustainably produced goods.

Foundations also work with businesses to raise awareness and to make the business case for sustainable practices. They encourage commitment to environmentally friendly practices in production and supply chains, and work with governments to set legislation and incentives that encourage environmentally sustainable business practices.

How we work to address global challenges on a local level	How this work leads to change occurring	The intermediate outcomes we want to achieve
Consumers		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We share examples of how the environment is affected by consumer choices • We promote local produce and support different ways to make local produce available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding by business and consumers of how behaviour affects the environment • Easier for people to make more responsible choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers include environmental factors in their decision making. (For example, reduce plastic use/lower carbon travel/reduced consumption of vulnerable species)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage producers and supply chains to enable more environmentally friendly consumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased consumer pressure on businesses to act sustainably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased consumption of local/sustainable produce
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How we work to address global challenges on a local level	How this work leads to change occurring	The intermediate outcomes we want to achieve
Businesses		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate evidence and make the case that sustainability is good for business in the long-term • Work with local businesses and local communities to raise awareness of sustainable practices and make the case for change • Work with governments to set legislation and incentives that encourage businesses to act sustainably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses perceive that becoming more environmentally conscious will be good for their business in the long-term • Businesses are aware of the actual steps they can take to reduce their negative impact on the local environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability is part of business' identities • Businesses compete with each other on their sustainability • Businesses integrate green practices into their activities

2.2.8. Influencing governments and other institutions

Government action can play a vital role in improving local environments, whether this be through planning, legislation, protecting spaces, subsidies, funding, or other incentives.

Foundations aim to improve local and regional governments' awareness of environmental issues and share information on how they can support sustainable practice locally. They encourage governments to give environmental issues and protection a more central role in decision making, policy and legislation, and to invest more in conservation projects.

How we work to address global challenges on a local level	How this work leads to change occurring	The intermediate outcomes we want to achieve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We advocate for and support policy work with government and officials on specific environmental issues • We raise awareness within local and regional government on environmental issues • We share information on how governments can support sustainable practice in their locality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased government awareness of the ethical and economic case for focusing on the environment • Governments are more aware of what they can do and need to do to protect the environment • Stronger incentives for government to reflect the environment in decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater government investment and support to communities to protect their environment • Legislation and policy decisions that support the local environment. • Local governments aware of and celebrate the work of local communities to protect the local environment. • Local governments support the work of local communities to protect the local environment.

2.3. Creating a Global Movement

This section describes how the Conservation Collective’s global hub and partner foundations work together to support and amplify the local change initiatives described above.

Working globally to support change:

- Identifying need and encouraging new foundations
- Generating more funding for conservation projects



- Supporting learning and good practice
- Supporting good quality and risk management
- Enabling foundations to speak with a collective voice

2.3.1. Identifying need and encouraging new foundations

The Conservation Collective collaborates with local stakeholders to identify locations where there is a need for a local foundation. The Conservation Collective will work with local stakeholders to identify the right people to lead the new foundation and to help them set it up.

For local stakeholders themselves, engaging with the Conservation Collective appeals for the following reasons:

- Each local foundation is embedded within and is part of the local community
- Foundations establish a trusted relationship with local stakeholders, in part through its approach to working through local communities (described above)
- The Conservation Collective has a strong profile and a credible reputation for getting things done, including accessing funding
- The Conservation Collective’s reputation can encourage a ‘multiplier effect’, through which its involvement naturally increases local energy, funding, and impact.

How we help to address local challenges on a global level	What needs to be in place for change to happen	Our intended outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination where there is a gathering of donors wanting to collaborate to create a way to support nature in their area; we provide our tried and tested approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Conservation Collective’s reputation and success record encourages local stakeholders to engage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New local foundations are established to address unmet need

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We identify potential areas to launch new foundations on an opportunistic basis 		
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2.3.2. Generating more funding for conservation projects

Foundations need money to operate and fund local projects. In the same way that foundations support communities to fundraise, the Conservation Collective supports foundations to raise money.

The Conservation Collective approaches trusts, foundations and philanthropists on behalf of one or more foundations. This kind of central funding helps foundations to flourish and gives them the ability to select and support the highest impact projects.

How we help to address local challenges on a global level	What needs to be in place for change to happen	Our intended outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We approach trusts, foundations and philanthropists on behalf of one or more Foundations • We build local Foundations' capacity for fundraising • We provide case studies to share insights, challenges and opportunities in a way that inspires potential donors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to reach new funders. • Our messages engage and inspire people • The foundations are as effective and efficient as possible both in projects they support and how they are run 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundations have the funds/resources they need and grow every year, retaining existing supporters and bringing in new ones • Foundations select and support the highest impact projects and make real long-term positive change in the areas where they work • The Conservation Collective has the resources they need

		to provide high quality support to local Foundations.
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2.3.3. Supporting learning and good practice

The Conservation Collective operates as a channel for shared learning. Local foundations share what matters, what works and what does not, and they benefit from knowing what has been learned elsewhere. Globally, we are continuously improving and identifying what good practice looks like for local solutions to environmental challenges. As a coordinating body, the Conservation Collective operates as a hub for learning and innovation.

How we help to address local challenges on a global level	What needs to be in place for change to happen	Our intended outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We provide technical support, which includes appropriate equipment, study development, consultancy, introductions to experts, etc. • We train local foundations in knowledge and skills needed to run a foundation • We share lessons learnt by foundations across the network • We synthesise and disseminate what has been learnt from external sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An active global network for sharing information, knowledge and support, where the value of sharing and receiving lessons is valued • Foundations trust the Conservation Collective is operating in their best interests • Foundations feel empowered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved efficacy of local foundations • Increased skills and knowledge of local foundations • Increased confidence of local foundations

2.3.4. Supporting good quality and risk management

The staff and volunteers at foundations have limited time and capacity. The Conservation Collective helps foundations by maximising efficacy and consistency across foundations. Specifically, it:

- Supports quality and risk management practice across the local foundations
- Increases efficiency by promoting standard systems, processes and approaches
- Reduces the risk of inconsistent standards and quality across foundations or the risk of duplicating effort by ‘joining the dots’
- Creates consistent information and messages that improves learning and collective voice (see below).

At the same time, and somewhat in tension, central support must also preserve individual foundations’ ability to act independently in a locally tailored way.

How we help to address local challenges on a global level	What needs to be in place for change to happen	Our intended outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We develop systems and processes to improve efficiency • We network to identify sector good practice and transferable lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems and processes are: a) flexible to meet local needs; b) provide foundation coherence and benefits of scale where possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved efficiency • Increased adoption of sector best practice • Reduced risk • Improved ability to effectively manage relationships with grantees and donors

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved reporting processes
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2.3.5. Enabling foundations to speak with a collective voice

By speaking collectively about challenges, issues and successes, foundations can have a greater impact on stakeholder and public awareness of environmental issues than they could alone. This can increase donations and the effectiveness of environmental philanthropy. Having a collective voice also helps foundations to present their work as part of a bigger picture and increase local support.

The Conservation Collective helps foundations to have a collective voice by standardising and synthesising information across the network. The Collective also aims to have a strong global brand, through which they can amplify the messages of foundations and their partners, and advocate with governments and international decision-makers.

By connecting people, everyone in the network can feel part of a global movement. Moreover, by connecting people in different areas with similar local problems, the Collective creates a global movement for change. The Conservation Collective believes there are similar problems everywhere, often not as different as they might first appear, and that solutions pioneered elsewhere can often be applied in other areas. By supporting shared learning and replicability the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.



How we help to address local challenges on a global level	What needs to be in place for change to happen	Our intended outcomes
<p>Speaking in unison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We support standardisation of information collected by foundations • We facilitate synthesis of information collected by foundations • We coordinate international awareness-raising campaigns and advocacy • We support local and collective brand development • We facilitate local and global brand awareness-raising • We amplify messages from local work • We advocate with governments and international decision-makers on shared local and global challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Collective speak in unison and have greater collective power than they would have individually • National and international decision-makers and donors recognise the Conservation Collective’s brand and understand its work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of environmental issues amongst key stakeholders and public • Increased donations and effective environmental philanthropy • Increased ability of local foundations to report their work as part of a bigger picture and increase support for local causes as a result • Increased awareness of the Conservation Collective’s work amongst communities, donors (potential and existing) and local government • Increased awareness of local and international environmental issues amongst key stakeholders and general public • Increased awareness of how the Conservation Collective addresses local and

How we help to address local challenges on a global level	What needs to be in place for change to happen	Our intended outcomes
		international environmental issue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of effective philanthropy practices amongst donors (potential and existing) • Increased donations and effective environmental philanthropy

3. THE CONSERVATION COLLECTIVE’S VALUES

All members of the Conservation Collective share core values of positivity, openness, and collaboration. They also share the belief that local action can unlock solutions to shared global challenges, and that this is best achieved by empowering communities to protect their local environment through a ‘bottom-up’ approach.

Conservation Collective’s core values are positivity, openness, and collaboration:

- There are so many terrifying and overwhelming issues facing the world. The Conservation Collective focus on identifying and supporting the tangible small-scale solutions which can unlock real change. They turbo-charge the work of local environmental champions to create long-lasting change, bolstering civil society and building capacity

- The Conservation Collective listen and respond to the needs of local partners to empower communities to restore and protect their local environment through a bottom-up approach. They know that we can achieve more when we all work together, and everyone involved in their work is totally driven by their passion for nature
- The Conservation Collective create neutral alliances of relevant stakeholders, fostering cross sector collaboration.

These values underpin every part of the Conservation Collective’s work and the urgent needs of the world around us keeping us moving quickly in the right direction.



APPENDIX 1: THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

What is a theory of change?

In short, a theory of change is a description of how an organisation or project intends to do good in the world. Working on a theory of change has four potential benefits which are described below. Most important for this project is number 4) as our end goal is to have a plan for measuring the effectiveness and impact of the Collective's work.

1. Strengthening teams and team motivation through a process of dialogue and debate

A theory of change process brings people together to share their views, which can lead to better understanding between colleagues, inclusion of a wide spectrum of views and stronger team working. A theory of change output should also provide clarity through a succinct and consistent statement of plans, which can support a greater strength of purpose and team motivation.

2. Project design or review

A theory of change is a forum that encourages people to challenge themselves; review the evidence base; and think seriously about context, priorities and plans. This can lead to stronger underlying thinking—and better projects.

3. Better external communications and better conversations with partners

A theory of change is a useful approach to showing others what you want to achieve and how. It demonstrates that the 'change process' has been properly thought through. This can contribute to a wider understanding and confidence in an organisation's work.

4. Better monitoring and evaluation

- **Improved monitoring and evaluation plans:** A theory of change provides a blueprint for what needs to be measured and helps identifying research priorities. This improves the quality and relevance of evaluation.
- **Frameworks for performance assessment and reporting:** A theory of change helps to identifying short-term indicators of success and provides the basis for a narrative about project effectiveness

The Theory of Change Process with the Conservation Collective

NPC facilitated online discussions with representatives from the Conservation Collective during April–May 2021. Seven local foundations took part, all located in the Mediterranean region (Greece, Italy and Spain) along with representatives of the Conservation Collective globally.

Before these discussions, NPC also consulted a wider range of stakeholders from across different parts of the Collective and across the world, to understand peoples’ views on the goals of this work and to get initial thoughts on what the theory of change should cover.

An early draft of the theory of change was shared with all foundations and we received helpful written feedback, all of which is reflected in this draft.

