

Get involved

The review team are in the process of identifying key references - journal articles, project reports, book chapters, conference proceedings, dissertations etc. - that can shed light on the effectiveness of alternative livelihood projects. If you can help by providing copies of documents or pointers to key sources please do get in touch.

What we are looking for

We are looking for key references that document the results of an alternative livelihood intervention (as we have defined it, see definitions) to reduce a specific threat to an element of biodiversity and have then made an assessment of the success or failure of the intervention. The names of key projects that may have made such assessments would also be helpful.

Geographic scope

The review will look at alternative livelihood projects globally, considering different ecosystems and geographical regions. However, the main focus will be on developing countries where biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction are international priorities. These regions have also been the main target for alternative livelihood projects.

Get in touch

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Project
Materials

Biodiversity

Keywords:
Alternative livelihoods,
biodiversity, conservation,
systematic review

“Alternative Livelihood Projects” and Conservation

A systematic review for evidence based policy

IIED, CIFOR and ZSL are collaborating on a systematic review to understand the effectiveness of alternative livelihood interventions in reducing threats to biodiversity.



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In brief

Considerable investment has been made in strategies designed to provide alternative livelihoods for people living in and around protected areas or other areas of biodiversity. The primary aim of such interventions is to alleviate a threat to biodiversity, a strong secondary outcome is to improve the well being of the targeted communities. Examples of commonly used “alternative livelihood” interventions include cane rat farming to reduce bush meat hunting or seaweed farming to alleviate fishing pressure within sensitive marine areas.

Why now?

The donor community has invested in alternative livelihood activities for decades as part of both poverty alleviation programmes and tied development and conservation projects. For example, the Millennium Development Goals and the Aichi Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 have set goals that could be met by robust alternative livelihood projects. Despite these investments, very little is known about what has worked, what has not worked and why, as well as how we can develop more effective new programmes for both conservation and sustainable livelihoods. The evidence base on the effectiveness of alternative livelihoods projects is scattered, partial and found across multiple institutions and geographies. Studies have used diverse, and sometimes scientifically weak methods and metrics resulting in inconclusive evidence.

Motion 145 - IUCN Congress, Korea

This lack of evidence on the effectiveness of alternative livelihood projects was underlined at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in 2012, which passed motion 145 entitled:

“A critical review of the biodiversity benefits of alternative livelihood projects” calling for “best practise guidelines for alternative livelihood projects to ensure sustainable benefits to species, ecosystems and people”

Project summary

The project goal is to provide an overview of the state of the evidence base on the effectiveness of alternative livelihood projects and illuminate the strengths, weaknesses and prevailing knowledge gaps.

Our primary research question for the systematic review is:

“Are alternative livelihood projects effective at reducing local threats to defined elements of biodiversity and/or improving or maintaining the conservation status of those elements?”

To answer this key question we will be using the following definitions for alternative livelihood interventions and effectiveness:

“Alternative livelihood” projects

Are interventions that seek to alleviate a human threat to biodiversity through providing or encouraging the use of: an alternative resource; an alternative occupation; or an alternative method (lower impact) of exploitation.

Effectiveness

Refers to the ability to alleviate the threat through changes in human attitude, behaviour and/or well being; and ultimately leading to improvements in the conservation status of the specified element of biodiversity under threat.

Who’s who

The project involves a joint collaboration between IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development), CIFOR (Center for International Forestry Research) and ZSL (Zoological Society of London).

IIED

IIED is a policy and action research organisation. We promote sustainable development to improve livelihoods and protect the environments on which these livelihoods are built. We specialise in linking local priorities to global challenges. IIED is based in London and works in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific, with some of the world’s most vulnerable people. We work with them to strengthen their voice in the decision - making arenas that affect them - from village councils to international conventions. For more information visit: www.iied.org

CIFOR

CIFOR is a non-profit, global facility dedicated to advancing human wellbeing, environmental conservation, and equity. Our research and expert analysis help shape effective policy, improve the management of tropical forests and

address the needs and perspectives of people who depend on forests for their livelihoods.

CIFOR is a member of the CGIAR Consortium and leads the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry. Our work contributes to all four of CGIAR’s goals: reducing rural poverty, increasing food security, improving human health and nutrition, and ensuring more sustainable management of natural resources. For more information visit: www.cifor.org.

ZSL

ZSL, founded in 1826, is a world-renowned centre of excellence for conservation science and applied conservation. ZSL’s mission is to promote and achieve the worldwide conservation of animals and their habitats. This is realised by carrying out field conservation and research in over 50 countries across the globe, original scientific research at our institute of Zoology, and education and awareness at our two zoos, ZSL London Zoo and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, inspiring people to take conservation action. For more information visit: www.zsl.org



Timeline of activities

2014	July -August	Present results	Disseminate findings
	May - June	Peer review	Submit the review to <i>Environmental Evidence</i>
2014	March - April	Analyse results	Review analysis
	January - February	Identification of inclusion papers and data extraction	Implement search strategy
2013	November - December	Draft and submit the review protocol to <i>Environmental Evidence</i>	The review protocol
	September - October	Scoping of available evidence	Initial steps
	Monthly timeline	Activities	KEY STEPS