

Due diligence on conservation organisations: What should we be asking?

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Declaration

I declare that the work presented here is my own, under the supervision of Professor Alex Rogers and Dr Shonil Bhagwat with external supervision and guidance from Dr Laura Miller.

In instances where others have contributed, the contributions have been specifically acknowledged.

I have clearly indicated and referenced where I have quoted and discussed others' work throughout the document.

In addition, I can confirm this thesis has not been submitted for any other qualification at any institution.

I hereby confirm this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

This inductive study explores what criteria could be used to identify conservation organisations more likely to achieve their goals. In addition to information gathered from the academic and grey literature, primary data was obtained from three main sources: semi-structured interviews with 74 conservation practitioners; an online survey completed by 154 conservation practitioners; and review of 35 non-profit organisational effectiveness frameworks.

Interviews identified barriers to conservation success, allowing a typology of barriers to be developed. Risks to success can be internal (arising inside an organisation), external (completely outside of an organisation's control) or operational (outside of individual organisational control, but within the control of the conservation community). Because the list was long, statistical procedures were applied to the survey data to reduce the number of barriers needed to understand operating context.

The framework review and survey explored organisational deficiencies that might present internal barriers to effectiveness. I found four dimensions to an effective organisation: governance; finance; leadership; and management. There was less agreement as to which criteria are present in effective organisations. Differences between frameworks used to guide effectiveness and those used to judge it were noted and discussed. Finally, survey results were compared to framework review results to compare viewpoints on effectiveness criteria. Ranked lists were not significantly different, but correlation between them was weak.

This study provides the first empirically based conceptual model of barriers to conservation as perceived by conservation practitioners, and a first attempt to identify which barriers, internal and external, may be most important in identifying more effective conservation organisations. My findings also suggest that current criteria applied in funding decisions might be counter-productive: insisting on the presence of unproven effectiveness criteria stretches already pressurised conservation organisations even further and hampers their effectiveness. Instead, the donors could collaborate more and work towards less onerous and untested methods of decision-making.

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1: CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

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What is conservation?

Human activities that make use of natural resources have an impact on the natural world (Beinart & Hughes, 2008). When human populations are low, resources abundant, and extraction sustainable, this impact can be imperceptible. However, as human population sizes and appetites for consumption increase, the human impact on the natural world becomes more apparent.

Murombedzi (2003) explains that in pre-colonial times, there is evidence to suggest that when resources came under pressure, e.g., because of increased human populations or economic activity, a typical response was for whole populations to move to new, uncolonized areas abundant in resources. Beinart and Hughes (2008) explain that during the imperial colonialist expansion, agriculture and pastoralism spread, hunting increased exponentially, forest resources were extracted, and desirable commodities that could not be produced in Europe (sugar, cotton, etc.) were grown in frost-free tropical and subtropical environments. Natural resources were extracted and turned into tradable commodities. This commodification of nature (Castree, 2008) fuelled colonial expansion further and, in turn, drove the increase in global trade (Newsham & Bhagwat, 2016). It eventually became apparent that ignoring or simply moving on from the resultant destruction was no longer an option.

Recorded pre-colonial conservation practices included the demarcation of sacred areas, allocation of totems and expropriation of labour for conservation (Murombedzi, 2003). In his 'Origins of Western Environmentalism' paper, Richard Grove (1992) explains that the roots of Western conservation, which grew in the tropics, are at least 200 years old. Contrary to the romantic Edenic Island discourse, which perceived the tropics as an untouched Utopia, there was a realisation in the 17th Century that

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European colonial expansion and rule could be environmentally destructive. During the 17th and 18th centuries, scientists were employed by commercial entities to help them understand unfamiliar floras, faunas and geologies. By the 19th century, academies and scientific communities throughout colonial territories were able to identify and discuss their observations that imperialism was bringing about adverse changes to natural environments. This led to an emerging discourse of ecological collapse (Newsham & Bhagwat, 2016). Around the same time, the fusion of scholarship, contemplation of the beauty and wonder of nature, survival and first-hand observations of rapid changes in landscapes and species targeted for hunting and collection led to a realisation that we had a moral responsibility to ensure the survival of threatened life forms (Jepson & Whittaker, 2002). The concern that human activities in the colonial expansion that sought to turn nature into commodities could exceed natural limits, combined with the scientific revolution that contributed not only to the expansion of trade and economic activity, but also to the documentation of the environmental impacts of this expansion and the impetus for those wanting to avoid or minimise impacts, laid the foundation for the international conservation architecture that we see today (Newsham & Bhagwat, 2016). From a handful of national parks and conservation organisations set up by 1900, we now have more than 200,000 protected areas (PAs: Juffe-Bignoli *et al.*, 2014) and tens of thousands of active environmental non-profit organisations (NPOs: Scholfield & Brockington, 2008; NCVO, 2015).

Conservation has been broadly defined as any act with the intention of conserving nature (Game *et al.*, 2015). This incorporates a huge variety of activities, including the creation of protected areas, both allowing and devoid of any human presence (see Hutton *et al.*, 2005 and Dudley, 2008), education and outreach programmes designed

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to promote benefits and therefore discourage damage on the boundaries of protected areas (e.g., Holmes, 2003), community-based conservation or natural resource management (Roe & Nelson, 2009), integrated conservation and development programmes (ICDPs: Hughes & Flintan, 2001), and advocacy and campaigning (Brussard & Tull, 2007; Jepson & Ladle, 2010). Not only is there great variability in what conservation activity is undertaken, but also in where it is done. Every country has conservation activities of some sort under way, though the amount of effort undertaken and the combination of levels of biodiversity and risk do not necessarily correlate with each other (Figure 1.1).

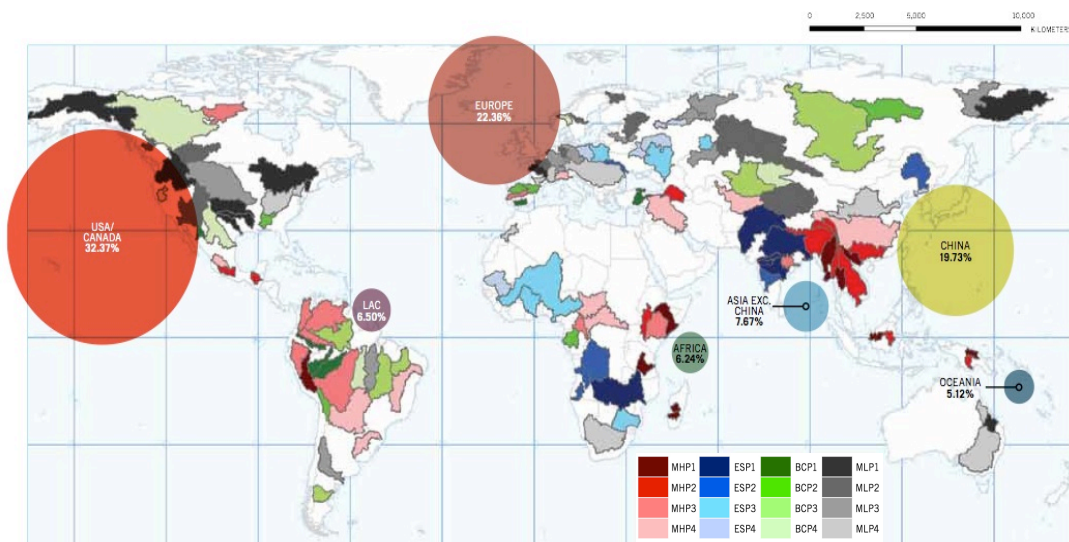


Figure 1.1: Map comparing estimates of biodiversity finance delivered in 2010 to high priority areas for ecosystem services and the global priority areas for biodiversity (taken directly from Parker *et al.*, 2012). The background data for the map (which Parker *et al.* took directly from Luck *et al.*, 2009) shows country priority watersheds for ecosystem services provision (e.g., flood mitigation, fresh water provision) combined with biodiversity hotspots, important ecoregions and endemic bird areas. The boxed scale identifies four categories: Mutual-high priorities (MHP; red) for priority protection of both ecosystem services and biodiversity; high priorities for protecting ecosystem services (ESP; blue); high priorities for protecting biodiversity (BCP; green); and mutual-low priorities (MLP; grey/black) for protecting both ecosystem services and biodiversity. White areas were not included in the original analysis.

Conservation success and failure

There have been many success stories, and conservation measures have reduced the rates of extinction of some species (Sodhi *et al.*, 2011; Stuart, 2014; Hoffmann *et al.*, 2015). A model demonstration by Waldron *et al.* (2017) suggests that conservation investment has reduced biodiversity loss in 109 countries (signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity and Sustainable Development Goals), by a median average of 29% per country between 1996 and 2008.

But progress has been slow. There is a strong feeling within the conservation community that while a few conservation battles are being won, overall the war is seemingly being lost (Balmford & Cowling, 2006). Biodiversity continues to decline (Butchart *et al.*, 2010). With the rate of species loss currently 1,000 times faster than background rates (Pimm *et al.*, 2014), a sixth mass extinction is already under way (Cellabos *et al.*, 2015). Global wildlife populations have fallen by 60% since 1970 (WWF, 2018). The 2010 biodiversity target as set out in the Millennium Development Goals has not been met (Rands *et al.* 2010), and recent reviews suggest similar outcomes for the Aichi biodiversity targets (Pimm *et al.* 2014; Butchart *et al.* 2015) and the two conservation-related Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2018). Instead, it has been suggested that regardless of planned management responses, we are unlikely to see improved trends in the state of biodiversity by 2020 (Tittensor *et al.*, 2014), a concerning picture since we have already transgressed the planetary boundary for the rate of biodiversity loss (Rockström *et al.*, 2009).

To understand this seeming lack of progress, we need to look beyond the conservation community and consider what is happening more widely. Lower population densities in pre-colonial times meant that conservation practices typically

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dealt with crisis situations arising out of natural disasters (Murombedzi, 2003). The modern, post-colonial conservation movement was set up to deal with three major threats at the time: the disease Rhinderpest, hunting by white settlers and agriculture expansion (Jepson, 2017). Some of these threats are still prevalent, but they have now been joined by other serious threats that have manifested in recent times, including habitat loss, overexploitation (e.g., poaching, extraction of natural resources), pollution of air, land and water, the introduction of exotic species, and human-induced climate change (Manabe *et al.*, 2014).

The seriousness of these threats grows along with our global population. There are currently seven billion people globally (Allendorf & Allendorf, 2012) and the population is still increasing. Estimates suggest that by 2100 it may exceed 11 billion (United Nations DESA, 2017). Humanity's large population size combined with its seemingly insatiable trend of consumption (Hill, 2011) present serious challenges. Although these arise well away from areas where conservation is being undertaken, their impact is enormous. Capitalism has a destructive and extractive relationship with the environment (Igoe *et al.*, 2010). Our capitalist world is inherently expansionist, with the main response to the need for development relying almost entirely on economic growth (see Büscher & Arsel, 2012). This growth comes at a cost to the natural world and its non-human inhabitants. Duffy (2010) provides an example of mobile technology. The mining of coltan, needed in increasing quantities to feed the growing electronics and nanotechnology industries, is a real threat to gorilla habitat. While the real threat to the gorillas and their habitat is global demand for these industries, we point the finger of blame for increased threats to gorillas at miners and poachers, leaving consumers to continue with business as usual. Scenarios such as these provide real challenges not only to conservationists (taken in

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this thesis to include both governmental and non-governmental organisations (including academic institutions)) but also to other members of the non-profit sector working to address issues of development, wellbeing, poverty reduction and other key areas of the sustainable development goals.

Changes in the non-profit sector

In trying to deal with these multiple problems facing humanity, there has been a global expansion of the non-profit sector (Igoe & Kelsall, 2005; Wallace *et al.*, 2006), especially since responsibility for dealing with social issues has been devolved from the state to the charitable sector as a result of neoliberal policies (e.g., see Igoe & Brockington, 2007). The current pool of NPOs needing support is vast. The number of NPOs in the United States of America (USA) alone almost doubled between 1999 and 2009 (Roeger *et al.*, 2011), and there are now more than 1.5 million registered NPOs there (Pettijohn, 2013). That number in the United Kingdom (UK) exceeds 160,000 (NCVO, 2015). The developing world similarly has seen an explosion in NPOs. India has the largest number of active NPOs: with an estimated 3.3 million of them, the country now boasts one NPO for every 400 people (Shukla, 2010). Within Africa, South Africa and Kenya have the highest number (Scholfield, 2013). While South Africa has 100,000 registered NPOs and an estimated 50,000 unregistered ones (Jankelowitz, 2007 in Stuart, 2013), Kenya's NPO sector has been growing at an incredible rate: the most recent statistics from 2009 show that 6,075 organisations were registered in Kenya in that year alone (Gathiga, 2014). The proliferation of NPOs is a very global trend, and the environmental sector is contributing significantly to this. In the UK, the rate of growth in the 'environment and animals' subsector is even higher than in the non-profit sector

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generally (Figure 1.2) while in the USA, new environmental organisations continue to be created at more than double the pace of non-profits in general (Figure 1.3).

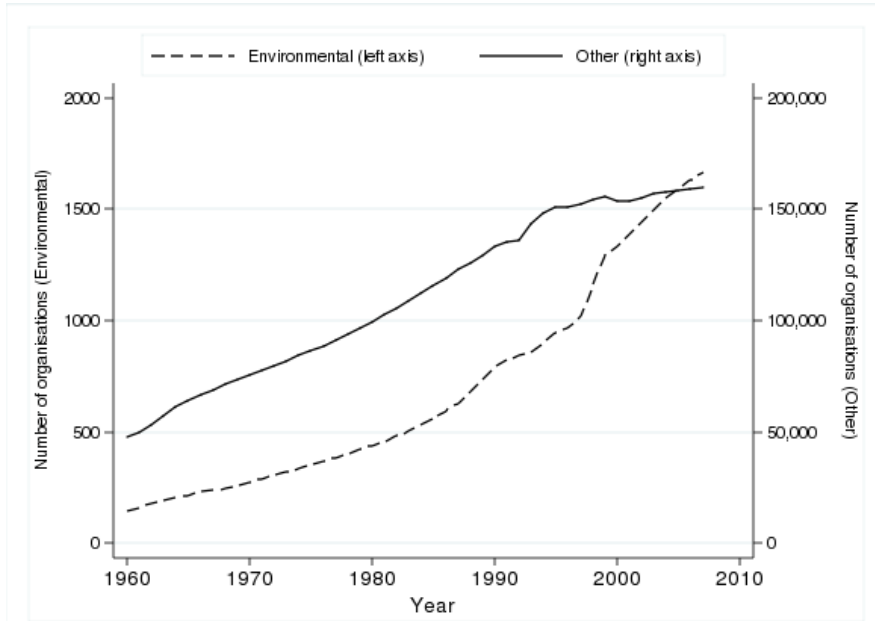


Figure 1.2: Number of charities in the UK Charity Commission register by types of organisation between 1960 and 2007. The figure is taken directly from Clifford *et al.* (2013), and is based on analysis of Charity Commission Register data.

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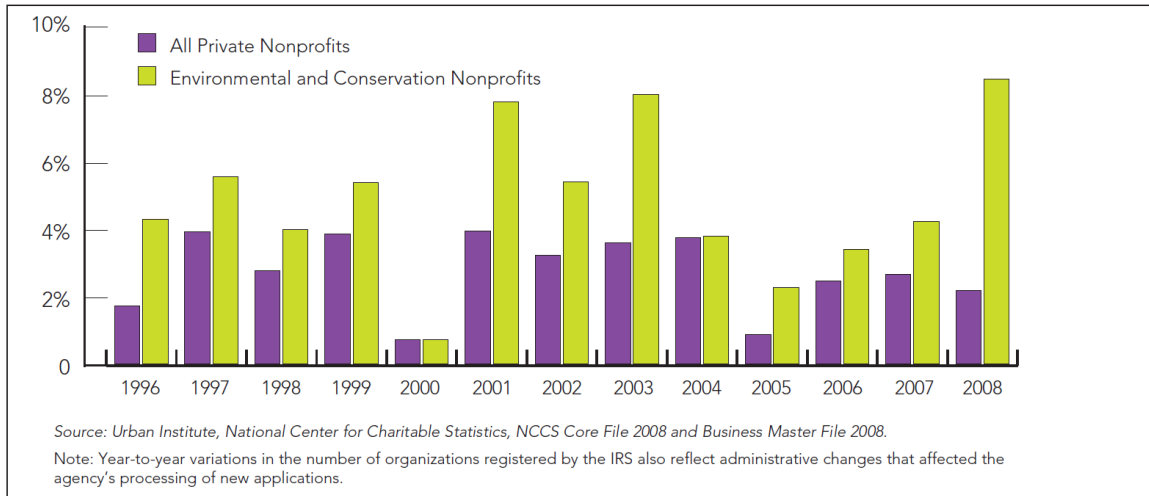


Figure 1.3: Percentage change in the number of NPOs registered with the Inland Revenue Service (IRS) in the USA. This figure is taken directly from Straughan and Pollack (2011), who sourced the data from the Urban Institute, National Centre for Charitable Statistics, NCCS Core File 2008 and Business Master File 2008. It should be noted that year-to-year variations in the number of NPOs registered by the IRS also reflect any administrative changes that affected the IRS's processing of new applications.

The non-profit sector has also seen a massive increase in the funding available for NPOs, and changes in where that money comes from. Government money to the voluntary sector generally has declined (Cracknell *et al.*, 2013; Birtwistle & O'Brien, 2015), falling every year since the start of the century (NCVO, 2015) as 'more pressing' needs emerge. For example, initiation of the war on terror following the attack on the World Trade Centre in September 2001 shifted USAID's priorities away from biodiversity (Sachedina, 2011). The environmental agenda has also been downplayed as the focus following the 2008 global financial crisis has shifted to more immediate concerns, like improving economic growth (Cracknell *et al.*, 2013). Estimates of current aid suggest that donor commitments made at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit have not been met (Miller *et al.*, 2012).

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While sources of money for environmental NPOs will vary by country (Morton, 2013), the reduction of government funding has returned individuals to their leading position as the major source of funding, especially in the developed world. This is particularly true for smaller NPOs (Clifford *et al.*, 2013; NCVO, 2015). Individuals, either directly or through their foundations, provide the majority of funding for all NPOs in the USA (80%: Hope Consulting, 2011) and for environmental organisations in the UK (68%: NCVO, 2015; Figure 1.4). From only a few foundations in existence in 1900 (there were 27 by 1915), there are now tens of thousands today (Hammack, 2006). The amounts being donated enabled good causes to be transformed into thriving organisations. The trend of reliance on funding from individuals is spreading: the developing world has also seen an increase in private funding in the form of philanthropy, which is overtaking traditional sources of government aid there (see Nelson, 2009).

The government money that is available is now increasingly awarded through contracts or fees paid for services (NCVO, 2015), but this source is not suitable for all types of NPOs (Birtwhistle & O'Brien, 2015). Conservation, for example, has less products and services to offer than, say, healthcare or education. The majority of third sector organisations in the UK now don't receive any statutory funding (see Hopkins, 2010).

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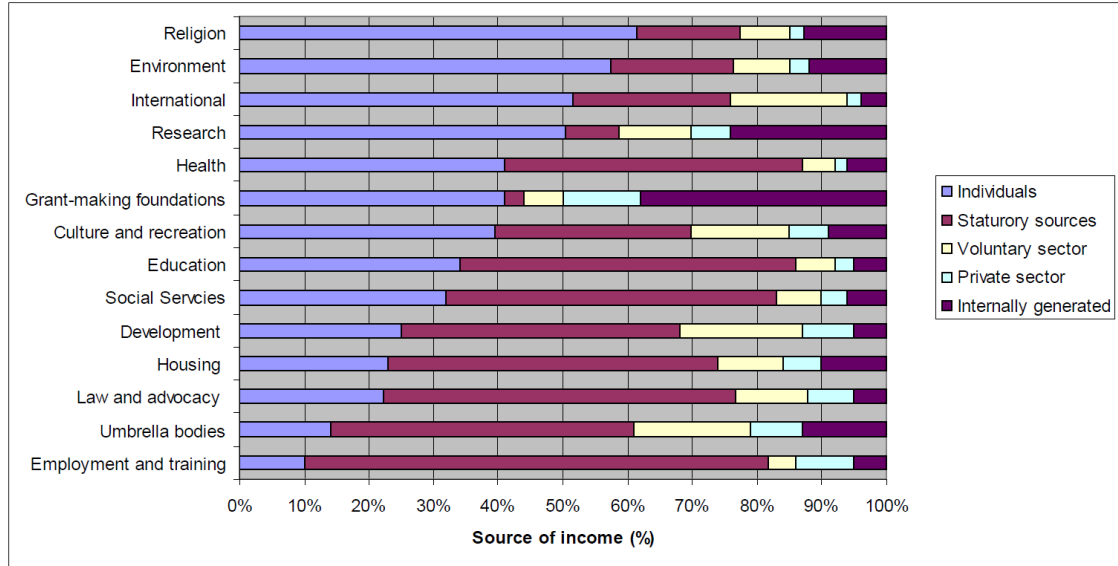


Figure 1.4: Income sources of UK charities by sub-sector in 2006/07 (per cent of income). The figure is taken from Hopkins 2010, who sourced the original data from the 2009 NCVO Almanac. Internally generated income comprises gross turnover of trading subsidiaries and investment returns. Private sector includes sponsorship, research or consultancy, patent royalties, corporate grants and gifts. Voluntary sector encompasses services provided under contract, grants from charitable trusts and intermediaries. Statutory sources include public sector fees, payments for contracted services, funding grants (including national lottery distributors). Amounts from individuals comprise donations, covenants, legacies, subscriptions, goods and service fees.

The need for checks and balances

Unfortunately, the increased money to, and a lack of accountability within, the NPO sector has led some to believe it is an easy source of income where there are few checks and balances. Although there is a commonly held belief that all charities work hard to deliver on their stated aims, it is becoming increasingly apparent that this assumption is not always true. Igoe and Kelsall (2005) discuss how many groups saw the influx of donor money into Africa as a way to make money for themselves rather than as a means of solving society's ills. They mention how these "briefcase" NPOs, which exist only on paper but do not actually do any work, have become more commonplace.

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Inefficient or ineffective NPOs are not just a developing world phenomenon. Questionable judgements at best and alleged misbehaviour at worst have been observed (Fleishman, 2006), within both charities and the foundations supporting them (Meier, 2006) in the developed world too. Charities have been criticised for paying executives too much, being unprofessional, lacking transparency, and engaging in tax scams and questionable investment strategies (see Wixley & Noble, 2014). Some devote very low percentages (less than 4%) of donations to aid, award expensive contracts to family members and drive the charities into debt (Hundley & Taggart, 2013). Some of the worst have even been charged by the US Federal Trade Commission for misusing funds (Bartz, 2015).

Not all failed charities are corrupt. Some might just lack the systems and processes needed to guide or manage the organisation. For example, 2015 saw the collapse of Kid's Company in the UK, a charity that had received £42m in public funding. A House of Commons (2016) report explains that its demise was primarily down to the board failing to protect the interests of the charity and its beneficiaries by seemingly ignoring repeated warnings about the organisation's precarious financial position. This rendered the organisation incapable of surviving any variance in funding streams. The board also lacked the skills and experience necessary to interrogate the decisions of the founder-chief executive.

Other NPOs lack the controls needed to prevent or detect fraud or error. For example, The United Way, one of the USA's most well-known and respected charities, was hard hit in the 1990s when previous high ranking officials were found guilty of embezzling and mismanaging the organisation's finances for personal gain (see Gilkeson, 2007).

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Results of an analysis of charitable donations in the UK suggest that within the charitable sector as a whole, £1.7bn (\$2.7bn) could be reallocated to better-performing charities (Bagwell *et al.*, 2013). But how does one identify these charities?

NPO effectiveness

It can be difficult for donors, be they individuals, corporations or government bodies, to decide which NPOs to invest in because of the large number of organisations in the sector. Measurement of success in for-profit organisations is clear because there is close alignment between value creation, performance and survival (Moore, 2000). There is a suite of well-defined and accepted financial measures that gives a fairly accurate view of the health of an organisation. The process of due diligence, which involves an investor learning more about an organisation's financial and organisational health to guide investment decisions, originated in the world of business and finance (Woodwell, 2010). Due diligence is an intensive assessment process that addresses issues potentially affecting an organisation's ability to deliver on its goals. These include financial position, management experience and ability, the environment in which the organisation operates, and significant risks to the organisation (ECVA, 2013). The assessment uses past performance and existing internal structures and processes to estimate future success. Culick *et al.* (2004) point out that the failure of a programme may not be the result of flawed ideas, but rather due to weaknesses within the organisation, such as financial shortcomings, poor organisation or internal conflict.

Although there are many similarities in the management and effectiveness of for-profit and non-profit organisations (Baruch & Rolelo, 2006; Ritchie & Eastwood, 2006), due diligence processes used for corporations would not work if applied directly to NPOs

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because of fundamentally different structures and reasons for existence (Rosenthal, 2012). Measuring success in NPOs is much more difficult because it is more closely aligned with how effectively they achieve their goals (Rosenthal, 2012), fulfil the purposes for which they exist (Dart, 2010) and meet the needs of their constituents (Kaplan, 2001). For example, conservation organisations can find it difficult to demonstrate their effectiveness (Fowler, 1996) because outputs and mission achievement indicators can be difficult to measure (Speckbacher, 2003; Epstein & McFarlan, 2011). It can be hard to link project results to outcomes (Campbell, 2002) and impossible to identify which of the multiple potential causes is most important (Murray, 2001). A particular intervention might also be addressing only a symptom of the underlying political economy that drives habitat destruction rather than the cause of it. That intervention itself may do little to stem biodiversity loss, but it can play a small part in combined efforts to do so. So how would one go about identifying which organisations are most likely going to achieve their goals?

Undertaking due diligence to aid decisions

Given that NPOs should use resources responsibly and without extravagance (Rosenthal, 2012), and should spend a significant percentage of their annual budgets on mission-related activities (Independent Sector, 2007), efficiency ratios have often been used to identify performance. These commonly compare programme, administrative and fundraising expenses to total expenses (Abrahams, 2006). However, since efficiency does not necessarily lead to effectiveness, higher overhead ratios do not imply less wise spending of funds (Cunningham & Ricks, 2004). For example, people are the lifeblood of NPOs (McKinsey, 2001), which accordingly spend the majority of their budgets on staff

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(Culick *et al.*, 2004). An NPO might not function well if it does not have the people needed to undertake its vital work. Efficiency ratios also say nothing about performance against mission (Glassman & Spahn, 2012). Measures of efficiency therefore reveal little without a full understanding of effectiveness.

In the past, organisational effectiveness has been judged mainly on programmatic performance (Kareithi & Lund, 2012). But Thomas (2010) warns against this: measuring organisational performance is not the same as assessing impact (John, 2006), and excellence in programme innovation and implementation alone is not enough to achieve lasting results (McKinsey, 2001). The effectiveness of a programme is related to, but distinct from, the effectiveness of the organisation running it (Herman & Renz, 2008). Project staff may have different skills and experience to those running organisations. Projects may also be in different operating environments that present different pressures. Effectiveness, therefore, needs to be exhibited from both an organisational and a programme perspective (Fowler, 1996) and there is a call for NPO performance measurement to focus on overall functioning of the organisation (Kareithi & Lund, 2012).

Funders have a wide range of potential NPOs to choose from. To help them with those choices, many more are now undertaking due diligence processes. When done well, due diligence can help to distinguish NPOs with a greater likelihood of success (Enright, 2012). Unfortunately, there is no commonly agreed method for undertaking due diligence of an NPO. NPOs have multiple constituents – employees, trustees, funders, communities they were set up to serve – each of whom may have different ideas of what effectiveness means (Herman & Renz, 2004; Jun & Shiau, 2012). This multi-dimensional nature of effectiveness means that success cannot be assessed with a single

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indicator (Herman & Renz, 2008). Accountability and performance measurement systems in NPOs are therefore complex (Sridhar & Nagabhushanam, 2008; Costa *et al.*, 2011). There is little theoretical or empirical consensus about the best ways of identifying and measuring NPO effectiveness (Sowa *et al.*, 2004).

Instead, there have been many different suggestions as to what should be included in such a process. To name a few examples: New Philanthropy Capital released a guide for funders and charities to use in analysing NPOs (Coppes & Vernon, 2010); Bridgespan Group published a Give Smart guide (see www.givesmart.org), which guides philanthropists as to the right questions to ask to identify the best organisations; and BirdLife International (2008) released its own guide to how to assess potential project partners. Many of the suggestions made by these guidelines mirror or complement findings from the more academic field of NPO effectiveness (see Lecy *et al.*, 2012 for latest literature review). But there is a lot of variability in the criteria used (Sanders, personal observation).

With increased use of due diligence and NPO assessment frameworks (Chen, 2009), NPOs increasingly have to spend more time dealing with requests for information from funders (Bearman, 2008). But to date, there has been no evaluation of the usefulness of these frameworks and no consensus on what suitable measures might be (Lecy *et al.*, 2012). As well as no agreement on which determinants of organisational effectiveness are essential to include in a due diligence process, there is also little to no consideration of what, if any, impact risks in the external operating environment may have on an organisation's effectiveness (Sanders, personal observation). An organisation may have all the determinants of an effective organisation, but its interventions might still fail if

they are thwarted by political decisions or obstruction from local communities. This study aims to provide a starting point to filling these gaps.

Knowledge gaps and the main aims of this study

The choice of conservation intervention can play a role in whether or not a conservation project will succeed in its stated aims (e.g., see Williams *et al.*, 2012). But this is only one consideration. It is also important to consider the risks and barriers that could inhibit progress or success. 'Risk' is a very business-oriented term. There is no unified definition of risk concepts in the business literature (Wolke, 2017), and different academic communities choose to define it in slightly different ways. For example, The Institute of Risk Management (IRM, 2002) and most of the business community use the definition given by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), which defines risk as the combination of the probability of an event and its consequences. The Convention on Biological Diversity defines it as the combination of the probability of an event and its negative consequences, commonly expressed as a function of exposure, vulnerability conditions present, and the magnitude and frequency of a hazard event (Sudmeier-Rieux, 2013 in CBD, 2019). There are multiple definitions offered by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, but most of those include both the probability and consequence of risk (IPCC, 2003). Some of these definitions take the concept further, saying there is potential for adverse consequences and that occurrence and degree of outcome is uncertain. While there are subtle differences in these various definitions, there is agreement that it is important to consider the likelihood (probability) and consequence of risks when undertaking any risk assessment. My focus in this thesis is on factors that contribute to non-achievement of goals by conservation

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organisations. Therefore, my definition of risk includes the combination of the probability of an event or circumstance and the resultant consequences that impede conservation success.

In the business context risk management, which involves company-wide measurement and supervision of all business risk (Wolke, 2017), increases the probability of success, and reduces both the probability of failure and the uncertainty of achieving the organisation's overall objectives (IRM, 2002). The consequence (and severity) of a risk is important because it represents a future barrier that the organisation may face in trying to achieve its goals. The probability is an important factor because it is impossible to mitigate against every risk. When trying to allocate finite resources it is important to give preference to those risks that have the highest likelihood of occurring. Unfortunately, the concepts of risk and risk management are still not sufficiently recognised and practiced by the managers of non-profit organisations (Herman, 2010). There is, however, more consideration of 'barriers' within the NPO sector. I define barriers in this thesis as the consequences of risks that threaten an organisation's ability to meet its target or goals. Once a risk is realised it becomes a barrier to success. Identifying these risks and the barriers they may create is important to enable NPO leaders to manage them (Herman, 2010). There are many academic papers that highlight individual issues, such as inadequate law enforcement (e.g., van Beukering et al., 2007; Wright-Reolledo, 2007; Sano, 2008), opposing agendas between conservation and development (e.g., Songorwa *et al.*, 2005; Rambaldi *et al.*, 2006; Eneji *et al.*, 2009) and a lack of political support (e.g., Gratwicke *et al.*, 2007; Nelson, 2007; Kaltenborn *et al.*, 2008). But for the field of conservation, there has never been an attempt to identify and consolidate the major barriers to conservation.

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If an NPO is deficient in some way, then it will have a reduced likelihood of achieving its objectives (e.g., see Black *et al.*, 2011). There is a rich academic literature on the determinants of NPO effectiveness (see Lecy *et al.*, 2012) and, once again, there have been many studies looking at individual determinants to identify their importance. For example, both Green & Griesinger (1996) and Herman & Renz (2000, 2004) found significant relationships between the effectiveness of the board (as measured by using accepted business practices) and organisational effectiveness (as judged by stakeholders) in NPOs. Brown (2005) suggests that boards making more robust strategic contributions are found in organisations with higher financial performance, and LeRoux & Wright (2010) found that effective governing bodies increased the effectiveness of strategic decision-making in NPOs. Links have also been found between organisational effectiveness or performance and the presence of a clear vision (Jepson & Canney, 2003; Gill, 2006), mission statement (see Kirk & Nolan 2010), strategic planning process (Green & Griesinger, 1996; and see Gill, 2006) and short-term achievable goals (Black *et al.*, 2011). But there has once again never been an attempt to consolidate what determinants are currently being used to guide or judge effectiveness in NPOs, or to seek the views of conservationists as to the importance of these various determinants.

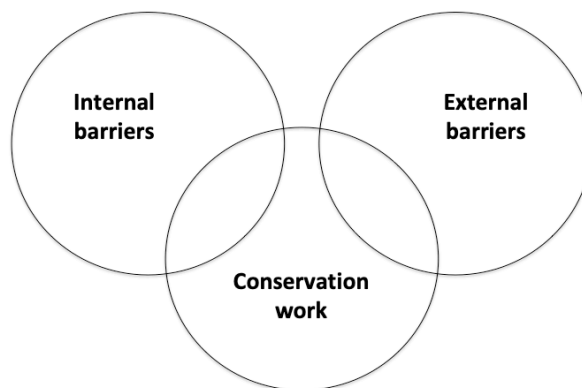


Figure 1.5: Venn diagram showing that the effectiveness of conservation work can be hampered by barriers arising both inside and outside of a conservation NPO.

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A due diligence process needs to look at potential risks and barriers to success, and what the NPO has/does that makes it likely that it can overcome those barriers. These can originate both inside and outside of organisations (Figure 1.5). Efforts to create due diligence procedures seem to have looked at what has been done before. Existing effectiveness determinants are used as a starting point for identifying internal risks, despite there being little scientific evidence supporting the contention that these things do actually result in better performing organisations. Furthermore, the world we live in is complex. There are multiple issues all interacting with each other such that it is difficult to determine where one problem ends and the next begins. Both conservation and organisational effectiveness fall into the 'wicked problem' category (van den Broek, 2012). There have been no broad-brushed attempts to look more holistically at the challenges conservationists face. Similarly, other than work done by Black *et al.* (2011), there have been very few attempts to merge the fields of organisational effectiveness into the field conservation. This thesis aims to begin to fill these knowledge gaps by seeking to answer three research questions.

- What are barriers to progress or success in conservation as perceived by conservation practitioners?
- What external barriers to success do conservation practitioners feel are important when trying to understand the context in which conservation work is undertaken?
- What internal barriers to success, in the form of deficiencies in NPO effectiveness criteria, should be considered when trying to identify an effective organisation?

Methodological framework

This thesis initially set out to investigate how to design a due diligence process that would enable funders of wildlife conservation to identify those organisations most able to deliver positive conservation outcomes. A good way to identify what procedures or considerations conservationists need to have in place to enhance the likelihood of success is to identify possible points of failure. Once we know what they are, we can identify how to mitigate those them and manage any residual risk that remains.

There are two possible ways to do this: use existing theory and test it, or start with a blank canvas and create new theory. A major problem with using existing theory and concepts is that we may inadvertently be committed to a particular perspective, which means we are not open to equally plausible alternative interpretations of what we observe (De Vaus, 2002). For this reason, I chose a 'back-to-basics', broad-brushed approach to identifying internal and external barriers to success. I identified those barriers by using three main data sets: NPO effectiveness frameworks that guide or judge organisational effectiveness, semi-structured interviews with a large sample of conservationists, and a Likert-scale survey in which an even larger group of conservationists were asked to validate the findings of the first two analyses. Statistical analyses were then used to reduce and interpret the findings.

In an inductive study, data analysis has little or no predetermined theory or structural framework, thereby requiring the data itself to be used to derive the structure of the analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Burnard *et al.*, 2008). Methodological frameworks such as 'grounded theory' (Bryman, 2016) have adopted such inductive approaches to research. However, there is a lack of agreement over what grounded theory is: to some it is a distinct method of approach to qualitative research in its own right, to others it is

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an approach for generating theory, while still others use it to generate concepts rather than theory itself. In this thesis, I have used an inductive research approach to generate concepts, which are ideas expressed in words or as symbols (Blaikie, 2010).

I had to use non-probability sampling throughout this study because the sampling frames for conservationists based in my chosen study locations (South Africa and Kenya) and worldwide, and for all available NPO effectiveness frameworks were unavailable, and the populations too wide and dispersed to allow me to use probability sample (De Vaus, 2002).

I analysed the content of interview transcripts by identifying themes within those data and gathering examples of those themes from the transcripts (Burnard *et al.*, 2008). I used constant comparison in my analyses, i.e., reading and rereading data to search for and identify emerging themes in a constant search for understanding what the data mean (Silverman, 2013), and discover thematic groupings or open code clusters, which allowed the data – rather than a literature review – to drive coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In accordance with the principles of an inductive approach to research, I used theoretical saturation as the criterion for deciding when to cease collecting new data (Bryman, 2016): once no new data seemed to emerge in the various categories identified, and no new categories were being identified, I stopped collecting data. Coded concepts and ideas emerging from the interviews and framework review were then used to typify external barriers conservationists face and internal determinants of NPO effectiveness (De Vaus, 2002).

I chose to conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews because these are useful when the goal is to explore people's experiences and when generating new theory (Raymond & Knight, 2013). They also allow complex issues to be followed up on. Seeking

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clarification of additional information following a response compels interviewees to contemplate their thoughts and not merely try to fit their answers to set categories (Schoenberger 1994). Interviewees were selected from a range of different conservation organisations, including small grassroots organisations, medium-sized regional organisations, large international organisations and representatives from government departments. While there is a concern that relying on the impressions of conservationists could leave gaps in barriers identified, I felt that it was important to take this approach because these are the people on the front-line of conservation every day. Their combined impressions are not only important but are also largely lacking from the academic literature.

Since only single, high level questions were asked, the interviews essentially took the form of freelist interviews (Quinlan, 2005). These involve participants listing things in whatever order they come to mind. Frequently mentioned items indicate common knowledge or consensus. People can forget or omit items, or cluster responses as they 'unpack' mental subcategories, and omission and clustering can reduce the precision of salience estimates (Quinlan, 2005). I therefore chose not to calculate a salience statistic on interview findings.

Freelists can consist of different phrasings of the same concept, so some judgement in analysing them is needed (Weller & Romney, 1988). Since both the interviews and frameworks needed some degree of interpretation, I used qualitative content analysis to translate all meanings in the interviews and frameworks into a coding frame and classify successive parts of the material according to these categories (Schreier, 2012). This allowed me to reduce the data into manageable categories and make sense of all the information obtained.

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Positionality refers to the effect researchers have on interviews as a result of their position. According to Rose (1997), it is vital to consider the position of both the researcher and the respondent throughout the research process, and it is important that the relationship of the researcher to the research and the wider world is clear so that the knowledge generated within interviews can be appropriately situated. In order to secure interviews, I introduced myself as Head of Risk and Due Diligence for Synchronicity Earth, the organisation that I was developing the due diligence framework for at the time of research. Because Synchronicity Earth is a funder of wildlife conservation, it helped to secure meetings with senior people, but it is possible that it swayed conversation towards limited funding. I did try to pull conversation away from that if it appeared to get stuck there, but most interviewees spoke about multiple challenges, and funding was commonly not the first one. To make sure that they thought more broadly than 'the potential funder sitting in front of them' I asked a second question if time permitted: 'if there was more money than the sector knew what to do with, what would be the solution?'

As there is no one truth, narratives are co-constructed between the participant and researcher, raising the issue about whether research findings are valid and whether or not the researcher can legitimately represent the views of the research participants (Hunter, 2009). There are also risks that what is said could be misinterpreted by the researcher. One method of validating an analysis involves sending coded interview transcripts back to interviewees for feedback (Burnard *et al.*, 2008). I chose not to do this, however, because I did not want participants to modify their opinions once seeing them all written or after having more time to think about it. To minimise risks arising from positionality, inaccurately coded or interpreted interview transcripts, and the fact

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that the majority of my interviewees were based in only two African countries, I chose to use a Likert-scale survey to test the validity (De Vaus, 2002) of the external barriers and the determinants of organisational effectiveness that had been identified in the interviews and frameworks review.

Most inductive research is qualitative, but I combined the qualitative method of open-ended interviews and framework review with the quantitative method of an online survey so that the typologies I developed for important external barriers and internal effectiveness determinants could be tested.

Structure of this thesis

Conservation is an incredibly complex field (Game *et al.*, 2013) that is as much a social, political and economic problem as it is a biological one (Saterton, 1999). Many factors present challenges to conservation practitioners: while some are internal to the organisation and its interventions, many are external to it. Socio-economic and political attributes of nations can and do influence the effectiveness of conservation actions (O'Connor *et al.*, 2003), regardless of how well the organisation does at implementing its intervention. Think back for a moment to the example of mining for coltan given by Duffy (2010). Any work a conservationist might do could be countered by the government awarding a mining concession in a conservation area. But conservation organisations continue to be judged on their internal effectiveness with seemingly little consideration of the external challenges they face. While there have been many studies into the effects of individual external challenges, there has never been a broad-brush approach to understanding the external context within conservationists operate. The next two chapters contribute to our current knowledge by addressing this shortfall.

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Chapter 2 uses findings from 74 interviews with conservation practitioners to develop a typology of external challenges to conservation as perceived by conservationists. Chapter 3 uses a survey of a larger population of 154 conservation practitioners and statistical methods (principal components analysis and linear discriminant analysis) to prioritise those challenges and examine the impact of organisational attributes (age, size, independence and continent of operation) on priorities, thus helping us to hone in on key impediments to conservation success.

The final three data chapters take the focus of challenges to conservation inside the organisation. While individual determinants of NPO effectiveness have been studied in depth, there have been no over-arching studies identifying the determinants currently being used to operationalise NPO effectiveness. Chapter 4 contributes to knowledge by addressing this shortfall. Knowledge of the determinants of NPO effectiveness is useful not only because it allows NPOs to focus on these determinants, thus making themselves more effective, but also because it allows donors to use them to identify those organisations with a greater likelihood of success. While academic studies have examined the determinants of NPO effectiveness (Forbes, 1998; Lecy *et al.*, 2012), there has never been a comparison of the determinants used to guide NPOs in becoming more effective and those used by donors or other stakeholders to judge effectiveness. Chapter 5 contributes to academic knowledge by filling this gap. In Chapter 6, I compare the NPO effectiveness determinants as identified by frameworks used to operationalise the concept to determinants identified by 154 conservation practitioners in an online survey. This chapter contributes to knowledge by providing the first attempt to obtain the views of conservationists on this important subject. Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the chapters and contributions to knowledge and practice that they make. Overall

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observations and broader implications of this work are discussed, and recommendations on how this work may be used by conservationists and their funders are provided.

2: CHAPTER TWO

**Conservation conversations: A typology of
barriers to conservation success**

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Abstract

Despite considerable achievements in the field of conservation, biodiversity continues to decline. Conservation initiatives face numerous barriers. While many of these are well known, for example, insufficient funding and capacity, there has, to date, been no systematic attempt to catalogue and categorise them into a typology. Risks faced by an organisation can give rise to barriers that can impact the organisation itself or compromise its ability to achieve its goals. Here I present the first attempt at identifying all key barriers. I use analysis of extensive interviews with 74 conservationists, primarily from Africa but with international experience, to identify these and use that information to create a typology of barriers to conservation success. While the intention is not to devise a ranked list of barriers, I do draw on the literature to explain the prevalence of some of the barriers identified. I suggest that this typology could form the basis of heuristic tools that conservationists can use to identify and manage potential risks and barriers to their projects, thereby improving decision making, strategic planning and, ultimately, overall impact. The typology is also useful for the conservation community (comprising conservationists and their funders) to identify how it can implement better practices to improve the likelihood of success. I present examples of such work already under way and suggest more can be done to continue to improve.

Introduction

There has been a notable increase in the scope and scale of conservation activities. On average the sector receives USD 1.1 billion in aid from government and multilateral agencies annually (Miller *et al.*, 2012), and possibly even more from private sources, with philanthropy overtaking traditional sources of aid (Nelson, 2009).

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With this support, conservationists – defined here as any individual, group or organisation undertaking conservation actions – have been able to reduce the risk of extinction for many species (e.g. Hoffman *et al.*, 2015), yet global biodiversity loss continues (Butchart *et al.*, 2010). Global wildlife populations have fallen by 60% since 1970 (WWF, 2018). There is an urgent need to increase the success of conservation, and some practices from the corporate sector could prove useful.

The success of for-profit companies in the corporate sector is typically measured through productivity, profit or return on assets (Wall *et al.*, 2004). Success in conservation, however, is more difficult to define. There has been much debate over the definition and measurement of conservation success (e.g. Margoluis *et al.*, 2013), perhaps because success is both subjective and pluralistic. Definitions vary in different contexts and for different stakeholders (Meredith *et al.*, 2018). Here I define success as the agreement by all relevant stakeholders that outcomes have had positive benefits on species, habitats and/or ecosystems, that barriers have been successfully overcome or managed, and that the intervention or action was good value for money.

In the corporate sector, success is underpinned by, among other things, the management of risk (Merna & Al-Thani, 2008). As outlined in Chapter 1, the Institute of Risk Management (2002) and most of the business community use the definition of risk given by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO): risk is the combination of the probability of an event or circumstance and its consequences. Once a risk has materialised, the consequence of that risk creates a barrier to success, defined as something that makes it hard or impossible for something to happen or be achieved (Collins dictionary, 2019). In business, the term ‘barrier’ is not commonly used. Instead, businesses tend to talk about the various risks to their business, which personal

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experience has shown might include both the risk itself and the barrier that results from it. Herman (2010) explains that risk management is still not as well understood and implemented in non-profit organisations. Contrary to the popular view that risks relate mainly to accidents, risk management is actually about helping a non-profit to advance its mission. As a result of this misunderstanding, I chose in this study to use the words 'barriers' and 'challenges' rather than 'risks' because of the commonly held, but incorrect view, that risks simply involve specific events, like falling down the stairs or being cut off from a power supply (see Charity Commission, 2010, and Herman, 2010).

Fundamentally, risk management involves identifying key risks to success in a timely manner (Cadbury, 1992). These might include problems within an organisation (for example, inappropriate organisational structure, poor staff recruitment and training, inadequate cash flow) or outside of it (e.g., changing government policy, turbulent economic environment and poor public perception). Once barriers are identified, the risk management process assesses their likelihood and potential impact, and identifies the resources that could prevent or mitigate such barriers (Cadbury, 1992). Effective risk management therefore enables organisations, both for- and non-profit, to identify and monitor significant barriers and take timely action. This makes them more effective in forward planning and strategy development, and more likely to achieve organisational aims (Charity Commission, 2010) by increasing confidence in achieving their desired outcomes, effectively constraining barriers and threats to acceptable levels and, critically, taking informed decisions about exploiting opportunities (Grant, 2012).

Since overcoming barriers to success through effective risk management frees up resources for mission-related activities (Herman, 2010), conservationists would benefit from understanding and mitigating barriers that compromise the success of their

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missions. There are tools available to help. The UK Charity Commission (2010) guide to risk management and various capacity assessment tools (e.g., BirdLife International, 2008) mostly focus on internal barriers, such as inappropriate governance structures or weak leadership. Various studies have also examined conservation successes or failures and tried to identify causes (e.g., Manolis *et al.*, 2009; Black *et al.*, 2011; Botrill *et al.*, 2011). However, such tools do not easily guide users through the process of risk assessment, nor do they ensure that all types of barriers are considered.

Typologies can potentially help to categorise the range of barriers that organisations face, facilitating better risk management. The field of climate change adaptation, for example, has used typologies presented by Adger *et al.* (2007), Burch (2010), Biesbroek *et al.* (2013) and Burch *et al.* (2014) to find more strategic ways to address climate change adaptation. To date, there has been no similar attempt to categorise barriers to conservation success. A typology of barriers to conservation success would, therefore, be useful to inform risk management for conservationists. In this chapter, I aim to develop such a typology. The main aims of this chapter are to:

- Identify internal and external barriers to conservation success at local and international levels as perceived by conservationists, and categorise these into a heuristic typology;
- Examine geographical differences in the categories of barriers reported by conservationists;
- Discuss how the typology of barriers to conservation success might provide a starting point in organisational risk management; and

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- Review the examples of work already being done by some forward-thinking members of the conservation and non-profit communities to ameliorate barriers to success.

Methodology

I followed an inductive approach (Bryman, 2016) to ensure that conservationists' views are accurately reflected without being influenced by the researchers. Although there is a dearth of academic and grey literature discussing barriers to conservation, my goal was to gain insights directly from conservationists. While relying on the perceptions of conservationists could result in gaps in barriers identified, conservationists from organisations of all sizes work at the coal-face every day. Their views are therefore important, and have not previously been captured or consolidated in the academic literature.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 27 conservationists in South Africa and 32 in Kenya between October 2012 and December 2014. These countries were selected because their rich wildlife is coming under increasing pressure despite the large number of local and international conservationists working to protect it. As conservation hubs, large numbers of conservationists in relatively close proximity also helped reduce travel time between interviews.

Requests for interviews were sent out by email, with subsequent follow up by email or telephone. All email communications and procedures received the appropriate research ethics approvals from the University of Oxford. All interviews were informal and in-depth, most lasting one to two hours. The conversational tone of interviews, with open-ended questions, was intended to encourage more detailed answers.

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Interviewees were assured of anonymity by the publication of only consolidated findings.

All interviewees were identified through professional networks and chosen based on knowledge and experience. Most held director or senior management positions. Initial contact was made with 71 individuals from 60 organisations. Additional interviewees were identified through snowballing (Valentine, 2005). Where availability was limited and interviews delegated to less experienced individuals within the organisation, I requested that interviewees had at least three years of direct conservation experience. In some larger organisations, I interviewed more than one person. If the individuals within one organisation worked closely, they were interviewed together, but if they were involved in different projects or in different areas of work, they were interviewed separately.

My purposive sample included representatives from governmental and non-governmental organisations, and academic institutions. However, the vast majority were from non-governmental organisations. While I aimed for my sample to be representative of the conservation community, I found it particularly difficult to get interviews with people in smaller, grassroots organisations and government organisations. My samples are therefore not completely representative of all actors within the conservation space.

Since many interviewees represented iconic organisations in Africa, I felt there were gaps in other areas or organisational types. I therefore interviewed a further 15 conservationists from outside my chosen countries, including the United Kingdom, Philippines, Democratic Republic of Congo and Australia. While the low number of people in this sample is not representative of the wider conservation community, it did

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provide additional insight and ensured that I captured a wider range of conservation contexts. Furthermore, although the majority of my interviewees were based in Africa, not all have always been there. Their opinions therefore also exceed the African context. Overall, I interviewed 74 people from 64 organisations.

All interviewees were asked two questions: 'What barriers or challenges prevent conservation organisations from achieving their goals?' If time permitted, they were also asked: 'If money were no constraint, what would be the solution?' Additional probing questions were asked to dig deeper where required, and to ensure responses were clearly understood. Participants were able to discuss any issue for as long as they wanted. No attempt was made to lead participants in any particular direction during the discussion.

Interviews were transcribed using shorthand typing, with permission for doing so obtained from each interviewee. Transcripts were coded to identify key themes into which responses could be categorised. The informal nature of the discussions meant that barriers and solutions were often discussed interchangeably. When specifically asked about solutions, many interviewees continued to discuss barriers or merely suggest 'negative barriers' as solutions. My analysis therefore focused on 'issues' whether framed as problems (there are not enough skilled people) or solutions (we need to train more people). All interview transcripts were revisited following coding to ensure consistent logic was applied throughout. Where necessary, further contact was made to seek clarification.

In designing the typology, I used an iterative, inductive approach to categorise responses. I consulted a range of literature to provide additional explanation in the presentation of my results.

Results

All interviewees were very candid and forthcoming, discussing a wide range of topics. Rather than using barrier typologies that are used in other areas, such as climate change, which were inappropriate, I used obvious high-level criteria, split where necessary to capture different sub-themes.

At the top layer, issues were grouped by origin. External issues are completely outside of the control of the conservation community, which comprises both conservationists and their funders. Operational issues arise outside any particular conservation organisation but are within the control of the conservation community. This category is important to distinguish because it helps highlight how many practices can actually hinder, rather than improve, conservation success. Internal issues are those completely within an individual organisation's control. Within each of these categories, I identified a number of different themes:

- *External issues outside an organisation's control:* Themes within this category included behaviour, both of people and practitioners locally and the global population more widely, issues specific to the local context, and wider global issues.
- *Operational issues within the control of the conservation community but outside that of an individual organisation:* Themes within this group included the manner in which funding is awarded, involvement and ownership of local communities, continuous improvement, collaboration between different players within the sector, and coordination of effort.
- *Internal issues within an organisation's control:* Leadership is about driving the organisation's achievement of its vision, while management is concerned

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with achieving efficiency and stability during that process. Governance primarily revolves around oversight and organisational direction, and finance is concerned with acquiring, managing and spending funds.

The full list of issues discussed under each category and theme, and the number of interviewees discussing each category is shown in Table 2.1. More detail providing a fuller picture of what interviewees said about these issues is given in Appendix 1.

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Table 2.1. A typology of barriers to effective conservation. Each of the three categories is further divided into themes, which in turn each have issues within them. A quote capturing the essence of what was discussed is given for each theme. The percentage of interviewees from each interview group, and as a total interview population, discussing each theme is shown. The top five issues for each sample group are underlined and given in bold. Note that there was a tie for fifth place for South Africa so there are six issues highlighted in that column.

Themes and issues	Quotations	South Africa n=27	Kenya n=32	Other n=15	Total n=74
External – further divided into Behaviour (B); Local context (LC) and Wider issues (W)					
B	Cultural/ ethical norms	26	66	33	43
B	Changing behaviour	19	34	20	26
LC	Local capacity/ infrastructure	<u>93</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>81</u>
LC	Political will/ mainstreaming	33	50	20	38
LC	Enforcement of laws/ regulations	30	50	7	34
LC	Local context	26	38	27	31
LC	Government institutions	22	41	27	31

Cont.

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Themes and issues		Quotations	South Africa n=27	Kenya n=32	Other n=15	Total n=74
LC	Corruption	“Poor pay creates an environment where corruption can occur”	22	38	0	24
LC	Local community structure	“Working only with one community and not taking the views of others into account is a problem”	11	38	13	23
LC	Human-wildlife connection	“Poaching makes animals angry, which increases human-wildlife conflict”	15	22	7	16
LC	Land tenure	“Out of anger, local communities with no land tenure have shunned conservation. Because the land isn’t theirs, there’s no point participating because they won’t benefit”	0	25	0	11
LC	Security/ conflict/ war	“Conflict or war means anyone not local pulls out”	0	16	13	9
W	Increased demand for land/ resources	“People are pushed into forests and water-stressed areas as more land is needed for agriculture”	44	59	7	43
W	People disconnected from nature	“City folk don’t really know about nature or conservation”	30	44	27	35
W	Complex world	“The number of threats is increasing very rapidly. You deal with one threat here and another rises quickly”	30	34	13	28
Operational – comprising Funding (FU), Coordination (C), Continuous improvement (CI), Local involvement and impact (LII) and Reputation (R)						
CI	Learning/ knowledge sharing	“We are notoriously bad at learning from our interventions”	48	63	40	53
CI	Discussing failure	“Discussing failure can affect future funding”	22	25	13	22

Cont.

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Themes and issues		Quotations	South Africa n=27	Kenya n=32	Other n=15	Total n=74
C	Integrated approach	“The scale of impacts is bigger than the size of the interventions, so we’re not working at the right scales”	52	<u>72</u>	47	59
C	Collaboration	“Collaborations are often very superficial”	52	41	20	41
C	Coordination of effort	“Politics prevents us from adopting a coordinated approach”	15	<u>69</u>	27	41
C	Unintended consequences of conservation	“Benefits from conservation attract more people to the area”	11	3	7	7
FU	Availability of funding	“People care about people, so the amount of money going into conservation is small”	<u>67</u>	66	47	<u>62</u>
FU	Long term issue	“There is a disconnect between meaningful outputs and getting money out in line with 3-5 year funding policy”	<u>70</u>	56	40	58
FU	Funding allocation	“Overhead is more expensive than many donors think”	41	50	33	43
FU	Donor-led conservation agenda	“Everyone changes their tune based on what donors are funding”	44	38	27	38
FU	Unsustainable conservation actions	“Interventions are unsustainable when funding runs out”	22	47	20	32
FU	Competition	“There are many organisations clamouring to do very similar things”	37	28	13	28
FU	Donor selection of conservationists	“Some organisations are good at raising money but not implementing”	30	41	0	28
FU	Donor due diligence	“Filled in forms mask weaknesses because NGOs want the money”	22	41	13	28

Cont.

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Themes and issues		Quotations	South Africa n=27	Kenya n=32	Other n=15	Total n=74
FU	Desire for recognition	“Everyone wants to make their own mark, so we’re too focused on novelty”	26	34	20	28
FU	Relations between funders/ conservationists	“There is a lack of open communication between donor and organisation when problems arise”	22	28	13	23
FU	Dishonesty in the sector	“Conservation agencies lie to funders about what they’ve done or are doing”	11	13	44	26
FU	Application and reporting processes	“Donors have created bureaucratic procedures, but won’t pay for the staff needed to prepare them”	22	19	7	18
LII	Community buy in	“The process of developing trust with locals takes time”	56	75	60	65
LII	Local ownership/ empowerment	“NGOs should be aiming to make themselves redundant in an area, not make the area reliant on them”	30	63	53	49
LII	Conservation/ development interplay	“We have a challenge of making conservation an economic choice, which is hard in a poor society”	37	56	27	43
LII	Community consultation	“Proper consultation and participation of people helps identify risks”	11	22	13	16
R	Accountability	“There’s no follow up to check what you’ve paid for has been done, and that it’s actually achieving anything”	22	19	7	18

Cont.

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Themes and issues		Quotations	South Africa n=27	Kenya n=32	Other n=15	Total n=74
R	Reputation of conservation	“We have to stop being so radical and ecocentric. We have to remember that there is a human need”	22	19	0	16
Internal – further subdivided into Finances (F), Leadership (L), Governance (G) and Management (M)						
F	Financial management	“Project managers don’t understand the need for financial management so don’t keep receipts”	33	13	20	22
G	Governance	“The directors often don’t have the time that is needed to fully address issues”	30	6	13	16
L	Impact	“Sometimes it can be hard to show what you’re doing, but you are making progress”	<u>70</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>69</u>
L	Strategy	“The average manager is always doing things. They don’t have time to look at the reports that come out from the research guys to see if it can solve their problems”	<u>89</u>	47	<u>73</u>	<u>68</u>
L	Leadership	“Ego is an issue in conservation. The needs of the organisation need to be bigger than the individual running it”	<u>67</u>	44	27	49
M	General management	“There is more interest in doing the interesting work than the bureaucratic processes”	63	13	33	35
M	People management	“People out in the field have no strong home connection or strong ability to network socially or promote themselves, so they miss out”	41	16	13	24

Discussion

This first section of the discussion introduces the top five issues identified in my interviews, both for the entire sample and for interviewees only from South Africa and Kenya separately (Table 2.2). It explores why they may be foremost in people's minds. I suggest possible reasons for differences in prevalence between South Africa and Kenya: three of the top five issues overall were top five in only one country. I have not included the 'other' group in this analysis since it is not representative of the rest of the world.

Table 2.2. Top five issues raised by interviewees from South Africa, Kenya and the total interview population. The percentage of interviewees discussing each issue is given in parentheses. Note that there was a tie for fifth place for South Africa so there are six issues included for that country.

South Africa (n = 27)	Kenya (n = 32)	Total (n = 74)
Local capacity (93)	Local capacity (84)	Local capacity (81)
Strategy (89)	Community buy-in (75)	Impact/ monitoring and evaluation (69)
Impact/ monitoring and evaluation (70)	Impact/ monitoring and evaluation (72)	Strategy (68)
Long-term issue (70)	Integrated approach (72)	Community buy-in (65)
Leadership (67)	Co-ordination of effort (69)	Availability of funding (62)
Availability of funding (67)		

Local capacity (external issue)

One issue raised by 81% of interviewees was the challenge of finding and keeping skilled and experienced staff. Interviewees felt many young people are drawn to the better pay and perks offered by the private sector, leaving a relatively small pool of

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suitably skilled and passionate people available to fill low-paid but highly skilled jobs. One interviewee said conservationists are expected to be jacks-of-all-trades: understanding complex ecological processes while comprehending complicated socioeconomic and political interactions. They have to write grant applications and progress reports, manage staff and control financial budgets. But many interviewees felt that finding people with training and experience in these diverse skills was difficult. This could be a result of limited training available to small organisations, especially in developing countries. Many interviewees felt they had little time or money to invest in training or development, possibly because of time and resource constraints.

South African interviewees particularly mentioned problems with staff retention and recruitment: 93% of them raised this issue. South Africa has a long history of conservation, a large number of state-run national parks, and the largest number of conservationists in Africa: more than twice as many as in Kenya (Brockington & Scholfield, 2010a). Access to and competition for highly skilled and passionate individuals is therefore more challenging in South Africa, a problem possibly exacerbated by local education deficiencies (see Chisholm, 2004 & Fleish, 2008) and legal requirements for active promotion of previously disadvantaged groups over those who might have more skills and/or experience (Krüger, 2011).

Leadership (internal issue)

Local capacity issues may explain why leadership ranked highly amongst South African interviewees. Leadership, defined as “the ability to influence, inspire and motivate people, organisations and institutions to achieve, and in many cases go beyond, their goals” is a key contributor to institutional performance, stability and

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adaptability (United Nations Development Programme, 2010:20). Its translation into, and importance in, conservation is increasing (e.g., see Manolis *et al.*, 2009, Black *et al.*, 2011 and Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2011). A number of South African interviewees felt it was impossible to find effective leaders, while others gave examples of individual egos being put above the cause. Their concerns are borne out in the literature. For example, one study of high-impact non-profit organisations found that the best leaders put their organisations and causes above themselves, sharing leadership and empowering others to take action (Grant & Crutchfield, 2008).

Strategy (internal issue)

Many interviewees described conservation efforts as lacking strategy, often operating in crisis mode. The need for strategy is also clearly articulated in the literature (e.g., see Jepson & Canney, 2003). Strategic planning enables non-profit organisations to develop short- and long-term goals and ensure that limited resources are appropriately allocated (McHatton *et al.*, 2011). If clear, a strategy can ensure that objectives and methods are well thought-through and articulated, providing coherence and focus in pursuit of the mission (Kaplan, 2001). Interviewees were frustrated by the lack of resources available to develop strategies, especially given the urgency of new and emerging threats to biodiversity. They recognised a need to examine assumptions underpinning their approaches, but in reality had little time to do so. While there may be clarity over what organisations want to achieve, it was less obvious how they could go about it given the resource constraints they faced.

Impact/monitoring and evaluation (internal issue)

Monitoring and evaluation are central to adaptive management, providing an opportunity to reflect on which interventions are working and which need to be revised (Salafsky & Margoluis, 2003). They are therefore essential to project management and development (Stem *et al.*, 2005). While interviewees agreed that monitoring and evaluation were important, they felt they did not have the right tools to assess conservation initiatives. This is because progress is not fast or linear and therefore impacts can be difficult to measure. Furthermore, reasons for success might not be obvious, making it difficult to define and report on them. The academic literature also describes the challenges in assessing conservation impacts (e.g. Kapos *et al.*, 2009), and provides agreement that there is no satisfactory method for measuring impact consistently or attributing benefits to specific interventions (e.g., Bond, 2006).

Community buy-in (operational issue)

Nearly two thirds of interviewees identified with the need for, but challenges of, securing support from local communities that have often lived in the area for generations. One pointed out that the concept of 'conservation' can be alien to them. Another said poverty can prevent conservation from being a viable choice for local communities. Community expectations are often unmanaged. Some interviewees gave examples of broken promises and communities losing out as benefits arising from interventions that are meant for the community are in fact captured by other people/groups. Others talked of evictions and displacement in the name of conservation. Community buy-in was more commonly discussed in Kenya, featuring in

its top five issues. Active evictions of communities from their homes in Kenya at the time of my interviews (Survival International, 2015) could have contributed to this.

Availability of funding (operational issue)

Most non-profit organisations are completely reliant on external sources of funding (Hull & Lio, 2006). Availability of limited funding was raised as an issue by 62% of my interviewees, and is well described in the literature (e.g., see Sachedina, 2011), where biodiversity conservation is portrayed as a low priority for donors. Although private philanthropy has increased significantly (Hammack, 2006), environmental causes attract less than 5% of it in the UK and USA (see Murray *et al.*, 2014 and Sherlock & Gravelle 2009, respectively). Funding for conservation is well below the estimates of total funding needed by conservation organisations (e.g., see McCarthy *et al.*, 2012). With tens of thousands of active environmental organisations (Scholfield & Brockington, 2008), competition for funding is intense.

Long-term support (operational issue)

The percentages of South African and Kenyan interviewees discussing long-term funding were high (see Table 2.1). South African interviewees also emphasised the mismatch between short-term funding and long-term conservation goals. There is agreement in the literature that short-term funding is problematic in conservation (e.g., see Jepson & Canney, 2003; Sayer & Wells, 2004; Tempesta & Otero, 2013) because it does not give enough time to produce, promote and implement successful programmes (Keppel *et al.*, 2012), and is not well suited to supporting locally-driven conservation

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efforts (Nelson, 2009), instead advancing global conservation agendas (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2007). These impacts may be felt more acutely in South Africa, which has twice as many conservation organisations as Kenya (Brockington & Scholfield, 2010a), while only attracting a similar amount of conservation funding (Brockington & Scholfield, 2010b).

Integrated approach and co-ordination of effort (operational issues)

Two issues that show geographical differences are: integrated approaches to conservation; and co-ordination of effort. Both featured in the top five in Kenya but not in South Africa. The number of non-profit organisations operating across Africa has grown considerably (Brockington & Scholfield, 2010c). While South Africa's conservation community is bigger, interviews revealed a more inclusive approach to conservation. Interviewees often knew each other personally, and some spoke of forums allowing them to communicate better and even work together. Conversely, in Kenya, interviewees often described a competitive, piecemeal approach to conservation. Frustration at the lack of coordination and information sharing was expressed. There were criticisms of organisations duplicating one another's work and obtaining funding while doing little active conservation.

Some interviewees felt international donors awarded funding to the best grant-writers, not the best conservationists. The literature confirms persistence of this problem throughout the charitable sector (e.g., see Unwin, 2004). Some interviewees felt that better coordination between conservationists and their funders, and a more integrated approach that considered whole landscapes rather than individual species or habitats, would both result in better outcomes for conservation work. Some provided examples of where this is happening, offering opinion on how this eliminates some of

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the problems identified above, but many felt there was still a long way to go in achieving more widespread cohesion in the sector.

Interconnectedness of barriers

A very clear message from these interviews was that there is no easy answer to what affects conservation success or effectiveness. Instead, every conservationist faces multiple barriers. Some are specific to, or more serious in, individual areas, while others are more widespread throughout the conservation sector. In addition, barriers are deeply interwoven, resulting in cumulative impacts on conservationists and their ability to deliver results. For example, funding can be more difficult to find (operational issue) when more organisations join the conservation sector or if international donors change their focus, particularly for small organisations. A lack of funding can make it more difficult for organisations to attract or retain high-quality employees (internal issue) or show resilience when natural disasters or conflicts arise locally (external issue). With some organisations not delivering on their stated aims, funders may demand more onerous application and reporting processes (operational issues), which in turn can reduce capacity within the organisation to deliver results, reassess strategic goals and reflect on its performance (internal issues).

The way forward

My research highlights the plethora of barriers to success that conservationists feel that they face. I suggest that this information, while interesting, is also very useful if used to increase the likelihood of success or more effective operation of specific

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interventions. This can be done by each conservation organisation using the typology to identify and manage its own risks and barriers to success, and by the conservation sector reflecting on how its processes and procedures might be changed to improve performance. I consider each of these in turn.

Effective organisational risk management involves identifying barriers specific to an organisation and responding to them in an appropriate way (Merna & Al-Thani, 2008). The typology above presents all barriers identified by my interview sample and shows that not every barrier is applicable to every organisation. Instead, each organisation and intervention carries its own unique set of barriers. My typology provides a useful starting point to help conservationists consider what barriers might prevent them from achieving their goals. This exercise would help to move conservationists towards the more the 'systems thinking' approach, proposed by Black *et al.* (2013), in which knowledge of natural systems and human behaviour, and the variations therein, inform decision-making and problem solving. To do this, conservationists need to look both inside and outside their organisations to identify those barriers, and then look internally to determine whether the organisation has the tools and/or capacity to respond appropriately. If not, the organisation can identify how it might acquire such tools and/or build capacity, or even re-consider whether its proposed strategy will work given the presence of the identified barriers.

I suggest that an effective risk identification process for a conservation organisation would be to use my typology as a checklist to identify potential barriers to success and effectiveness, and then to use a tool employed commonly by companies, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. Helms and Nixon (2008) explain that such analysis can help a conservation organisation to identify its unique

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strengths and weaknesses and reflect on how these might help to take advantage of opportunities and avoid threats present in the operating environment. Once barriers to success have been identified, the organisation can devise strategies to manage them, increasing their chances of achieving their goals.

Effective risk management is not a one-off exercise. The barriers faced by conservationists vary over time (Merna & Al-Thani, 2008). New threats and challenges emerge constantly at the local context, and internal organisational structures can change. Risk management should therefore become part of standard operating procedures and be carried out on an on-going basis to address changing barriers. An embedded approach to risk will ensure that conservationists and their funders have the tools needed to properly face, address and hopefully overcome barriers to conservation success. Risk management can significantly improve internal performance in non-profits (Golini *et al.*, 2015) and risk reduction has been shown to add value to shareholder wealth in for-profit companies (Godfrey *et al.*, 2009). I therefore suggest it can add value to the vital work conservationists undertake.

From my typology, one can see that there are many external barriers that the conservation sector has limited influence over (e.g., population growth or political will), particularly since there is relatively little money spent on systematic challenges, like rethinking economic growth, grappling with consumption, or reforming financial systems (Cracknell *et al.*, 2013). Before we can hope to stem the tide of biodiversity loss, we need to deal with the underlying political economy, which presents an enormous challenge to biodiversity and its conservation. There is, however, significant scope for that sector to work to remove or minimise the operational barriers that are within its

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control. I have found many initiatives already underway to address some of these operational barriers. I highlight a few of those as exemplars of what is possible.

Non-profit donors are starting to realise the burden they place on non-profit organisations, particularly small ones, and work is being done to address this. Large numbers of funders are re-considering the future of funding and identify how the burden they create might be alleviated, e.g., through less paperwork, shared due diligence processes or better collaboration (Bearman, 2013; Longhurst, 2016). For conservation specifically, a forum of African conservationists and their funders was held in Washington DC to consider how to strengthen and support effective and impactful conservation models and organisations (Maliasili, 2017). Although this work is in its infancy, it is encouraging that funders are showing an increasing interest in how to make funding more impactful.

There is a growing acknowledgement that working in collaboration can achieve better results, and individual studies are providing evidence of this in conservation (e.g., see Liu *et al.*, 2014 and Kark *et al.*, 2015). As a result, more collaborations are being set up in the conservation sector, both among conservationists themselves and among their funders. For example, the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (2012) is a collaboration between the University of Cambridge and the conservation organisations operating in and around Cambridge. Members work together under a shared strategy and set of operating procedures to create solutions for society and strengthen conservation leadership and capacity globally. Oceans5 (www.oceans5.org) is a collaboration of international funders that combine their knowledge, experience and funding to support large, opportunistic projects and campaigns to establish marine reserves and constrain

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overfishing. Their joint funding provides more than any single funder can usually provide.

It is encouraging to see that there is already work being done, both within the conservation community and by the wider donor base, to address some of the barriers identified in this chapter. In the future, there will need to be better sharing of knowledge about the drivers of successes and failures of conservation initiatives. Better management of internal and external barriers by conservation organisations, combined with more helpful practices employed by the donor community, would be positive steps in improving the effectiveness and success of conservationists, and hopefully stem the loss of biodiversity globally.

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3: CHAPTER THREE

**Practitioner insights as a means of setting
a context for conservation**

Abstract

Conservationists face many challenges. A key obstacle to success is the tendency to tackle each challenge individually rather than collectively and in context. This study attempts to prioritise challenges previously described in the conservation literature. I undertook an online survey of 154 practitioners from over 70 countries and used statistical analyses to identify 21 uncorrelated principal components, allowing me to hone in on key impediments to local conservation success. Issues emerging from this analysis included community attributes, funding, safety and security, corruption and enabling environment. Linear discriminant analysis revealed that survey responses were influenced by continent of operation and an organisation's size (as indicated by income levels), but not by its age or autonomy. I suggest the most important challenges to consider when undertaking local conservation action, but also warn against applying a 'one size fits all' approach. I propose that conservationists take proper account of the complex socio-ecological systems they operate in if they are to achieve success.

Introduction

Despite success stories in conservation (e.g., Balmford, 2012 and Hoffman *et al.*, 2015), wildlife populations have fallen by 60% since 1970 (WWF 2018). The conservation community, comprising both governmental and non-governmental (including academic) non-profit organisations (NPOs), has been criticised for making slow and erratic progress (Salafsky *et al.*, 2002) and failing to use evidence-based approaches (Sutherland *et al.* 2004). Attempts are being made to address these criticisms: systematic reviews identify the most successful interventions (e.g., Dicks *et al.*, 2010; Williams *et al.*, 2012); frameworks for conservation planning (e.g., Levin *et al.*, 2013) and adaptive

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management (see Salafsky *et al.*, 2002) have been developed; and attributes of effective conservation leadership have been identified (Black *et al.*, 2011). Nonetheless, global biodiversity continues to decline (Butchart *et al.*, 2010). Conservation operates in a political economy that favours economic growth over protection of natural resources, and until we can change that, the loss of biodiversity will sadly continue. Nonetheless, the myriad conservation work being undertaken all helps to slow that decline.

Conservation is a wicked problem: multiple challenges are linked to each other without possibility of isolating the nature and characteristics of each (Rittel & Webber, 1973). However, the approaches, tools and institutional structures conservationists use are generally suited to simpler, more manageable systems (Game *et al.*, 2013). For example, frequently used logic models have been criticised for their rigid structure and incorrect assumption that change occurs in a linear, logical fashion (see Stem *et al.*, 2005).

More flexible, interdisciplinary systems-thinking approaches, such as theory of change, can address some of these shortcomings (Black & Copsey, 2014; Stebbings *et al.*, 2016). They do consider interactions of the organisation and its activities with external parties, such as communities (see Black *et al.*, 2013). While this is a step in the right direction, many conservationists using such approaches still struggle to take account of political, social, economic and natural events that do not seemingly intersect with their activities but can still hamper efforts. For example, Struhsaker *et al.* (2005) found that effective management in African rainforest reserves was compromised by immigration and a lack of funding for enforcement rather than substandard performance by conservationists. Similarly, Duffy (2010) explains that the real driver of

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habitat loss for gorillas is consumer demand for technology rather than the miners or poachers working in the area, or substandard work by conservationists.

The grey and academic literatures are replete with examples of challenges facing conservationists, but many are considered only in isolation. I consolidated these into a typology of barriers to success (Chapter 2), offering a useful first step in picturing the context in which conservationists operate. A better understanding of this context allows both conservationists and their funders to improve decision-making regarding choice of intervention and deployment of limited resources. In this chapter, I examine whether that typology, developed using the feedback from face-to-face interviews with a largely Africa-based interviewee group, can be simplified to create a more parsimonious and globally relevant framework for understanding the operating context for conservation. Specifically, I ask:

1. To what extent do challenges consolidated in my typology have more universal relevance among conservation practitioners?
2. Can a more streamlined list of challenges to conservation be identified?
3. Do organisational attributes, such as size, age, autonomy and continent of operation, influence the importance ascribed to challenges?

Methodology

An online survey with 56 Likert-scale questions was developed using the challenges identified in Chapter 2. The survey was pilot tested by three independent NPOs, and feedback assimilated before it was released. The list of suitable invitees, developed using non-probability sampling (Bryman, 2016), was devised using comprehensive

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Internet searches and consultation with specialists from Synchronicity Earth (www.synchronicityearth.org), a UK-based charity that researches both grassroots and international conservation organisations and their activity. Further organisations were identified through snowball sampling (Bryman, 2016). I stopped adding organisations once I was satisfied my sample was large enough and once new organisations became prohibitively difficult to find. The list of sources used to identify invitees is shown in Appendix 2.

Personalised invitations were sent by email to the Executive Director in the first instance. All email communications and procedures received appropriate research ethics approvals from the University of Oxford. The survey was sent to 865 organisations, but only 797 invitations were successfully delivered. The survey was completed by 154 respondents. This large sample size helped to increase validity of the findings (Hartley, 2013). The survey (Appendix 3), powered by SurveyMonkey (2015), remained live for ten weeks between November 2014 and January 2015.

Survey respondents were asked 'How much of a barrier are the following external factors to effective conservation?' For each challenge, I ensured there were no double-barrelled issues that addressed more than one actual issue and I kept questions brief to minimise ambiguity. Respondents were asked to rate each challenge as Extremely Important (scored 4), Relatively Important (3), Neither Important nor Unimportant (2), Relatively Unimportant (1) or Not at all Important (0). I chose rating rather than ranking because I did not want to effectively create a closed question that would require arbitrary choice (Schuman & Presser, 1981). A five point Likert scale was used since this number of categories is thought to capture the variability in responses adequately (see Ornstein, 2014).

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If more than 20% of respondents are unable to answer, it is good practice to include a 'don't know' option (Ornstein, 2014). This option allows distinction between a neutral position and an unknown answer. I chose to include this because I felt most respondents would have views on most challenges presented, but some may not have encountered some issues personally and therefore not have a strong view.

For each challenge, a relative score (total score received divided by possible maximum, which was 100%) was calculated. Any missing or Not Sure answers were omitted from those calculations since there were no proven correlations between variables (see Dray & Josse, 2015).

I subjected survey responses to principal component analysis (PCA), a multivariate statistical technique that extracts the most important information from a data table (Abdi & Williams, 2010). In doing so, new principal components (PCs) are created (Bryant & Yarnold, 2010), each capturing an additional dimension in the data and explaining smaller and smaller proportions of the variation of the original variables (Vyas & Kumanarayake, 2006).

Survey respondents were also asked about organisational attributes: countries of operation (later grouped into continents: Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, North America, Other and Multinational), size (split into five groups ranging from annual turnover less than £10,000 to over £1 million (see NCVO, 2015)), age (using categories defined by Cameron & Whetten, 1983) and autonomy (independent, associated with a larger group but operating autonomously, or part of a larger organisation).

Linear Discriminant Analysis (LDA) tests for the significance of previously explored groups, identifies and describes which variables distinguish between groups, and produces a model to allocate new samples to the groups (Henderson & Seaby, 2008). It

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determines whether there are significant differences between groups using multivariate *F* tests and, if so, which variables have significantly different means across the groups (Poulsen & French, 2004).

Using the smaller number of challenges identified via PCA as per the Kaiser-Guttman stopping criteria (Jackson, 1993), I employed LDA to determine whether: there were differences in the importance ascribed to individual challenges based on where organisations operate (continent of operation), and their size, age and autonomy; and whether I could identify which challenges were responsible for those differences. Chi-squared tests were run, using Yates's Correction, to test classification of the models.

All statistical analyses were run in R (R Core Team, 2017) using packages Psych (Revelle, 2017), Rela (Chajewski, 2009) and MASS (Venables & Ripley, 2002). For both the PCA and LDA analyses, Not Sure answers were replaced with median scores in accordance with common practice.

Results

Of the 797 delivered e-invitations, 154 surveys were completed, giving a response rate of 19.3%. Although this is lower than the average response rate of 34% for online surveys (Shih & Fan, 2008), it is within one standard deviation of the average and therefore still acceptable (Baruch & Holtom, 2009). Furthermore, that our study participants were asked about issues unrelated to them personally suggests that the risk of bias from low response rates is low (Peytcheva 2013). Although some respondents missed individual answers, all respondents who started the Likert section completed it.

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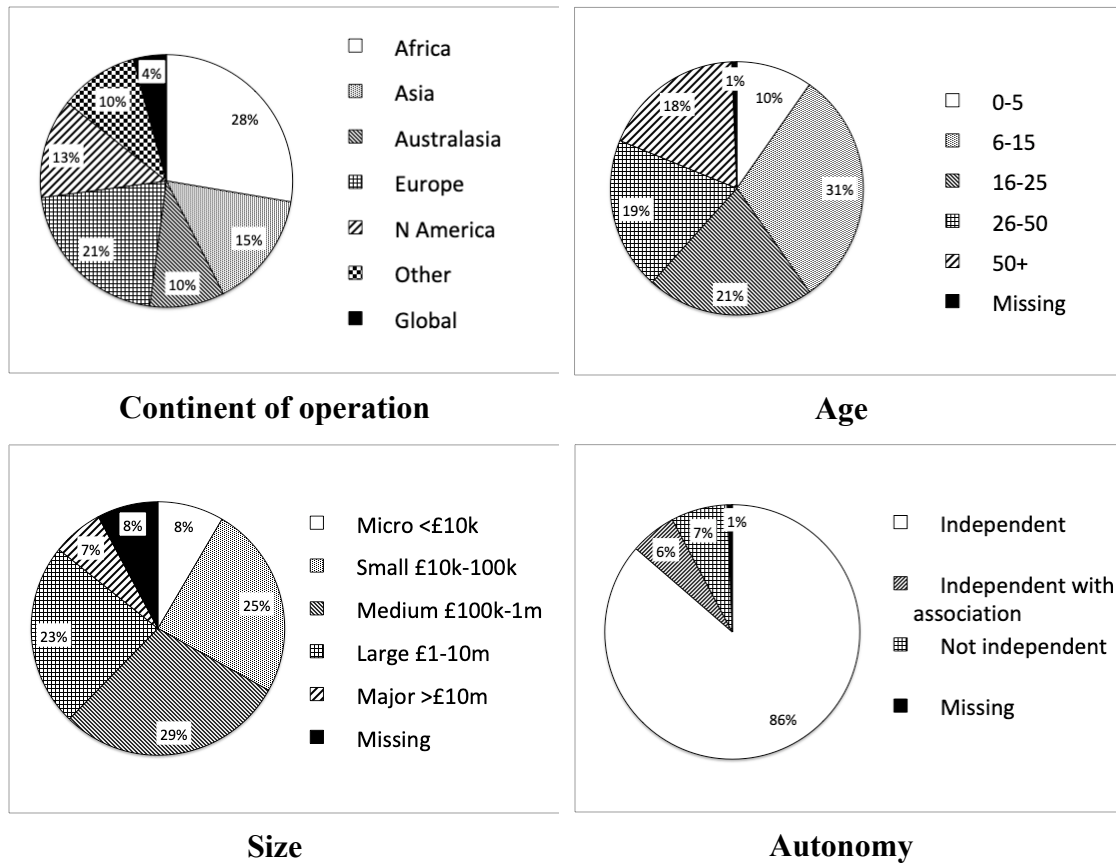


Figure 3.1: Breakdown showing organisational attributes of survey respondents: Continent of operation, age, size and autonomy.

Before proceeding with PCA, I tested the three main assumptions required (Schumacker 2016):

- Bartlett's sphericity test carried out on the correlation matrix showed a calculated χ^2 of 4,575.5. Since this is greater than the critical value of $\chi^2 = 1,632.4$ ($P < 0.0001$; 1,540 degrees of freedom), the PCA can achieve a significant reduction of the original data set's dimensionality.
- The KMO statistic of 0.8198 was near to 1, suggesting sample size was adequate.
- The determinant of the correlation matrix (2.07×10^{-25}), while small, was positive, indicating that I could extract variance.

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The PCA results (Tables 3.1 and 3.2) suggest much overlap in the challenges presented, and the possibility of obtaining the same information by considering fewer challenges. A PCA identifies the smallest number of PCs that together account for the majority of the variance in the correlation matrix, but this selection is subjective, with many different methods for determining the number of factors to extract (i.e., retain) from the analysis (Bryant & Yarnold, 2010). I chose to consider two methods. Firstly, using the Kaiser-Guttman stopping criterion, I only selected those PCs with eigenvalues greater than or equal to one (Jackson, 1993). This corresponds to an estimate of the effective dimension of subspace in which the data variations are largest (Polakow & Gebbie, 2008). This subspace in my PCA is represented by 12 PCs (Table 3.1). The first four accounted for 53% of the variation and all 12 accounted for 73.7%. These 12 PCs revealed 21 challenges with the strongest positive and negative pulls (Tables 3.1 and 3.2). Secondly, I considered the scree plot, in which the eigenvalues in the steep descent are retained, while those in the gradual descent (including those in the transition from steep to gradual descent) are dropped (Bryant & Yarnold, 2010). My scree plot (Figure 3.2) shows the sharpest drop between PCs one to four. When I ran the PCA with Varimax rotation, I found the same overall results.

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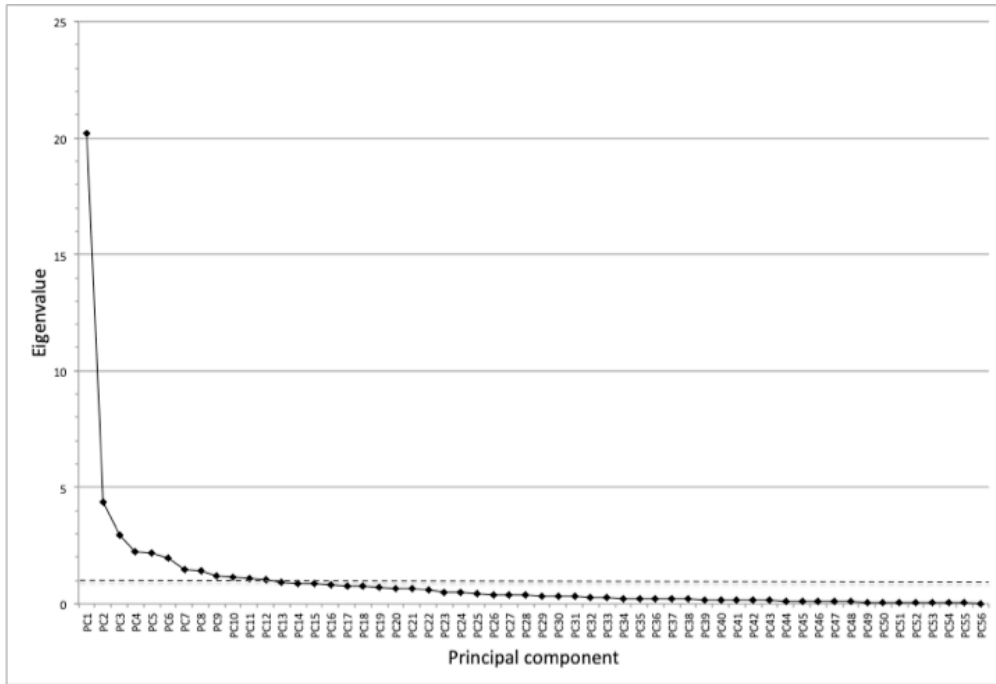


Figure 3.2: Scree plot of PCA eigenvalues. The first four PCs show the steepest drop while the first 12 have Eigenvalues over 1. The dashed line represents Eigenvalue = 1.

In analysing my PCA results, I chose to ignore typical cut off points for factor loading (e.g., 0.30: Bryand & Yarnold, 2010) because they are arbitrary (Vyas & Kumaranayake, 2006). Since PCA loadings are additive, any that are not zero are useful. To identify the most influential challenges, I chose only those with the highest (most positive) or lowest (most negative) loading for each PC (Jolliffe, 1986). Because of the subjectivity associated with PCA, I did a conceptual sense check, mapping the challenges not included in my list of 21 against those that were included. All could be mapped to at least one of my 21 (Table 3.2 last column).

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Table 3.1. Principal component analysis pattern matrix showing the loadings (rotation values) of each barrier onto each principal component. Since loadings are additive, any that are above zero are useful. Therefore, the loadings of all barriers onto all PCs have been shown here. The most positive and most negative loadings are the most influential for any particular principal component (PC). These are shown above as bold and underlined. Barriers with an asterisk are those with a most positive or most negative loading, and are therefore most influential for one or more PCs. The actual text of all the barriers can be found by searching for the corresponding number (e.g., B1 = barrier 1) in Table 3.2.

Principal component	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4	PC5	PC6	PC7	PC8	PC9	PC10	PC11	PC12
Barrier 1*	-0.106	0.143	-0.218	0.117	-0.123	0.288	-0.041	0.103	-0.016	0.116	<u>-0.252</u>	0.107
Barrier 2*	-0.097	0.162	-0.177	0.013	<u>-0.300</u>	0.124	0.115	-0.005	-0.150	0.096	-0.219	0.225
Barrier 3*	-0.116	0.039	-0.130	0.158	-0.227	0.097	<u>0.291</u>	-0.003	0.087	-0.063	-0.220	-0.028
Barrier 4	-0.122	0.073	-0.105	0.240	-0.150	0.252	0.078	0.133	0.119	0.063	0.000	-0.036
Barrier 5*	-0.129	-0.111	-0.030	<u>0.289</u>	-0.105	<u>0.297</u>	-0.012	0.046	-0.051	0.058	0.142	-0.090
Barrier 6*	-0.121	0.146	-0.006	-0.136	-0.059	0.026	-0.031	0.086	-0.076	<u>0.341</u>	0.057	-0.222
Barrier 7	-0.125	0.085	0.067	0.111	0.201	0.237	0.086	0.121	-0.159	0.189	0.234	-0.125
Barrier 8	-0.121	0.184	-0.002	-0.031	-0.116	-0.146	0.207	-0.147	-0.133	-0.079	0.220	0.023
Barrier 9	-0.083	0.273	-0.114	0.008	-0.083	-0.154	0.160	-0.182	0.044	0.226	0.106	0.016
Barrier 10	-0.131	0.119	-0.208	-0.083	-0.110	-0.220	0.043	-0.054	0.057	0.198	-0.003	-0.105
Barrier 11	-0.132	0.123	-0.210	-0.076	0.043	-0.126	-0.005	-0.135	0.217	0.078	0.017	-0.143
Barrier 12	-0.129	0.017	-0.206	-0.063	0.083	0.040	-0.183	-0.205	0.144	0.158	0.094	-0.059
Barrier 13	-0.140	-0.119	-0.185	0.105	0.207	0.001	0.066	-0.094	-0.017	-0.205	-0.032	-0.191
Barrier 14	-0.152	-0.077	-0.167	0.028	0.167	-0.024	0.152	-0.172	0.059	-0.138	-0.004	-0.251

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Principal component	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4	PC5	PC6	PC7	PC8	PC9	PC10	PC11	PC12
Barrier 15*	-0.150	-0.135	-0.143	-0.057	0.027	-0.004	-0.123	-0.139	0.071	-0.183	-0.127	<u>-0.296</u>
Barrier 16*	-0.075	<u>0.287</u>	0.027	-0.040	0.302	0.041	0.111	0.118	-0.167	-0.114	-0.039	0.025
Barrier 17*	-0.086	0.266	-0.098	-0.027	<u>0.328</u>	0.015	0.024	0.135	-0.180	0.007	-0.070	0.096
Barrier 18	-0.087	0.258	-0.105	-0.094	0.236	-0.081	0.131	0.036	0.019	-0.061	-0.124	0.095
Barrier 19*	-0.125	-0.072	<u>-0.239</u>	0.132	0.157	0.032	-0.131	0.020	0.034	-0.055	-0.065	0.244
Barrier 20	-0.135	-0.063	-0.226	0.073	0.213	-0.007	-0.116	-0.037	0.087	-0.109	0.095	0.083
Barrier 21*	-0.115	-0.073	0.013	<u>-0.335</u>	-0.088	0.267	0.182	-0.048	-0.015	-0.024	0.001	0.152
Barrier 22	-0.138	-0.112	-0.005	-0.277	-0.062	0.261	0.046	-0.013	0.053	-0.170	0.117	0.145
Barrier 23	-0.150	-0.107	-0.033	-0.288	0.031	0.140	0.093	0.006	-0.060	-0.111	0.040	0.192
Barrier 24	-0.150	-0.097	-0.051	-0.331	-0.067	0.021	0.086	0.023	-0.112	-0.088	0.041	0.051
Barrier 25	-0.165	-0.112	-0.092	-0.086	0.010	0.025	0.072	0.096	0.023	0.033	-0.103	-0.209
Barrier 26	-0.127	-0.193	-0.033	0.073	-0.063	-0.168	0.174	0.176	-0.165	0.077	0.112	-0.258
Barrier 27	-0.122	-0.159	0.034	0.028	0.084	-0.135	0.184	0.166	-0.160	0.282	-0.032	-0.048
Barrier 28	-0.138	-0.172	-0.042	0.122	0.138	0.003	0.181	-0.019	-0.018	-0.068	-0.100	0.014
Barrier 29*	-0.123	<u>-0.237</u>	-0.057	0.028	0.036	-0.143	0.010	0.161	0.092	-0.022	-0.211	0.095
Barrier 30	-0.144	-0.030	0.116	0.034	0.242	0.039	-0.048	-0.214	0.033	0.211	-0.043	0.083
Barrier 31	-0.135	-0.044	0.291	0.085	0.049	-0.009	0.094	-0.206	-0.117	0.044	-0.129	0.028
Barrier 32	-0.142	-0.028	0.306	0.077	0.048	0.049	0.153	-0.149	-0.098	-0.070	-0.197	-0.055
Barrier 33*	-0.140	-0.060	<u>0.310</u>	0.029	0.047	0.062	0.161	-0.090	-0.045	0.022	-0.180	-0.084

Cont.

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Principal component	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4	PC5	PC6	PC7	PC8	PC9	PC10	PC11	PC12
Barrier 34	-0.138	0.059	0.187	-0.074	-0.077	-0.179	0.088	0.182	0.312	-0.074	0.077	-0.006
Barrier 35*	-0.137	0.014	0.080	0.002	-0.077	-0.117	0.135	<u>0.324</u>	0.311	-0.156	0.013	-0.019
Barrier 36	-0.132	0.112	0.164	-0.079	0.155	0.134	-0.097	0.246	0.034	0.057	0.167	-0.021
Barrier 37	-0.130	0.180	0.120	-0.039	0.057	0.028	-0.184	0.211	-0.017	-0.083	-0.126	-0.092
Barrier 38*	<u>-0.173</u>	-0.127	-0.023	-0.113	-0.010	-0.064	-0.022	0.099	-0.031	0.063	0.024	0.046
Barrier 39	-0.140	0.063	0.098	-0.240	-0.050	-0.043	-0.156	-0.186	0.152	0.058	-0.138	-0.063
Barrier 40*	-0.134	0.091	0.201	0.001	-0.084	-0.046	-0.018	<u>-0.281</u>	-0.040	0.102	-0.195	0.012
Barrier 41	-0.158	-0.115	-0.025	-0.070	-0.092	-0.084	-0.136	-0.039	-0.178	0.096	0.122	0.168
Barrier 42	-0.161	-0.040	0.096	-0.133	0.058	-0.136	-0.169	0.035	0.069	0.120	-0.124	0.093
Barrier 43*	-0.146	-0.111	-0.014	0.103	-0.019	-0.196	-0.095	0.108	0.039	0.069	-0.168	<u>0.274</u>
Barrier 44	-0.162	-0.080	0.119	0.104	0.002	-0.185	0.003	0.058	0.024	0.006	0.029	0.150
Barrier 45	-0.162	-0.086	0.037	0.141	0.043	-0.074	-0.056	0.037	-0.013	0.120	0.256	0.064
Barrier 46*	-0.137	0.070	0.136	0.133	-0.058	0.048	0.096	-0.010	<u>0.332</u>	-0.109	0.218	0.125
Barrier 47	-0.124	0.128	0.140	0.157	-0.048	0.092	-0.145	-0.077	0.117	0.000	-0.025	-0.100
Barrier 48*	-0.119	0.186	-0.013	-0.035	-0.100	-0.043	0.120	-0.163	-0.093	-0.251	<u>0.281</u>	-0.019
Barrier 49	-0.140	0.111	0.000	0.069	-0.267	-0.078	-0.132	0.093	-0.026	-0.108	-0.127	-0.105
Barrier 50	-0.125	0.131	0.118	-0.036	0.044	0.161	-0.171	0.037	0.278	0.084	0.038	-0.010
Barrier 51	-0.153	0.059	0.040	-0.073	-0.078	0.072	-0.233	0.168	-0.180	-0.196	-0.036	-0.185
Barrier 52*	-0.144	-0.021	0.029	-0.018	-0.175	-0.008	<u>-0.348</u>	-0.029	<u>-0.279</u>	-0.171	0.014	-0.170

Cont.

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Principal component	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4	PC5	PC6	PC7	PC8	PC9	PC10	PC11	PC12
Barrier 53	-0.161	-0.120	-0.068	0.073	-0.012	0.057	-0.176	-0.110	-0.069	0.117	0.087	0.151
Barrier 54	-0.164	-0.131	0.057	0.139	-0.106	0.034	-0.012	-0.129	-0.008	-0.018	0.252	0.121
Barrier 55*	-0.078	0.188	0.046	0.249	0.066	-0.062	-0.115	-0.143	-0.049	<u>-0.281</u>	-0.020	0.154
Barrier 56*	-0.114	0.137	-0.049	0.082	-0.103	<u>-0.305</u>	-0.041	0.117	-0.241	-0.114	0.074	0.126
Eigenvalue	20.216	4.392	2.960	2.254	2.168	1.979	1.468	1.410	1.209	1.129	1.070	1.026
Proportion of variance	0.361	0.078	0.053	0.040	0.039	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.022	0.020	0.019	0.018
Cumulative variance	0.361	0.439	0.492	0.533	0.571	0.607	0.633	0.658	0.680	0.700	0.719	0.073

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Table 3.2. List of barriers to conservation included in the Likert questionnaire showing the relative score received by each, the PC that barriers with the highest and lowest loadings loaded to, and the PC that all other barriers are captured in. The B number in the first column reflects the barrier's position in the survey questions. Relative score is calculated as score received divided by total possible score x 100. The PC (principal component) column shows which barriers were most influential for each PC. Positive numbers show that this barrier had the most positive loading onto that particular PC while negative ones indicate the most negative loading. The top ten relative scores are in bold and underlined, as are those B number of barriers that are either most influential in one of the 12 PCs or within the top 10 relative scores.

Barrier	Relative score	PC	Barrier captured in PC
<u>B38</u> A lack of understanding about community structure/dynamics by conservation practitioners	68.1	-1	
<u>B16</u> A lack of funding for conservation	<u>82.0</u>	2	
<u>B29</u> Over-confidence of conservation organisations	51.3	-2	
<u>B33</u> Security/safety issues for conservation practitioners	54.3	3	
<u>B19</u> Donors setting and changing conservation agendas	69.3	-3	
<u>B5</u> Corruption	69.8	4	
<u>B21</u> Lack of local community buy-in	68.2	-4	
<u>B17</u> A lack of core funding for conservation organisations	<u>85.2</u>	5	
<u>B2</u> Lack of political will	<u>89.6</u>	-5, 6	
<u>B56</u> Consumerism and Western ideals	76.7	-6	
<u>B3</u> No enabling environment (e.g., ineffective policies, poor legislation, etc.)	<u>81.8</u>	7	

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Barrier	Relative score	PC	Barrier captured in PC
B52 Industrial scale activities (mineral extraction, logging, plantations, etc.)	83.5	-7, -9	
B35 The way people are educated in the communities in which conservation organisations operate	67.9	8	
B40 Conflict between neighbouring communities	53.3	-8	
B46 Conservation activity attracting more people to sensitive areas	55.2	9	
B6 Economics and the need/desire for development	80.5	10	
B55 Growing population	82.4	-10	
B48 Many people competing for limited resources	78.5	11	
B1 Weak government institutions	87.6	-11	
B43 Ill-conceived incentive schemes	63.2	12	
B15 A general lack of discussion about, and learning from, failures	68.9	-12	
B18 The short-term nature of conservation funding	85.7		2, 3, 5
B4 Ineffective law enforcement	83.9		4, 5, 6, 7, 11
B10 No integrated approach that considers both conservation and the underlying causes of damage to natural resources	82.9		1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11
B49 Competition for land (mining, golf courses, grazing, tourist spots, etc.)	81.0		7, 9, 8, 10, 11
B51 Extraction of resources for profit or business use	80.5		6, 7, 9, 10
B37 Lack of capacity in local government	77.7		5, 6, 11
B8 Natural resources being seen as external to humanity	74.6		2, 3, 5, 6, 8
			<i>Cont.</i>

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Barrier	Relative score	PC	Barrier captured in PC
B12 Lack of land use planning	73.9		7, 9, 10, 11
B36 Lack of capacity in local communities	71.5		1, 4, 8
B25 Interventions being planned/delivered with little understanding or consideration of the local context	70.7		1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11
B20 Donors failing to select the most effective organisations	70.2		2, 3
B53 Lack of clarity over land tenure and ownership	70.0		1, 4, 8, 9
B27 Lack of appreciation by international donors and NGOs for how things work in different countries (e.g., things can take longer in Africa, per diems are expected in some cultures, etc.)	69.4		1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11
B23 Lack of local community ownership	69.0		1, 2, 4, 8, 12
B47 Human-wildlife conflict	68.0		3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9
B11 Inability to work at a landscape scale	68.0		2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11
B44 Inappropriate alternative livelihood interventions	66.6		1, 3, 4, 8, 11, 12
B42 Lack of employment opportunities for local people	66.4		1, 4, 6, 8
B9 Conservation being seen as an elitist issue and a 'nice to have'	66.0		2, 3, 4, 5, 6
B24 Communities being seen as external to conservation	65.9		2, 3, 4, 8
B22 Lack of trust by local communities	65.4		2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12
B13 Lack of collaboration between conservation organisations	64.5		2, 3, 12
			<i>Cont.</i>

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Barrier	Relative score	PC	Barrier captured in PC
B34 The way people are educated globally	64.2		6, 10
B14 Poor knowledge sharing within the sector	63.8		2, 12
B26 Prevalence/promotion of Western models of conservation	63.4		2, 3, 4, 12
B50 Extraction of resources by local people for food or personal use	63.1		4, 8, 11, 12
B41 Inequality of benefits derived from conservation interventions	62.5		1, 8, 12
B45 Creation of dependency on conservation or development organisations	62.5		2, 3, 4, 8, 12
B7 Poverty	61.5		1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11
B31 Conflict/war in areas where conservation organisations operate	59.4		3
B54 Evictions in the name of conservation	55.6		2, 3, 4, 8
B28 Disconnect between head office staff and those working on the ground in conservation organisations	53.8		1, 2, 12
B39 The heterogeneous nature of local communities	53.2		1, 4, 8
B30 Poor local infrastructure (e.g., unsuitable roads, lack of fuel or vehicles, etc.)	51.2		3, 5, 7
B32 Outbreaks of disease in areas where conservation organisations operate	51.0		3

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A projection of the first two PCs onto a two-dimensional eigenvector space is shown in Figure 3.3. The angles between the segments show the correlations: an angle of 0 is a correlation of 1, and an angle of 90 is a correlation of 0. If one assumes that any question asked is as informationally useful as its converse, a challenge phrased in the inverse would simply flip the coefficients around. Given that my 21 challenges exist in a 90-degree arc within only two quadrants, I assumed no inverse or missing challenges in my list. My list therefore appears to provide a good coverage of challenges to conservation.

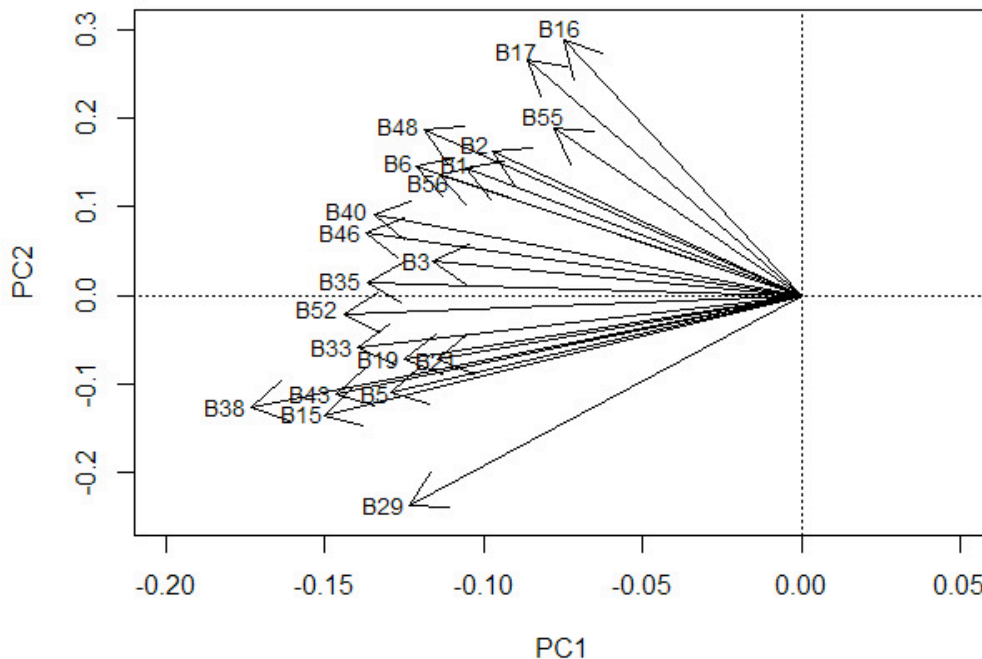


Figure 3.3: The projection of the 21 challenges identified by the PCA onto the 2-D eigenvector space presented as a bi-plot.

In the LDA, Wilk's Lambda is used to test the null hypothesis that population means of different groups (dependent variables) are equal: a small Lambda indicates differing group means (Schumacker, 2016). My results (Table 3.3) show that Wilk's Lambda was

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small and significant for continent of operation and size (independent variables). Full LDA results for continent and size are available online (Appendices 4 and 5, respectively).

An essential feature of LDA is the classification of items into mutually exclusive groups given knowledge of the independent variables (Schumacker, 2016). When I computed the percent correctly classified, I found highly significant correct classification for over 54% in all organisational attributes (Table 3.3), suggesting good reliability of the results.

Table 3.4. Results of the linear discriminant analysis.

	Continent of operation	Size	Age	Autonomy
LDA null hypothesis test results				
Linear discriminants	6	4	4	2
Wilks' lambda	0.2086	0.3326	0.433	0.5975
Degrees of freedom	6	4	4	2
<i>F</i> -statistic (approx.)	1.347	1.370	1.07	1.370
Degrees of freedom	126, 547	84, 356	84, 382	42, 196
<i>p</i> -value	0.013	0.027	0.33	0.080
Correct classification test results				
Correct classification	58.3%	90.1%	61.7%	54.5%
χ^2	222.67	44.36	142.35	84.99
Degrees of freedom	36	4	16	16
<i>p</i> -value	< 0.0001	< 0.0001	< 0.0001	<0.0001

Discussion

This study uses insights directly obtained from conservationists to identify which external challenges to conservation are most important when trying to understand operating context. Due consideration of these challenges in planning and conducting conservation work could increase the success of conservation interventions.

Key findings

My first key finding is that professionals working internationally across continents concur with the list of challenges to conservation previously raised in face-to-face interviews with a predominantly African-based group of conservationists (Chapter 2). The relative scores (Table 3.2) of all challenges exceeded 50%, suggesting all were considered more than less important. Although the range of scores was wide (51% - 89.6%), no challenges received a relative score of 100%. Thus, no single issue was routinely ranked as Extremely Important by every respondent. Instead, variability in importance suggests that context is very specific, a conclusion further validated by LDA results.

My second key finding is that challenges previously identified could be streamlined into a more parsimonious list without losing information. The subjectivity of the methodology, however, means that any hard cut-off points for including or excluding challenges in the conceptualisation of context would be meaningless. Instead, the methodology lends itself to suggesting prioritisation of challenges.

Themes emerging

Principal components are like the colours in a painting. While they create the painting, the focus is on the picture created, not the colours themselves. Combination of the most influential PCs and linear discriminants (LDs) allowed me to create a picture of conservation context. Below, I group the most influential challenges revealed (Table 3.4) into themes and discussed why those particular challenges are influential. For PCA, I consider only the first four PCs since they showed the strongest decline in the scree plot and accounted for more than half the variation in the data. For LDA, I consider the most influential challenges in the first two LDs for continent of operation and size as they account for over 70% of the variation seen. In most cases, there are two ‘most influential’ challenges for each PC or LD, one with the strongest positive pull and one with the strongest negative pull.

Table 3.4. Summary of barriers to be discussed due to their influential nature (most positive or most negative pull) in the first four principal components (PC) and the first two linear discriminants for continent (LDC) and size (LDS).

Barrier	PC	LDC	LDS
B38 A lack of understanding about community structure/dynamics by conservation practitioners	-1		
B29 Over-confidence of conservation organisations	-2	2	
B16 A lack of funding for conservation	2		1
B19 Donors setting and changing conservation agendas	-3	-2	
B33 Security/safety issues for conservation practitioners	3		
B21 Lack of local community buy-in	-4		
B5 Corruption	4	1	
B17 A lack of core funding for conservation organisations			-1, -2
B3 No enabling environment (e.g., ineffective policies, poor legislation, etc.)		-1	2

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The first theme to emerge is **community attributes**. A lack of understanding by conservationists about the structure of communities, or dynamics between people within the groups, (B38) was most influential for PC1. Contrary to being the homogenous groups they are often assumed to be (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999), communities have complex structures and unpredictable internal workings (Rambaldi *et al.*, 2006). Empowerment of or benefits to one group can negatively impact others (Borrini-Feyerabend & Tarnowski, 2005). Misunderstanding these complexities can lead to conservationists making inappropriate decisions regarding how receptive 'the community' is to its work, and how best to structure that work to manage conflicts and sensitivities.

The lack of local community buy-in (B21) was most influential in PC4. Local opposition can hinder conservation initiatives and even contribute to anti-conservation behaviour (e.g., Eneji *et al.*, 2009), whether or not communities are engaged in the conservation action (Bennett & Dearden, 2014). In designing conservation initiatives, it is essential to identify what local people value and want to achieve (Sheil *et al.*, 2008) since conservation success, particularly in developing nations, relies on local support to sustain results (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2007; Bennett *et al.*, 2019).

The **availability and distribution of funding** was the next theme to emerge. One most influential challenge for PC2 was a lack of funding for conservation (B16). Although conservation funding has increased (Miller *et al.*, 2012), both threats to biodiversity and the number of organisations competing for its funding are growing globally (Igoe & Kelsall, 2006). Recent cost estimates suggest that meeting global conservation targets will require funding to increase by at least an order of magnitude (McCarthy *et al.*, 2012).

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Over-confidence of conservation organisations (B29) was the second most influential challenge for PC2. There has been significant redistribution of charitable sector spending from smaller to larger organisations (Birtwhistle & O'Brien, 2015), with a small minority of NPOs now receiving more than 50% of all environmental charity income (Straughan & Pollak, 2011; Clifford *et al.*, 2013). In Africa, 10 NPOs manage more than 80% of conservation expenditure (Brockington & Scholfield, 2010). These large NPOs either conduct work themselves, or re-grant to local groups, often doing so in agenda-setting ways (Chapin, 2004; Sachedina, 2011). These specified approaches, which tend not to engender community ownership, or adequately integrate diverse natural, socioeconomic and cultural systems (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2007), are often ineffective, but their use prevails because they meet donor requirements, even though local agencies could develop more effective approaches more suited to the needs of local communities (Smith *et al.*, 2009).

The prevalence of conservation spending through large international NPOs in developing nations might explain why over-confidence of conservation organisations was also most influential for LD2 for continent of operation. Similarly, pervasiveness of channelling funds through either international NPOs or multilateral or bilateral aid agencies, particularly in Africa (Nelson, 2009), might explain why donors setting and changing conservation agendas (B19) was most influential in PC3 and in LD2 for continent of operation.

Safety and security of conservationists (B33) was the next theme arising from the PCA, with this point being most influential in PC3. A desire to conserve natural resources often conflicts directly with more ambitious development goals, particularly in poorer countries. During 2017 alone, 197 people were killed for defending land, wildlife or

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natural resources (Watts, 2018). Furthermore, outbreaks of disease or local unrest can present a danger to conservationists working in poorer countries.

The final challenge heavily influencing the PCA results was **corruption** (B5). This issue also explained 52.7% of the variation in the data in LD1 for continent of operation. The web of corruption includes all actors, including government officials, police, rangers and community members (e.g., see the issue of corruption in rhino poaching <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-43821674>). Corrupt practices involve bribery, fraud, extortion and favoritism (Luo 2005), and are often more prevalent in developing countries, where government salaries are low, regulatory institutions weaker and accountability limited (Laurance 2004). Corruption may also be exacerbated by opportunity for financial gain (Smith et al. 2015). The increased prevalence of corruption in developing countries could explain why it was given more importance by people operating in developing countries.

Our results show that **lack of enabling environment** (i.e., ineffective policies, poor legislation, etc.) (B3) was most influential for LD1 for continent of operation and for LD2 for NPO size, suggesting it is more influential in some countries than others, and in smaller organisations. Lane (2008) explains that top-down governance of natural resources has had to make way for more diverse governance systems in which networks of actors cooperate to achieve policy objectives. While this can ensure the needs of many different stakeholders are taken into account in devising and implementing policy, there is potential for fragmentation, duplication and competing policies and agendas. This impediment to effective management and use of environments (Morrison *et al.*, 2004) can be more pronounced in contexts of poorer quality governance (Moore, 2004) and higher levels of political corruption (Smith *et al.*, 2003), or in developing countries,

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where implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation is constrained by a lack of both resources and professional training (Lane, 2008), and public awareness of environmental laws (Clarke & Jupiter, 2010). Since smaller organisations have less flexibility in their budgets (Rochester, 2005), they have less resources and therefore flexibility to tackle external challenges. Poor enabling environments can therefore impact them more.

The final notable challenge is the *lack of core funding for conservation* organisations (B17), which was most influential in both LD1 and LD2 for size. Across the charitable sector, there is a fixation on overhead reduction that results in under-investment in organisational infrastructure (Lecy & Searing, 2015). The general unwillingness to provide general operating support to NPOs can be particularly debilitating for small, community-based organisations (Cohen, 2007) who find it difficult to find funding for their work (Jepson, 2017). As a result, it is increasingly challenging for them to build up and maintain adequate infrastructure (Woodwell, 2007). While larger NPOs tend to have more stable funding reserves, small and mid-size organisations face heightened pressures when overall funding declines (Philanthropy UK, 2008).

Practical use of my results

In this chapter, I distilled a large number of external challenges down and highlighted those most closely affecting conservation practice. This creates an accessible way for NPOs and funders to consider the context in which conservation occurs. To be successful, interventions need to address the right challenges – even if they are seemingly remote from day to day activities. The ability to respond to external challenges in real time will give NPOs more confidence to achieve their desired

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outcomes, effectively constrain challenges and threats to acceptable levels, and take informed decisions about exploiting opportunities (Grant, 2012). Similarly, donors could use this information to make their grant-making more effective. Undertaking due diligence in a selection process can help donors distinguish NPOs more likely to succeed (Woodwell, 2007). This process should survey not only an NPO's work, but also its key risks, strengths and weaknesses, allowing the donor to develop a more rounded picture of the organisation (Unwin, 2004). My findings presented here would be a good start point for this.

Since PCA is descriptive rather than inferential, I recommend using my list of challenges as a prioritisation tool rather than a definitive solution. When trying to understand what could affect goal attainment, I recommend considering the most influential challenges (Table 3.4) as a first step for any organisation. Other challenges can be added as appropriate for the size, complexity and location of interventions. This practical application of my prioritisation list would allow organisations to develop more risk-based strategic and adaptive management plans, and to assess whether consideration of this broader set of challenges did actually help them in their planning, execution and evaluation of interventions and achieve more impact with their work.

Limitations of this research

In designing this study, I made every attempt to control for risks to its usefulness. However, some remain worthy of mention.

There may be some concerns with generalisability of my findings. Because I used non-probability sampling, my results are not completely representative of the views of the entire conservation community (Bryman, 2016). Obtaining that level of

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representativeness is not possible. Only English speakers and computer users were able to participate. I did, however, have a reasonable spread of respondents from different categories within most organisational attributes (Figure 3.1) suggesting that the views of different organisations were adequately captured. The only possible exception was autonomy, where the vast majority of organisations were independent.

There have been concerns that high levels of nonresponse in surveys increase the risk of bias, but a low response rate does not necessarily translate into nonresponse bias. Peytcheva (2013) explains that the risk of bias is only increased when participants are related to the survey topic or sponsor. In a survey into drug use, for example, drug users are less likely to respond, thus increasing the risk of nonresponse bias. In this study, conservationists are asked about issues unrelated to them personally, thereby reducing the risk of nonresponse bias.

There is a risk that respondents have picked challenges based on a snapshot of what is currently happening, meaning my results could be quickly invalidated. I feel that some of these limitations are overcome by my original list of challenges (Chapter 2). It would, however, be interesting to repeat this study in future and compare results to see if and how prioritisation of challenges has changed. Conducting further work in individual locations and with different types of conservation could help to hone in on challenges more specific to individual contexts.

There is a risk of respondent fatigue given the large number of questions in the survey. Although there is strong evidence that such concerns are overstated (Hess *et al.*, 2012), I conducted an informal analysis of the number of responses for each question (result not shown) to check for evidence of fatigue in my respondents. I did not see any reduction in responses to later questions. Given that the first drop off in response levels

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for online surveys tends to occur after 18 minutes (see Duffy *et al.*, 2005) and my survey would have taken less than this to complete, I feel this risk is minimal, but still worthy of mention.

For interviews and surveys, there is evidence that acquiescence (social desirability) bias exists (Kankaraš & Moore, 2011). This tends to be larger for respondents with less knowledge and interest in the topic (Ornstein, 2014). Since I was asking senior level conservationists to rate issues outside of their control rather than provide information regarding their own behaviours or morals, I felt the risk of this bias affecting my results was extremely low.

4: CHAPTER FOUR

**Operationalisation of non-profit
organisational effectiveness: a typology of
criteria used in practice.**

Abstract

Non-profit organisations are increasingly required to display effectiveness, partly because donors want to identify and support effective organisations. However, there is still little consensus on what effectiveness means. I examined 35 frameworks to identify how the concept of organisational effectiveness is operationalised in practice. From this review, I develop a typology that groups the 106 criteria used in these frameworks into four dimensions: governance, finance, leadership and management. I examine the ten most prevalent criteria overall, all of which fall within the leadership and finance dimensions, and the most commonly required criteria within the governance and management dimensions. I discuss the implications of this research. While this typology provides a comprehensive organisational effectiveness guidance framework, its use by the donor community must be carefully considered.

Introduction

The non-profit sector has dramatically increased in size (Wallace *et al.*, 2006) and has billions of dollars donated to and spent by non-profit organisations (NPOs) each year (e.g., see Birdsall *et al.*, 2011). There are now stricter requirements for NPOs to both prove and improve their effectiveness (Speckbacher, 2003). But measuring NPO effectiveness is difficult because there is no single metric like profit (e.g. Gordon *et al.*, 2010) that captures performance against the organisation's objectives.

In the past, NPOs have been judged on financial ratios, such as percentage spend on overheads and fundraising (Lecy *et al.*, 2012; Liket & Maas, 2015), or on program performance (Kareithi & Lund, 2012). But these approaches are problematic. Although financial ratios are easy to calculate (Tinkelman & Donabedian, 2007) and can be scalable and objective (Lecy *et al.*, 2012), evidence suggests such figures can be

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manipulated to avoid perception that NPOs are spending too much on fundraising or overheads (Trussel, 2003). A focus on spending also largely ignores what non-profits do with that expenditure (Coupet & Haynie, 2018). Furthermore, financial efficiency does not necessarily lead to effectiveness: a financially efficient NPO may still not deliver on its goals (LeRoux & Wright, 2010).

Judging effectiveness through programme performance is also challenging. It can be difficult to link project results to outcomes (Campbell, 2002) and to assign causality to any particular programme (Thomas, 2010). Programme effectiveness is related to, but distinct from, effectiveness of the organisations running them (Herman & Renz, 2008). Programme failure may not be the result of flawed ideas, but rather of weaknesses within the organisation, e.g., financial shortcomings, poor management, etc. (Culick *et al.*, 2004), or challenges present outside of it (Chapter 2). Consequently, there is a call for NPO performance measurement to focus on the overall functioning of the organisation (Kareithi & Lund, 2012), which includes management of external risks (Herman, 2010).

Organisational effectiveness in non-profits is often represented by a set of managerial practices and financial controls (Lecy *et al.*, 2012) that are deemed to be 'correct' (Herman & Renz, 2008). In practice, NPOs might consider their capacity, which refers to the resources, skills and functions they need to fulfil their missions (Connolly & York, 2003). These concepts can be strongly linked as organisations require the appropriate capacity to be effective. I have, therefore, chosen to use the term 'organisational effectiveness' to represent both these concepts.

There is still no standardised measure of NPO effectiveness (Despard, 2017), and little empirical evidence for whether implementing individual criteria thought to be associated with it does indeed result in enhanced effectiveness (Lecy *et al.*, 2012; Liket

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& Maas, 2015). Historic fragmentation of the study of organisational effectiveness has undermined collaboration and sharing of insights, especially where scholars are unaware of work outside their respective disciplines (Lecy *et al.*, 2012). Despite a lack of clarity over which effectiveness criteria are vital, effectiveness frameworks guiding improvement or judgment of effectiveness are increasingly being used (e.g. Chen 2009).

In this chapter, I examine NPO effectiveness frameworks with the intention of informing both scholars and the wider non-profit community which criteria are currently used in practice to guide or judge effectiveness. I use this information to build an NPO effectiveness typology. This provides the first attempt to collate the criteria currently being used to operationalise the concept of NPO effectiveness. I highlight those criteria used most commonly and consider why they are prevalent. Finally, I discuss the implications and limitations of this research.

Study methodology

In identifying effectiveness criteria, I followed an inductive approach (Bryman, 2016), beginning with a 'blank canvas' so my opinions, or those of others, did not influence what I found. Initial identification of effectiveness frameworks was done through Google searches using a combination of the following search terms: 'charity OR non-profit OR non-profit' AND 'rating OR effectiveness OR analysis OR assessment OR due diligence.' As these search terms returned large numbers of results (over 15 million each), I reviewed results on only the first three search results pages since lower ranking suggests less relevance to the search (Google, 2013). As websites were visited and information obtained, further frameworks were identified and included. Some frameworks were also provided directly by known contacts within organisations that had developed them.

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I also included in the analysis influential academic studies on NPO effectiveness. These include the works of Herman and Renz (2004, 2008), who used a combination of practitioner focus groups and a Delphi process to identify the most highly rated NPO effectiveness criteria; Sridhar and Nagabhushanam (2008), who used a mixture of focus group discussions and qualitative research to develop a model of critical success factors in Indian NPOs; and Liket and Maas (2015), who created a self-assessment survey on the basis of organisational practices that had support in both academia and practice.

Criteria included within each framework were entered into a matrix, with new criteria mapped to those already identified. To make the list more manageable, refinements were made, including:

- Grouping similar criteria, where possible, to increase flexibility and reduce the number of criteria, e.g., 'clear employment policies' and 'employee handbook' were grouped together under 'clear employment policies.'
- Taking an overall consensus representing a more general requirement when criteria were specific in some frameworks but general in others. For example, 'regular board meetings' was taken to represent the various suggestions for how many should be held each year.

I stopped adding new frameworks to the matrix once I was satisfied that no new criteria were being identified. Overall 35 frameworks were included in my matrix (Table 4.1).

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Table 4.1. Frameworks included in this study.

Framework
1. Better Business Bureau (BBB) Wise Giving Alliance (www.bbb.org/us/wise-giving)
2. Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org)
3. New Philanthropy Capital's Little Blue Book (Copps & Vernon, 2010)
4. Give Differently (Institute for Philanthropy 2011)
5. Intelligent Philanthropy's Excellence in Giving (www.excellenceingiving.com)
6. Bridgespan's GiveSmart philanthropy initiative (www.givesmart.org)
7. Social Impact Exchange due diligence framework for scaling initiatives (http://www.socialimpactexchange.org/webfm_send/576)
8. Credibility Alliance's Accreditation System and Peer Group Review Model (www.credibilityalliance.org)
9. Grant-makers for Effective Organisations' Due Diligence Tool for use in pre-grant assessment (Culick <i>et al</i> , 2004)
10. Philippine Council for NGO Certification (PCNC) – Guidebook of NGO governance (https://www.pcnc.com.ph/admin/downloads/PCNC%20Guidebook%20on%20the%20Basics%20of%20NGO%20Governance.pdf)
11. AusAID Due Diligence Framework (https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/due-diligence-framework.pdf)
12. Birdlife Africa Assessment Tool (BirdLife International, 2008)
13. World Land Trust Evaluation Tool (available from World Land Trust directly)
14. Global Journal Top 100 NGO methodology (http://idsa02.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/74298527/Evaluating%20NGOs%20(Methodology%20Paper)_EN.pdf)
15. Pact (2010) Introduction to Organisational Capacity Development
16. UNDP Capacity Assessment Methodology (http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/undp-capacity-assessment-methodology/UNDP%20Capacity%20Assessment%20Users%20Guide.pdf)
17. Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice (www.principlesforgood.com)
18. Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) Standards (http://www.interaction.org/document/interaction-pvo-standards)
19. Charity Evaluation Service's Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO: www.ces-vol.org.uk/PQASSO)

Cont.

Framework

20. Charity Commission – Due Diligence, Monitoring and Verification of End Use of Charitable Funds
(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/677252/Chapter2new.pdf)
 21. Central and Eastern European Working Group’s Handbook of NGO governance
(http://providus.lv/article_files/1420/original/ngo_govern.pdf?1331192192)
 22. McKinsey Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool
(<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/social-sector/how-we-help-clients/organisational-capacity-assessment-tool>)
 23. BOND Organisational Health Check (<https://www.bond.org.uk/ngo-support/organisational-health>)
 24. Capacity for Conservation Self Lead Organisational Development
(<https://capacityforconservation.org/>)
 25. Assessing the Competence and Credibility of the Civil Society Organisations in Tanzania (NGO Resource Centre & TANGO 2008:https://www.anti-corruption.org.bt/sites/default/files/civil_society_tanzania_selfassessment.pdf)
 26. Non-profit Organisational Assessment Tool (<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/non-profits/management/documents/assessment.pdf>)
 27. Nidos Effectiveness Toolkit (www.nidos.org.uk)
 28. Standards for Excellence Institute (<https://standardsforexcellence.org/About-You/For-Non-profits>)
 29. Social Venture Partners Occupational Capacity Assessment Toolkit
(<http://www.socialventurepartners.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/OCAT-Process-and-Version-1-and-2-Comparison.pdf>)
 30. Heifer International Seeds of Change Initiative Occupational Capacity Assessment Tool
(<https://www.heifer.org/ending-hunger/our-impact/index.html>)
 31. Marguerite Casey Foundation Occupational Capacity Assessment Tool
(<https://www.google.com/search?q=marguerite+casey+ocat&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b-ab>)
 32. Board-Source Assessing Board performance
(<https://icamp180.org/JCamp180/media/Media/Knowledge-Center/Governance/assessing-board-performance.pdf?ext=.pdf>)
 33. Maas & Liket (2015)
 34. Herman & Renz (2004, 2008)
 35. Sridhar & Nagabhushanam (2008)
-

Results

I found significant variation in the number of criteria included within the various frameworks: the simplest required nine criteria while the most detailed required 76. Following the methodology above, I identified 106 distinct criteria. The ten most prevalent criteria are shown in Table 4.2. Analysis of all 106 criteria allowed for the creation of 22 distinct themes (Tables 4.3-4.6) that could be organised into a typology to help make sense of the criteria observed. These themes also provided direct support for the existence of four core dimensions:

- Governance: good governance in the form of a strong, independent board that provides guidance and oversight, and ensures legal and regulatory compliance;
- Finance: sufficient financial resources to enable the organisation to perform its functions;
- Leadership: strong leadership to provide clarity over what the organisation is trying to achieve and how it will do so; and
- Management: effective management to enable it to achieve its goals.

All four dimensions were well represented within the frameworks: governance criteria were included in 91.4% of frameworks, finance and management criteria in 97.1% of them and leadership criteria in all of them (100%).

In this section, I focus on the ten most commonly required criteria (Table 4.2), exploring reasons for their prevalence. All of these sat within the 'leadership' and 'finance' dimensions. While the 'governance' and 'management' dimensions did not include any of the top 10 criteria, presence of criteria from these two dimensions in

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more than 90% of frameworks suggests that they are essential in effective organisations.

I therefore also discuss their most prevalent criteria.

Table 4.2. The ten criteria required by the largest number of frameworks, and the dimension each criterion exists in. Popularity represents the percentage of frameworks requiring that particular criterion.

Criterion	Dimension	Popularity
Clear mission statement	Leadership	89%
Progress against plans is monitored	Leadership	89%
Clear, realistic goals/targets	Leadership	74%
Strategy and/or strategic plan	Leadership	71%
Impact/outcomes of the organisation's work is monitored	Leadership	71%
Sound budgeting and cash flow forecasting processes	Finance	71%
Robust systems and controls protect against fraud, theft and error	Finance	69%
Financial statements audited	Finance	66%
Diverse and stable income sources	Finance	66%
Networking and collaboration undertaken as appropriate	Leadership	66%

Leadership

Leadership is a complex issue concerned with both the ability to influence, inspire and motivate, and being open to, anticipating and responding to change, irrespective of whether it is internally initiated or externally imposed (UNDP, 2010). Although it is commonly associated with an individual, the concept of leadership is not synonymous with a position of authority. Ultimate responsibility for leadership does rest with the Executive Director and the board (Renz, 2010), but also extends throughout the organisation (Grant & Crutchfield, 2008). Leadership is different from, and should not

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be confused with, management: while leadership deals with what the organisation wants to accomplish, management deals with how it goes about achieving desired aims (Covey, 2004).

There is increasing evidence that effective leadership is associated with positive organisational functionality (Alemu, 2016), outcomes (Phipps & Burbach, 2010) and success (Froelich *et al.*, 2011). I found that leadership criteria were popular: all frameworks included at least one leadership criterion. I identified 31 leadership criteria that could be organised into six themes (Table 4.3). Six of the ten most commonly required criteria related to leadership.

Table 4.3. Leadership themes and criteria identified in the framework review. Popularity represents the percentage of frameworks requiring that particular criterion. The criteria among the top 10 (out of a total of 106 criteria across 22 themes and four overarching dimensions) are shown in bold.

Theme	Criteria	Popularity
Mission and purpose	Clear mission statement	89%
	Clear vision	63%
	Clarity over the organisation's purpose	54%
	Programmes are well defined and aligned with mission/strategy	43%
	Common set of basic beliefs and values	31%
Strategic planning	Strategy and/or strategic plan	71%
	Needs based work	54%
	Consideration of external context, including threats and opportunities	46%
	Participatory planning process	28%
	Continual assessment of ability of programmes to meet assessed needs	17%
		<i>Cont.</i>

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Theme	Criteria	Popularity
	Financial resources available to enable strategic planning	14%
	Exit strategies	11%
Monitoring and evaluation	Progress against plans is monitored	89%
	Clear, realistic goals/targets	74%
	Impact/outcomes of the organisation's work is monitored	71%
	Monitoring/evaluation are fully integrated / adaptive management	49%
	Track record/evidence of previous impact	29%
	Long-term impact is monitored	23%
	Comprehensive, integrated system (e.g., balanced scorecard) used	14%
Continuous improvement	Intention towards continuous improvement	49%
	Knowledge and learning outcomes are shared	40%
	Innovation is supported and promoted	40%
	System for gathering feedback	37%
	Complaints system in place	26%
	Possibility of scaling up frequently assessed and acted on, if appropriate	10%
	Research and data collection are undertaken	20%
	Quality improvement, e.g., through learning and adapting	17%
Collaboration	Networking and collaboration undertaken as appropriate	66%
Leadership style	Strong, skilled and committed leadership team	49%
	Transparent and consultative decision-making process	29%
	Teamwork promoted within the organisation	14%

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The most common leadership criterion was *clear mission statement*, required by 89% of frameworks. A mission articulates the organisation's reason for being (Sowa *et al.*, 2004) and reflects its long-term objectives (Kaplan, 2001). It defines how the organisation's vision of the future will be attained (Gill, 2006). A number of studies have shown that having a clear mission (e.g., Edwards, 1999; also see Kirk & Nolan, 2010) and enthusiasm for that mission (Sridhar & Nagabhushanam, 2008) are important contributors to NPO effectiveness.

The next most common was *strategy/strategic plan*. A strategy provides the means for reaching aspirations, enabling NPOs to develop clarity over short- and long-term goals, outline procedures for achieving them and allocate limited resources to that achievement (McHatton *et al.*, 2011). A clear strategy provides coherence and focus in pursuit of the mission (Kaplan, 2001). It reduces or even eliminates confusion about objectives and methods. Strategies are long-term and as such, play out over a period of months or years (Patrizi, 2010). Unfortunately, there is still a lack of research on strategy implementation in NPOs (Sharp & Brock, 2012), but some studies have shown links between strategic planning processes and organisational effectiveness (Green & Griesinger, 1996; and see Gill, 2006).

The next three commonly required criteria all relate to performance measurement: *clear and realistic goals/targets; monitoring progress against plans; and monitoring impact/outcomes of work*. Performance measurement should be central to the management process (Speckbacher, 2003) and be used as a strategic management tool (Carmen & Fredericks, 2008), with lessons learned from successes and failures of strategies feeding back into strategic planning (York, 2009). Since performance measures should be based on organisational mission, goals, and objectives,

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performance measurement helps guide decision-making (Zimmerman & Stevens, 2006), identify improvement opportunities (Cunningham & Ricks, 2004) and improve management of programs, services and resources (LeRoux & Wright, 2010). Performance measurement is increasingly being accepted as crucial to achieving impact (Lynch-Curello & Cooney, 2011), and setting clear goals has been found to positively contribute to organisational performance and success in a number of studies (e.g., Siciliano, 1997; Edwards, 1999; McKinsey, 2001).

The final prevalent leadership criterion was *networking and collaboration*. Complex or 'wicked' problems, which are so structurally complex that it is hard to identify where one problem stops and another begins (van den Broek, 2012), can require multi-disciplinary and creative approaches that may go beyond the capacity of a single organisation. NPOs therefore increasingly have to work together to strengthen their adaptive capacity (Connelly, 2007). Partnerships can lead to increased competency, greater efficiency, increased access to funding, strengthened strategic position, increased visibility and expanded political influence (Yankey & Willen, 2005). Strong linkages can also enable NPOs to share advice and experience (Edwards, 1999) and enhance organisational learning (Chen & Graddy, 2010). Ability and willingness to collaborate is therefore a vital asset in the NPO sector (Culick *et al.*, 2004) and studies are finding improved results where well-working partnerships have been formed (e.g., Chen & Graddy, 2010; Bruton-Adams *et al.*, 2011).

Finance

Financial condition is regarded as both a true measure of board effectiveness (Herman & Renz, 2004) and key ingredient for NPO sustainability (York, 2009). There is

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an underlying assumption that financially healthy organisations perform better because they can offer continual programme support and are better equipped to deal with unexpected fiscal challenges (Kim, 2017). Under-investment in management and infrastructure not only has a serious impact on financial transparency, but also a strong negative impact on the quality of the programmes it can deliver over time (Bell, 2010). Sound financial management entails not only securing funding, but also using it effectively and efficiently. Most NPOs are completely reliant on external funding (Hull & Lio, 2006), and there is constant pressure to keep overheads low, presenting an on-going challenge for most NPOs (see Lecy & Searing, 2015).

Table 4.4. Financial themes and criteria identified in the framework review. Popularity represents the percentage of frameworks requiring that particular criterion. The criteria among the top 10 (out of a total of 106 criteria across 22 themes and four overarching dimensions) are shown in bold.

Theme	Criteria	Popularity
Financial efficiency	Sound budgeting and cash flow forecasting processes	71%
	Robust systems and controls protect against fraud, theft and error	69%
	Financial statements audited	66%
	Complete annual financial reports prepared	63%
	Value for money is delivered	51%
	Finance and operations integrated	43%
	Adequate financial literacy	34%
	Debt levels are carefully managed	14%
Financial stability and sustainability	Diverse and stable income sources	66%
	Good cash flow management, including reserves policy where appropriate	57%

Cont.

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Theme	Criteria	Popularity
	Adequate fundraising resources	51%
	Good relationships with funders are maintained	31%
	Income generating activities are used where appropriate	29%

Within the finance dimension, I identified 13 criteria falling into two themes (Table 4.4). Four of those criteria were among the ten most commonly required criteria.

The financial criterion required by the largest number of frameworks was *sound budgeting and cash flow management*. As well as meeting the financial needs of programme delivery now and in the future, NPOs need enough revenue to survive economic shocks (Major, 2011), and to take calculated risks, invest in capacity development and grow (Cornelius *et al.*, 2011). Setting budgets and managing cash flow are essential to achieving this balance.

The next most common finance criterion was *robust systems and controls to protect against fraud, theft and error*. Several factors make NPOs especially vulnerable to fraud: a steady stream of cash donations, an atmosphere of trust within the organisation, reliance on volunteers for key tasks, limited supervision, limited resources for investigation, and a lack of financial expertise in volunteer board members (Owen, 2003). Sufficient internal controls are thus needed to track functional expenses accurately (Thornton & Belski, 2010)

The third most common finance criterion was *financial audit*. The quality of financial information is improved when financial statements are prepared and subject to external audit (Independent Sector, 2007). The audit not only forces NPOs to collect and maintain accurate financial information, but also provides assurance both internally and

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externally that its financial position and activity have stood up to scrutiny. Not all NPOs require a financial audit (Ostrower & Bobowick, 2006). It is often only legal requirement for larger NPOs (e.g., Charity Commission, 2018). However, it is considered good practice to have an audit or external review regardless of size to prove that finances stand up to external scrutiny (Rosenthal, 2012).

The last most prevalent financial criterion was *diverse and stable income*. NPOs have a number of funding sources, including donations from individuals or corporations, grants from private foundations and government agencies, and earned income from investments, endowments, membership fees and commercial activity (Hodge & Piccolo, 2005). Revenue diversification, especially increased reliance on earned income, investments, and contributions, has been found to promote NPO financial stability (Carroll & Stater, 2009).

Governance

Governance is the process of providing strategic leadership. It entails setting direction, making policy and strategy decisions, overseeing and monitoring performance, and ensuring regulatory compliance and overall accountability (Renz, 2004). The governance function is typically carried out by a board of trustees, which NPOs in most nations are legally required to have (Renz, 2010). Trustees can delegate powers to employees or agents, but they retain ultimate responsibility for running the NPO (Charity Commission, 2010). Although the board has ultimate power, it does not wield it operationally unless there are no paid employees (Axelrod, 2005). Effective governance therefore extends beyond the board to a good working relationship between the board and the executive director (LeRoux & Wright, 2010).

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Various studies show that effective governance is vital to NPOs. Both Green and Griesinger (1996) and Herman and Renz (2000, 2004) found significant relationships between board effectiveness (as measured by the use of accepted business practices) and effectiveness (as judged by stakeholders). Similarly, Brown (2005) found that boards making more robust strategic contributions are found in organisations with higher financial performance, and LeRoux and Wright (2010) found that effective governing bodies increased the effectiveness of strategic decision-making in NPOs.

Table 4.5. Governance themes and criteria identified in the framework review. Popularity represents the percentage of frameworks requiring that particular criterion.

Themes	Criteria	Popularity
Board members clear on roles and responsibilities	Trustees understand their roles and responsibilities	57%
	Trustees understand the mission and aims of the organisation	40%
	Mechanisms for board evaluation and accountability	40%
	Trustees receive an induction into the organisation	29%
	Appropriate training and development for trustees	14%
Appropriate board structure	Diverse board with a range of skills	51%
	Board size is appropriate for the organisation	40%
	Trustees have relevant backgrounds, skills, experience and networks	40%
	Appropriate use of committees	31%
	Term limits for trustees	26%
	Names of officers and trustees are available/published	17%
	Staggered term process for trustees	6%
Committed board members	Regular scheduled board meetings	49%

Cont.

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Themes	Criteria	Popularity
	Good attendance at board meetings	46%
	Trustees are committed to the organisation	37%
	Meetings are well planned and run	34%
	Board meeting minutes are prepared	29%
	Procedure for handling urgent matters between scheduled meetings	11%
Independent board	No inappropriate financial benefits are given to trustees	34%
	Appropriate board appointment process	26%
	Trustees are independent	26%
Accountable leadership team	Executive Director is held fully accountable	49%
	Process for determining executive compensation	20%
Strong board-executive relationship	Conflict of interest policy and procedure	46%
	Trustees and managers work well together	40%
	Whistle-blower policy and procedure	31%
	Appropriate document retention and destruction policies and procedures	26%
	Good communication between board and the rest of the organisation	23%
	Appropriate mechanisms for data and privacy protection	14%
	Internal code of conduct/ethics policy	14%

In my review, I found 31 governance criteria organised into seven key themes (Table 4.5). Although governance criteria were required by over 90% of the frameworks reviewed, none were within the ten most commonly required overall. Only three governance criteria were required by more than 50% of frameworks.

The most common governance criterion was *trustees understanding their roles and responsibilities*. Overall, trustees are responsible for ensuring managers and staff carry

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out the NPO's objectives (Cornforth, 2005). However, allocation of responsibility and authority within NPOs can be problematic, influenced in part by a lack of statutorily prescribed roles (Otto, 2005). If trustees are to deliver on their prescribed roles and responsibilities, they need clarity over what is expected of them (Drucker, 1989). Doherty and Hoyer (2011) found greater role clarity was directly associated with board members' perceptions of their meaningfulness and the quality of their contributions to the board. This is particularly true for the board chair (Harrison & Murray, 2012).

The second most common governance criterion was *compliance with applicable laws and regulations*. The board has a legal responsibility for all aspects of an NPO's work (Rochester, 2005). Legal compliance is not just a formal or nominal responsibility. It is also a fiduciary duty, meaning that board members can be held personally liable in the event of non-compliance (Rosenthal, 2012).

The third most common governance criterion was *a diverse board with a range of skills*. Rochester (2005) found that in effective boards, work is shared among many rather than concentrated in the hands of a few. It is widely recognised that the performance of a group is influenced by its composition (Brown, 2007). NPOs perform better when boards have an appropriate mix of necessary skills (Bugg & Dallhoff, 2006). These might include expertise in budget and financial management, personnel, fundraising, public relations, marketing, governance, advocacy, and leadership, and knowledge about the NPO's area of expertise, or a special connection to its constituency (Independent Sector, 2007).

Management

While leadership is more concerned with strategy and direction, managers operate to maintain an organisation, focusing on what needs to be done and how it can be accomplished (Nanus & Dobbs, 1999). Managers require different skill- and mind-sets to leaders. Good leadership can only take an organisation so far without strong management (McKinsey, 2001).

The widely held belief that the managerial style of NPOs needs to differ from for-profit organisations (e.g., Petersen & Van Fleet, 2008) is being now challenged (e.g., see Hamlin *et al.*, 2011 and Tucker *et al.*, 2013) and there is more acceptance that well-run organisations can have better results. Well-defined organisational structures are important in enabling organisations to achieve their objectives (Dewhurst *et al.*, 2011), and institutions can become stronger with policies, systems, processes and mechanisms that allow them to outperform others (UNDP, 2010). My review of effectiveness frameworks revealed seven themes into which 30 management criteria could be grouped (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6. Management themes and criteria identified in the framework review. Popularity represents the percentage of frameworks requiring that particular criterion.

Theme	Criteria	Popularity
Capacity	Adequate internal infrastructure	57%
	Operational planning is undertaken	43%
Effective external communication	Engages in effective external communications	57%
	Effective stakeholder engagement procedures	40%
	Financial reports are communicated to stakeholders as appropriate	31%
		<i>Cont.</i>

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Theme	Criteria	Popularity
	Responsiveness	31%
Employee management	Appropriate training and development opportunities	54%
	Procedures to promote low employee turnover	51%
	Employee performance review process	51%
	Managers/staff have appropriate experience and/or qualifications	49%
	Employees are clear on their roles and responsibilities	43%
	Clear recruitment processes for staff and volunteers	40%
	Appropriate personnel policies in place	31%
	Equality and diversity policies, as appropriate	23%
	Managers/staff are drawn from diverse background	9%
Risk management	Risk management process and procedures	49%
	Reputation is managed	43%
	Appropriate asset management procedures	29%
	Appropriate insurance held	29%
	Health and safety policies and practices	20%
	Environmental responsibility	11%
	Intellectual property is effectively managed	6%
Volunteer use and management	Volunteers are used where appropriate	43%
	Volunteers are clear about their roles and responsibilities	29%
	Volunteers get appropriate support and supervision	26%
Management style	Clear procedures	40%
	Effective communication throughout the organisation	29%

Cont.

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Theme	Criteria	Popularity
	Appropriate management skills	20%
Business continuity plans	Succession planning for key posts	37%
	Continuity/disaster recovery plans, as appropriate	14%

There were no management criteria among the ten most prevalent overall. However, that these indicators were required by 94% of frameworks, suggests widespread recognition that management is important to NPO effectiveness. Below I discuss the management criteria required by more than 50% of the frameworks I reviewed.

Since any mission is likely to fail if an NPO does not have sufficient resources to pursue it (Herman & Heimovics, 2005), it is important for organisations to have and appropriately allocate the resources needed to execute its strategy (Charan, 2005; York, 2009). This may explain why *adequate infrastructure* was one of the most common management criteria. Establishing a direct link between building capacity and increasing social impact has proven elusive (McKinsey, 2001), but PACT (2010) believes that proactive investment in both organisational and technical capacity does lead to increased levels of organisational efficiency, local ownership, sustainability and more effective service provision.

NPOs are accountable to a large number of stakeholders (Rosenthal, 2012). External stakeholders include donors, grant makers, potential allies, the media, and other interested players in business and public sectors (Wallis & Dollery, 2005). I found that *effective external communication* was a popular management criterion. Results of academic studies are suggesting that strong external relations and communications are important for enhancing the longevity and survival of NPOs (Napoli, 2006) and their external impact (Herman & Heimovics, 2005). Sending public messages can demonstrate

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responsiveness and establish a dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders (Lovejoy *et al.*, 2012). Organisational responsiveness is seen as strongly related to organisational effectiveness (Herman & Renz, 2004). Communication also enables NPOs to negotiate accountability, learn about and respond to needs when setting priorities, and gain legitimacy with important stakeholders (Ospina, Diaz & O'Sullivan, 2002).

The next three most commonly required management criteria all relate to employee management: *training and development*; *performance review*; and *employee retention*. Most NPOs spend the majority of their budgets on staff (Culick *et al.*, 2004). Human Resource systems and strategies are therefore important because they encourage strong employee performance (Sowa *et al.*, 2004). Because capacity in NPOs is limited, every person is important: these organisations cannot afford to carry 'dead weight' in their workforce (Sutherland & Wocke, 2011). NPOs can minimise the risk thereof by employing sound talent management, which involves attracting, hiring, developing and rewarding people who help the organisation achieve its mission (Major *et al.*, 2012). Once found, NPOs need to retain those employees, the probability of which is improved by giving employees the support they need to help them realise their potential to contribute to the organisation's strategy and effectiveness (Ya'anana & Bunchapattanasukda, 2011b). Research has also shown that providing development and growth opportunities can enhance employee retention (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006). Employee development takes on a strategic quality if aligned with clear competencies required for the execution of the organisation's strategy (Meier, 2006). Effective performance measurement systems link the work and behaviours of individuals and teams to the organisation's strategies, values and goals (Mulvaney *et al.*, 2006; Ya'anana & Bunchapattanasukda, 2011a), especially when done from the outset (Becker *et al.*, 2011).

Discussion and conclusions

My first key finding is that NPO effectiveness frameworks currently in use are both multi-dimensional and variable, as recommended by previous expert reviews (Lecy *et al.*, 2012). Although efficiency ratios are included in many of the frameworks I reviewed, many other criteria are also included. The most popular financial criteria concern clarity and reliability of financial information rather than how money was spent. This is also true when considering only judgment frameworks, which donors use to aid giving decisions (Chapter 5). Although Lecy *et al.* (2012) expressed concerns about donors continuing to employ unidimensional judgment based on overhead ratios, my results suggest this concern may be overstated.

My second key finding is that, when the results are considered as a whole, there are four distinct but overlapping dimensions of governance, finance, leadership and management. The inclusion of these dimensions by over 90% of frameworks suggests widespread agreement that all four are necessary for an NPO to be effective. Each dimension contains vital components for effectiveness, yet there are still many frameworks where criteria do not represent all four dimensions. This suggests room for improvement in how effectiveness is operationalised within the sector.

My third key finding is that the most commonly required criteria cover the important questions of what an organisation is trying to do (mission), how it will do it (strategy), how it will pay for it (diverse and stable income), and how it will know whether it is succeeding (setting goals, monitoring progress, and monitoring impact). Logically, these are the main considerations needed to ensure that an NPO can work towards achieving its mission, so it is encouraging to see them included. What is slightly concerning is that none of these criteria were required by all of the frameworks reviewed. Results shown

in Chapter 5 provide further evidence that while there are common methods in the operationalisation of NPO effectiveness, there is still variability in how the concept is being applied in practice.

Implications of my findings

Although I have shown that NPO effectiveness is being operationalised using multi-dimensional approaches, one can also see that there is still focus on commonly accepted criteria, despite little empirical research to validate this focus (Lecy *et al.*, 2012). In choosing which criteria to include in an effectiveness framework, there is a risk that donors or NPOs include criteria simply because they are commonplace. Such standards are said to have been subject only to measurement *by fiat*, described by Cicourel (1964) as the notion of decree: a concept is asserted with fairly straightforward but minimal steps taken to examine face validity, with no attempt made to find evidence of its reliability or validity (Bryman, 2016). An example of this from my study is the 11th most common criterion: a vision.

A vision describes what the future looks like once the organisation has achieved its goals. It defines what or where the organisation needs or wants to be in the future (Gill, 2006). Collins and Porras (1996) found that more successful companies have a vivid vision of the future 10-30 years ahead. Various studies have found a link between a clear, viable vision and organisational performance, success and growth in corporate organisations (Gill, 2006). Similarly, Bugg and Dalhoff (2006) found that NPO boards that were more fully engaged had a vision for the organisation and had translated it into measurable objectives and benchmarks for them to monitor.

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I conducted an informal review of the vision statements of a random selection of corporations and NPOs (results not shown). This indicated a very important difference between the visions of the two sectors. While the vision statements of corporations consider their place in the world, the vision statements of NPOs consider the state of the world: a bank aimed to 'become the best bank for customers;' an oil company wanted to 'be the top performing and most admired refinery in Asia;' and a pharmaceutical company strived to 'become the indisputable leader in our industry - not simply in terms of size, but in how we use that size to achieve our mission and improve the quality of human life.' Compare these to a selection of NPO visions: an animal charity wants to 'build a future where people live in harmony with nature;' a palliative care charity foresees a 'better life for people and their families living with a terminal illness;' and a charity fighting poverty would like to see 'a just world without poverty.' While it is important for organisations to know what they are ultimately aiming for, 'ending homelessness', 'stopping cruelty to children' or 'curing Alzheimer's' are all too ambitious for any one organisation to achieve (Sloan, 2013). Vision statements in NPOs as currently used are therefore probably not as important to the functioning of NPOs as some governance criteria, which were much less commonly required in the frameworks I reviewed.

While some criteria might be included where they need not be, the converse is also true. Some criteria are still not common despite being found to be important both in the corporate and non-profit sectors. One example is teamwork. With only 14% of frameworks including it, it is amongst the ten least commonly required criteria. But there is increasing empirical evidence linking teamwork to organisational performance. While Delarue *et al.* (2008), Richter *et al.* (2011) and Zincirkiran *et al.* (2015) have all found links between teamwork and staff/organisational performance, Sonnenfeld

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(2002) and Hudson (2012) found that openness and trust in well-functioning teams at board level were linked to more effective governance. Most of these studies focused on for-profit corporations, but Hudson's study considered the UK's top 500 charities, suggesting that this issue is starting to receive attention in the non-profit sector. Teamwork is, however, a relatively new concept, especially in the non-profit sector. With as yet undefined indicators for it, the concept is harder to assess or implement than more widely accepted concepts, such as vision and mission. Nonetheless, with the importance of teamwork becoming more apparent in effective organisations, it would be remiss to exclude this criterion as a determinant of organisational effectiveness.

One final point I would like to note is the lack of attention paid in frameworks to outside influences. Although there is an increasing need for risk assessments or theories of change in NPOs, the assessment of risk is only included in less than half of the frameworks reviewed. The best-managed organisational endeavours can fail not because of deficiencies within an organisation, but because of issues completely outside of its control. One of many examples of barriers to effectiveness identified in Chapter 2 was a lack of funding. While an organisation might be very clear on its mission, it might be prevented from achieving it because of insufficient overhead (Lecy & Searing, 2015) or multi-year funding (Cohen, 2007). Increased competition for funding can adversely affect strategic decision-making by encouraging NPOs to shift their focus to easily funded quick fixes rather than activities that may help them further their mission in the long run (see LeRoux & Wright, 2010).

I believe my typology is a useful consolidation of the operationalisation of effectiveness criteria. Since it includes a robust list of effectiveness determinants, it can be used by NPOs to help them evaluate and improve their own effectiveness. Because

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it includes criteria that are both commonly required (e.g., mission and monitoring/evaluation) and less commonly required (teamwork, staggered board member limits), I think it provides a more comprehensive framework that really covers both the popular and more novel criteria. While this typology could also be useful for donors wishing to evaluate NPOs, I would caution against its wholesale use as an evaluation tool. The increasing demand for competency and efficiency in NPOs, and the increased pressure on donors to show their own accountability, has seen donors increasingly applying sometimes quite onerous assessment and evaluation procedures on NPOs (e.g., see Bearman, 2008). Furthermore, failure to achieve can result from issues completely outside of an organisation's control (Chapter 2). While this typology should be an *aide memoire* for donors, it should not become an onerous due diligence framework.

Limitations of this research and next steps

Since it was not possible to review all effectiveness frameworks currently in use, it is possible that a larger study might find additional criteria, or may find a change in the popularity of individual criteria. Although I made every effort to be consistent in how I grouped criteria, there is always some subjectivity in identifying what a criterion is actually asking for.

While I have collated a list of criteria that appear, on the face of it, to be important in effective organisations, there is still little empirical evidence supporting them (Lecy *et al.*, 2012). Following supposed 'best practices' is not a guarantee of effectiveness (Herman & Renz, 1998). Despite increased intellectual interest in organisational effectiveness, there remains little consensus, either theoretically or empirically, as to

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what constitutes it and how best to measure it (Sowa *et al.*, 2004; Liket & Maas, 2015).

A useful next step in this research would be to conduct research into whether NPOs that satisfy my list of criteria are actually deemed to be more efficient by their stakeholders than those that do not.

5: CHAPTER FIVE

Operationalisation of organisational effectiveness: Are non-profits guided and judged the same way?

Abstract

There is an increasing use of non-profit organisational (NPO) effectiveness frameworks designed either for guidance (helping NPOs become more effective) or judgment (helping outsiders identify the most effective NPOs). In this chapter, I compared 17 guidance frameworks and 17 judgment frameworks. I found that frameworks designed for one purpose were not more similar to each other than to those designed for another purpose, and that judgment and guidance frameworks differed in terms of the numbers of criteria included, and in the composition of those criteria, mainly because of the lack of governance and management criteria in judgment frameworks. Guidance frameworks were more compositionally consistent while judgment frameworks showed more variability. My results show that there remains no theoretical or practical consensus on how to operationalise NPO effectiveness.

Introduction

The global non-profit sector is of increasing importance in most modern economies (Speckbacher, 2003). Millions of non-profit organisations (NPOs) now strive to solve some of the world's most difficult social and environmental problems (Shukla, 2010; Pettijohn, 2013) and hundreds of billions of dollars flow into the sector from government (Birdsall *et al.*, 2011) and foundations, which can represent both individuals and corporations (Foundation Centre & Council on Foundations, 2018). There is now much more choice when trying to determine which NPOs to support.

Unfortunately, there has been a decrease in public trust of NPOs (Ebrahim *et al.*, 2011). There are many reasons for this, including criticisms of charities spending very low proportions of their funding on charitable activities (e.g., Hundley & Taggart, 2013),

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some high profile instances of mismanagement and fraud (e.g., Gilkeson, 2007; Wixley & Noble, 2014), and an increasing prevalence of briefcase NPOs, which do little to no actual work (Igoe & Kelsall, 2004). Although donors, particularly foundations, have been subject to little scrutiny of their operations in the past (Fleishman, 2006; Meffert, Then & Fritsch, 2006), there is a growing desire for increased transparency and accountability within the sector (Parker *et al.*, 2014). Analysis has shown that billions of dollars could be reallocated to better-performing charities (Bagwell *et al.*, 2013). In a move from opportunistic charity to a more thoughtful, engaged and proactive approach aimed at accelerating the pace of social change (Castro, 2013), there is a growing demand for NPOs to demonstrate competency in order to obtain funding (Barman, 2007). With this in mind, an increasing number of donors are now employing due diligence processes to inform their decision-making.

Due diligence is an intensive assessment process that addresses issues potentially affecting an organisation's ability to deliver on its goals. These include financial position, management experience and ability, the environment in which the organisation operates, and significant risks to the organisation (ECVA, 2013). The assessment uses past performance and existing internal structures and processes to estimate future success. Culick *et al.* (2004) point out that the failure of a programme may not be the result of flawed ideas, but could rather stem from weaknesses within the organisation, e.g., financial shortcomings or poor planning. When done well, due diligence can help to distinguish NPOs with a greater likelihood of success (Enright, 2012).

While we have seen an increase in the practice of due diligence, there is little consistency in the process. The field of NPO effectiveness has received considerable attention in the literature. Forbes (1998) undertook one of the earliest comprehensive

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reviews of empirical studies from the previous 20 years to identify determinants of NPO effectiveness. He found that while previous studies had modelled effectiveness around goal attainment, system resources or reputation, there was an increasing use of an approach that emphasised the operational processes needed to improve organisational effectiveness.

In a more recent review of the NPO effectiveness literature, Lecy *et al.* (2012) found broad scholarly consensus that: unidimensional measures of effectiveness are not useful; there are many conceptual studies of effectiveness but not many empirical ones; and there is still no consensus on how to operationalise effectiveness. They suggest that in order to progress understanding of NPO effectiveness, we need to cross disciplinary divides, add empirical analysis, and clearly define preferred definitions of effectiveness. Both Lecy and colleagues and Liket and Maas (2015) both agree that there is still little agreement on what actual processes make an organisation effective and how to evaluate their existence

Mitchell (2013) engaged a large sample of non-profit leaders from the United States to identify how their organisations define effectiveness. He found most leaders define effectiveness as “outcome accountability,” believing that effective organisations keep their promises to their stakeholders, especially donors. But NPO success is less precisely observable and harder to measure than for-profit success (Epstein & McFarlan, 2011). The lack of standard reporting processes for various factions within the NPO sector, along with the lack of independent comparisons, makes it difficult to gauge an NPO’s impact (Kaplan & Grossman, 2010). NPOs also have multiple constituents, employees, trustees, funders, etc., each of whom may have different ideas of what effectiveness

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means (Herman & Renz, 2004; Jun & Shiau, 2012), further complicating how success is assessed (Herman & Renz, 2008).

While I agree that an effective organisation is one that delivers on its promises, I also believe an effective organisation needs to have policies and practices in place to enable it to do so. Three influential academic studies on NPO effectiveness use different methodologies to identify those practices. Herman and Renz (2004, 2008) used a combination of NPO practitioner focus groups and a Delphi process to identify the most highly rated criteria related to NPO effectiveness. Sridhar and Nagabhushanam (2008) used a mixture of focus group discussions (comprising both senior NPO leaders and academics) and qualitative research to develop a model of critical success factors in Indian NPOs. Finally, Liket and Maas (2015) tested the extent to which assertions about NPO effectiveness determinants found in the academic literature aligned with practitioner views. To increase the practical value of their work, they created a self-assessment survey on the basis of practices finding support in both academia and practice.

These studies all considered the theory underlying the criteria that should be present in an effective NPO. In Chapter 4, I used these three academic papers and an additional 32 frameworks, which could be split into two main groups, guidance frameworks that help organisations improve their own effectiveness, and judgment frameworks that enabled third parties, particularly donors, to judge the effectiveness of NPOs, to create a typology of organisational effectiveness. That analysis revealed criteria spread between four key dimensions:

- Governance: good governance in the form of a strong, independent board providing guidance and oversight, and ensuring legal and regulatory compliance;

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- Finance: sufficient financial resources to enable the organisation to progress its mission;
- Leadership: strong leadership to provide clarity over what the organisation is trying to achieve and how it will do so; and
- Management: effective general management to enable it to manage process of achieving its goals.

In this chapter, I compare the criteria used by guidance and judgment frameworks to determine whether:

- Frameworks designed for one purpose are more similar to each other than to those designed for another purpose; and
- Groups of frameworks designed for guidance and judgement are statistically different to each other.

In doing this, I can examine the risk that organisations are using one set of criteria to help them become more effective while being judged on that effectiveness by a different set of criteria. Furthermore, funders and other interested third parties may risk missing important criteria when choosing one framework over another.

Methods

The frameworks examined in Chapter 4 were split into the two groups identified above: judgment and guidance frameworks (Table 5.1). Each group contained 16 frameworks. The seminal academic papers outlined above were also included in all analyses. The numbers of frameworks requiring each criterion that were identified by the inductive analysis (Bryman, 2016) presented in Chapter 4 were calculated (Table 5.2).

Table 5.1. Frameworks included in this study, grouped by design function.

Framework
<i>Frameworks designed as external judgment tools</i>
1. Better Business Bureau (BBB) Wise Giving Alliance (www.bbb.org/us/wise-giving)
2. Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org)
3. New Philanthropy Capital's Little Blue Book (Copps & Vernon, 2010)
4. Give Differently (Institute for Philanthropy 2011)
5. Intelligent Philanthropy's Excellence in Giving (www.excellenceingiving.com)
6. Bridgespan's GiveSmart philanthropy initiative (www.givesmart.org)
7. Social Impact Exchange due diligence framework for scaling initiatives (http://www.socialimpactexchange.org/webfm_send/576)
8. Credibility Alliance's Accreditation System and Peer Group Review Model (www.credibilityalliance.org)
9. Grant-makers for Effective Organisations' Due Diligence Tool for use in pre-grant assessment (Culick <i>et al</i> , 2004)
10. Philippine Council for NGO Certification (PCNC) – Guidebook of NGO governance (https://www.pcnc.com.ph/admin/downloads/PCNC%20Guidebook%20on%20the%20Basics%20of%20NGO%20Governance.pdf)
11. AusAID Due Diligence Framework (https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/due-diligence-framework.pdf)
12. Birdlife Africa Assessment Tool (BirdLife International, 2008)
13. World Land Trust Evaluation Tool (available from World Land Trust directly)
14. Global Journal Top 100 NGO methodology (http://idsa02.pbworks.com/w/file/74298527/Evaluating%20NGOs%20(Methodology%20Paper)_EN.pdf)
15. Pact (2010) Introduction to Organisational Capacity Development
16. UNDP Capacity Assessment Methodology (http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/undp-capacity-assessment-methodology/UNDP%20Capacity%20Assessment%20Users%20Guide.pdf)

Cont.

Framework

Frameworks designed as internal guidance tools

17. Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice (www.principlesforgood.com)
18. Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) Standards
(<http://www.interaction.org/document/interaction-pvo-standards>)
19. Charity Evaluation Service's Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations
(PQASSO:www.ces-vol.org.uk/PQASSO)
20. Charity Commission – Due Diligence, Monitoring and Verification of End Use of Charitable Funds
(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/677252/Chapter2new.pdf)
21. Central and Eastern European Working Group's Handbook of NGO governance
(http://providus.lv/article_files/1420/original/ngo_govern.pdf?1331192192)
22. McKinsey Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool
(<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/social-sector/how-we-help-clients/organisational-capacity-assessment-tool>)
23. BOND Organisational Health Check (<https://www.bond.org.uk/ngo-support/organisational-health>)
24. Capacity for Conservation Self Lead Organisational Development
(<https://capacityforconservation.org/>)
25. Assessing the Competence and Credibility of the Civil Society Organisations in Tanzania
(NGO Resource Centre & TANGO 2008:https://www.anti-corruption.org.bt/sites/default/files/civil_society_tanzania_selfassessment.pdf)
26. Non-profit Organisational Assessment Tool (<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/non-profits/management/documents/assessment.pdf>)
27. Nidos Effectiveness Toolkit (www.nidos.org.uk)
28. Standards for Excellence Institute (<https://standardsforexcellence.org/About-You/For-Non-profits>)
29. Social Venture Partners Occupational Capacity Assessment Toolkit
(<http://www.socialventurepartners.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/OCAT-Process-and-Version-1-and-2-Comparison.pdf>)
30. Heifer International Seeds of Change Initiative Occupational Capacity Assessment Tool
(<https://www.heifer.org/ending-hunger/our-impact/index.html>)

Cont.

Framework

31. Marguerite Casey Foundation Occupational Capacity Assessment Tool

(<https://www.google.com/search?q=marguerite+casey+ocat&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b-ab>)

32. Board-Source Assessing Board performance

(<https://jcamp180.org/JCamp180/media/Media/Knowledge-Center/Governance/assessing-board-performance.pdf?ext=.pdf>)

Seminal academic papers

33. Maas & Liket (2015)

34. Herman & Renz (2004, 2008)

35. Sridhar & Nagabhusanam (2008)

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Table 5.2. Typology of organisational effectiveness as identified in Chapter 4 showing the number of frameworks that included each criterion. Judg = Judgment; Guid = Guidance; Acad = Academic. ** depicts the most common criteria for that framework group while ^^ depicts the least common criteria.

Dimensions	Themes	Criteria	Judg	Guid	Acad	Total	
Governance	Board members clear on roles and responsibilities	Trustees understand their roles and responsibilities	5	14**	1	20	
		Trustees understand the mission and aims of the organisation	2	12	0	14	
		Trustees receive an induction into the organisation	0^^	9	1	10	
		Mechanisms for board evaluation and accountability	1	12	1	14	
		Appropriate training and development for trustees	0^^	5	0	5	
	Appropriate board structure	Board size is appropriate for the organisation	5	9	0	14	
		Trustees have relevant backgrounds, skills, experience and networks	3	11	0	14	
		Term limits for trustees	2	6	1	9	
		Staggered term process for trustees	0^^	2^^	0	2^^	
		Diverse board with a range of skills	5	13	0	18	
		Appropriate use of committees	2	9	0	11	
		Names of officers and trustees are available/published	3	2^^	1	6	
							<i>Cont.</i>

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Dimensions	Themes	Criteria	Judg	Guid	Acad	Total
Committed board members		Trustees are committed to the organisation	3	10	0	13
		Regular scheduled board meetings	4	12	1	17
		Meetings are well planned and run	1	10	1	12
		Board meeting minutes are prepared	2	8	0	10
		Good attendance at board meetings	2	13	1	16
		Procedure for handling urgent matters between scheduled meetings	1	3	0	4^^
Independent board		Trustees are independent	3	5	1	9
		No inappropriate financial benefits are given to trustees	5	6	1	12
		Appropriate board appointment process	1	8	1	10
Accountable leadership team		Executive Director is held fully accountable	3	13	1	17
		Process for determining executive compensation	3	4	0	7
Strong board-executive relationship		Trustees and managers work well together	4	9	1	14
		Good communication between board and the rest of the organisation	2	5	1	8
Internal governance		Compliance with applicable laws and regulations	6	13	0	19
		Conflict of interest policy and procedure	8	8	0	16
		Whistle-blower policy and procedure	4	7	0	11
						<i>Cont.</i>

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Dimensions	Themes	Criteria	Judg	Guid	Acad	Total
Finance	Financial stability and sustainability	Appropriate document retention and destruction policies and procedures	3	6	0	9
		Appropriate mechanisms for data and privacy protection	1	4	0	5
		Internal code of conduct/ethics policy	0^^	5	0	5
		Diverse and stable income sources	10	13	0	23
		Income generating activities are used where appropriate	4	6	0	10
		Adequate fundraising resources	6	12	0	18
		Good relationships with funders are maintained	2	9	0	11
		Good cash flow management, including reserves policy where appropriate	9	11	0	20
		Financial efficiency	Adequate financial literacy	3	9	0
	Complete annual financial reports prepared		11**	10	1	22
	Financial statements audited		11**	11	1	23
	Finance and operations integrated		4	11	0	15
	Sound budgeting and cash flow forecasting processes		10	14**	1	25**
	Value for money is delivered		9	9	0	18

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Dimensions	Themes	Criteria	Judg	Guid	Acad	Total
Leadership	Leadership style	Robust systems and controls protect against fraud, theft and error	9	15**	0	24
		Debt levels are carefully managed	3	2	0	5
		Transparent and consultative decision making process	4	6	0	10
		Teamwork promoted within the organisation	2	3	0	5
		Strong, skilled and committed leadership team	7	8	2	17
	Mission and purpose	Clear mission statement	12**	16**	3**	31**
		Clear vision	9	10	3**	22
		Common set of basic beliefs and values	2	8	1	11
		Clarity over the organisation's purpose	5	11	3**	19
		Programs are well defined and aligned with mission/strategy	3	10	2	15
	Strategic planning	Strategy and/or strategic plan	9	14**	2	25**
		Participatory planning process	3	5	1	9
		Financial resources available to enable strategic planning	1	3	1	5
		Needs based work	7	9	3**	19
		Continual assessment of ability of programs to meet assessed needs	2	3	1	6
						<i>Cont.</i>

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Dimensions	Themes	Criteria	Judg	Guid	Acad	Total
		Consideration of external context, including threats and opportunities	7	8	1	16
		Exit strategies	2	2	0	4
	Monitoring and evaluation	Clear, realistic goals/targets	11	13	2	26
		Progress against plans is monitored	14	14	3	31
		Impact/outcomes of the organisation's work is monitored	11	13	1	25
		Long-term impact is monitored	2	6	0	8
		Monitoring/evaluation are fully integrated / adaptive management	6	10	1	17
		Comprehensive, integrated system (e.g., balanced scorecard) used	1	4	0	5
		Track record/evidence of previous impact	7	3	0	10
	Continuous improvement	Possibility of scaling up frequently assessed and acted on, if appropriate	3	4	0	7
		Quality improvement, e.g., through learning and adapting	3	3	0	6
		Intention towards continuous improvement	6	10	1	17
		System for gathering feedback	3	9	1	13
						<i>Cont.</i>

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Dimensions	Themes	Criteria	Judg	Guid	Acad	Total
		Complaints system in place	2	6	1	9
		Research and data collection are undertaken	2	4	1	7
		Knowledge and learning outcomes are shared	5	9	0	14
		Innovation is supported and promoted	5	9	0	14
	Collaboration	Networking and collaboration undertaken as appropriate	10	12	1	23
Management	Management style	Effective communication throughout the organisation	3	7	0	10
		Appropriate management skills	3	4	0	7
		Clear procedures	4	9	1	14
	Risk management	Risk management process and procedures	4	12	1	17
		Health and safety policies and practices	1	6	0	7
		Intellectual property is effectively managed	1	1	0	2
		Appropriate asset management procedures	3	7	0	10
		Appropriate insurance held	1	9	0	10
		Reputation is managed	5	10	0	15
		Environmental responsibility	2	2	0	4
	Capacity	Operational planning is undertaken	4	11	0	15
		Adequate internal infrastructure	8	12	0	20
						<i>Cont.</i>

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Dimensions	Themes	Criteria	Judg	Guid	Acad	Total
	Employee management	Appropriate personnel policies in place	3	8	0	11
		Employees are clear on their roles and responsibilities	6	9	0	15
		Managers/staff have appropriate experience and/or qualifications	8	9	0	17
		Managers/staff are drawn from diverse background	0	3	0	3
		Equality and diversity policies, as appropriate	3	5	0	8
		Clear recruitment processes for staff and volunteers	3	11	0	14
		Employee performance review process	6	11	1	18
		Appropriate training and development opportunities	10	9	0	19
		Procedures to promote low employee turnover	9	9	0	18
		Volunteer use and management	Volunteers are used where appropriate	3	11	1
	Volunteers are clear about their roles and responsibilities		4	6	0	10
	Volunteers get appropriate support and supervision		2	7	0	9

Cont.

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Dimensions	Themes	Criteria	Judg	Guid	Acad	Total
	Business continuity plans	Succession planning for key posts	3	9	1	13
		Continuity/disaster recovery plans, as appropriate	1	4	0	5
	Effective external communication	Engages in effective external communications	7	12	1	20
		Effective stakeholder engagement procedures	4	9	1	14
		Financial reports are communicated to stakeholders as appropriate	4	6	1	11
		Responsiveness	3	7	1	11

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Analysis of Similarities (ANOSIM) uses a non-parametric permutation procedure to compare two or more groups to each other when the normal assumptions required for conducting an ANOVA cannot be guaranteed (Clarke *et al.*, 2014). In community ecology, ANOSIM can interpret community differences between sites by demonstrating that there are statistically significant differences to interpret (see Clarke *et al.*, 2014). I used ANOSIM here to compare the main groups of frameworks (guidance, judgment and academic) and identify whether they demonstrate statistically significant differences that can be examined.

Non-metric multi-dimensional scaling (nMDS) analysis helps visualise the level of similarity or dissimilarity among objects (Cox & Cox, 2001) and detect the hidden structure of similarity judgments (Stalans, 1995). A SIMPROF (Similarity Profile) analysis can test for evidence of multivariate structure within a set of samples (Sommerfield & Clarke, 2013) or look for significant evidence of structure among samples with no pre-defined grouping (Clarke & Gorley, 2005). The informal principle on which it works is that genuine structure within a set of samples is evidenced by an excess of smaller and/or larger similarities than expected under the null hypothesis of all samples being drawn from the same group (Clarke *et al.*, 2008). Since differences in abundance and composition of species drive differences among groups of samples (Sommerfield & Clarke, 2013), these methods have also been regularly used in the field of community ecology. The SIMPROF analysis relies on the fact that if there is evidence of multivariate structure in a group of samples or variables, some pairs of samples/variables will be more, or less, similar to each other than would be expected if the data were essentially random and there was no structure (Sommerfield & Clarke, 2013).

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I used SIMPROF here to identify whether the identified frameworks or groups of frameworks are similar to each other or not, and cluster analysis to produce an ordination plot, in which frameworks were mapped such that distances between pairs reflect their relative dissimilarity of criteria composition (Clarke *et al.*, 2014). The cluster analysis identifies grouping, and SIMPROF allow significance to be put to that grouping. Examination of the output allows us to see how similar/ dissimilar the various frameworks are to each other. I chose to undertake both SIMPROF and cluster analysis because a combination of clustering and ordination analyses can be an effective way of checking adequacy and mutual consistency of both representations (Clarke *et al.*, 2014). For the nMDS, I calculated resemblances using Sorensen distances, which are most appropriate for presence/absence data (Clarke *et al.*, 2014).

All statistics tests were run in PRIMER (version 7: Clarke *et al.*, 2014).

Results

All dimensions were well represented within both groups of frameworks. All guidance frameworks included criteria from all four dimensions. Of the judgment frameworks, 88% had governance criteria, 94% had management criteria, and 100% required finance and leadership criteria.

Table 5.3 shows the average (and range) number of criteria required by each group of frameworks in each dimension and for all frameworks together. All dimensions in all groups of frameworks contained considerable variation in the number of criteria required. Guidance frameworks required almost twice as many criteria as judgment ones.

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Table 5.3. Average number of criteria (and range) required by each group of frameworks in each dimension, and when all four dimensions were considered as a whole.

	Judgment frameworks	Guidance frameworks	Academic papers
	Average (range)		
Governance criteria	5 (0-10)	16 (6-27)	8 (0-11)
Finance criteria	6 (2-10)	8 (2-11)	3 (0-2)
Leadership criteria	10 (1-23)	15 (3-25)	12 (7-19)
Management criteria	7 (0-22)	15 (1-26)	6 (1-5)
Whole framework	29 (9-59)	54 (19-75)	20 (12-29)

Table 5.4 shows the largest differences found when the number of guidance frameworks requiring particular criteria was compared with the number of judgment frameworks requiring them. Since guidance frameworks consistently required more criteria, all of these largest differences go the same way. The full list of differences can be seen in Appendix 6.

Table 5.4. Largest 14 differences between the number of frameworks requiring each criterion.

** signifies one of the ten most commonly required criteria in that group of frameworks while ^^ signifies one of the least commonly required criteria.

Criterion	Dimension	Judgment	Guidance	Difference
Mechanisms for board evaluation & accountability	Governance	1	12	-11
Good attendance at board meetings	Governance	2	13	-11
Trustees understand the mission and aims of the organisation	Governance	2	12	-10
Executive director is held fully accountable	Governance	3	13	-10

Cont.

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Criterion	Dimension	Judgment	Guidance	Difference
Trustees understand their roles and responsibilities	Governance	5	**14	-9
Trustees receive an induction into the organisation	Governance	^0	9	-9
Meetings are well planned and run	Governance	1	10	-9
Trustees have relevant backgrounds, skills, experience and professional network connections	Governance	3	11	-8
Diverse board with a range of skills	Governance	5	13	-8
Regular scheduled board meetings	Governance	4	12	-8
Appropriate risk management process	Management	4	12	-8
Insurance requirements are up to date and regularly reviewed	Management	1	9	-8
Clear recruitment process for staff and volunteers	Management	3	11	-8
Volunteers used as appropriate	Management	3	11	-8

The ANOSIM results revealed that there are differences between the groups of frameworks examined (Table 5.5). *R* is calculated for the observed data and thereafter for the data following a random reassignment to one of the three groups a further 999 times. The spread of *R*-values possible from these random ($T = 999$) simulations, i.e., if there were no structure to my data, is shown in the histogram bars (Figure 5.1). The largest of these simulations is still less than the observed *R*-value of 0.25. Since my *R*-value therefore has a probability (*p*) of 0.1%, I can reject the hypothesis that there is no

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variation between the samples. The highly significant global test result shows that at least one of the groups is different at $p = 0.1\%$, and the subsequent pairwise tests revealed that the differences lie between the judgment and guidance frameworks, and between the academic papers and guidance frameworks, with the latter difference ($R = 0.71$) being clearer than the former ($R = 0.2$). Similar results were obtained when ANOSIM was run at the level of themes rather than individual criteria (global test: $R = 0.213$, p -value = 0.3% , pairwise test results not shown). Conducting this analysis at dimension level revealed similar results for all dimensions except for leadership, which did not detect any differences, either in the global test or any pairwise tests.

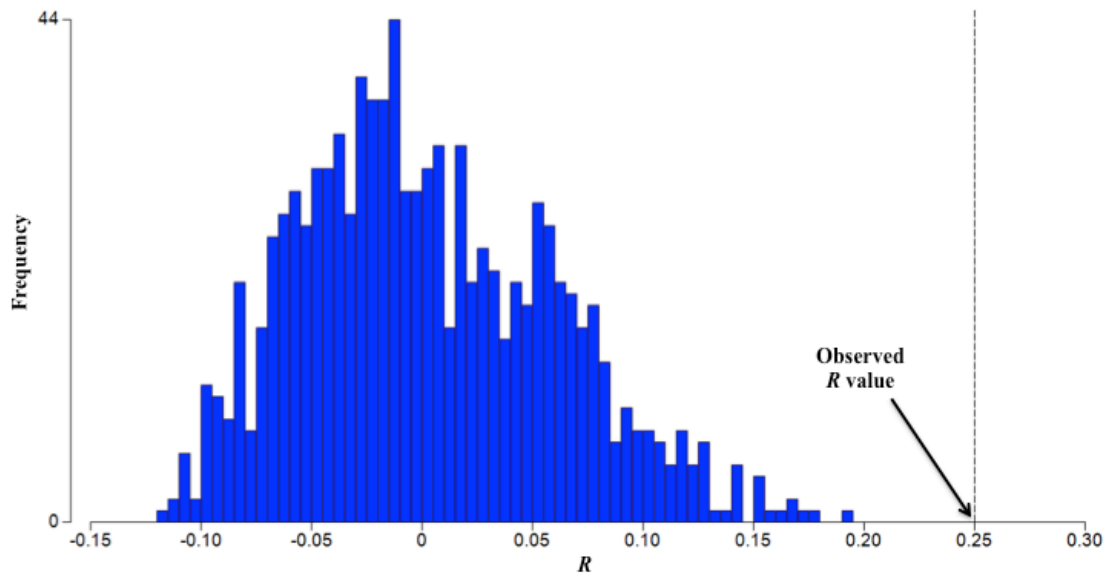


Figure 5.1: Permutation distribution of 999 simulations of the test statistic R under the null hypothesis of ‘no differences between the three groups.’ The bars represent the 999 simulations of randomly reassigned data while the dotted line shows the observed value of R of 0.25.

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Table 5.5. ANOSIM results showing comparison of internal guidance and external judgment frameworks. An asterisk implies significance.

Test comparison	<i>R</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Global test	0.25	0.1%*
Pairwise: judgment-guidance	0.19	0.2%*
Pairwise: judgment-academic	0.197	14.1%
Pairwise: guidance-academic	0.71	0.7%*
Governance	0.328	0.1%*
Pairwise: judgment-guidance	0.317	0.1%*
Pairwise: judgment-academic	0.134	20.0%
Pairwise: guidance-academic	0.581	3.9%*
Finance	0.19	0.02%*
Pairwise: judgment-guidance	0.079	3.1%*
Pairwise: judgment-academic	0.416	5.9%
Pairwise: guidance-academic	0.844	1.3%*
Leadership	0.017	33.9%
Pairwise: judgment-guidance	0.037	11.9%
Pairwise: judgment-academic	-0.116	68.7%
Pairwise: guidance-academic	0.028	42.8%
Management	0.174	0.5%*
Pairwise: judgment-guidance	0.096	0.8%*
Pairwise: judgment-academic	0.274	8.5%
Pairwise: guidance-academic	0.258	2.4%*

The ordination plot (Figure 5.2A) shows clustering of guidance frameworks at an arbitrary similarity level of 50. The judgment frameworks and academic papers were more dispersed, therefore showing more variation than guidance frameworks in terms of rank-based similarities. In the SIMPROF chart (Figure 5.2B), dashed lines represent group structure where there is no evidence from the test to reject the null hypothesis (that samples in that group have no further structure to explore). Continuous lines show divisions for which the null hypothesis is rejected. My chart shows five frameworks that

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do appear to have statistically different structures (as indicated by the combinations of criteria they contain) from all other frameworks, and a further 11 groups that differ in their structure. Even though the three academic papers I included all consider organisational effectiveness, all three are in different statistically supported groups, suggesting that there are differences in the way that they combine criteria. The two-dimensional STRESS value of 0.19 in the cluster analysis suggests a fair goodness of fit (Kruskal, 1964). While this gives a potentially useful two-dimensional picture, because the value is close to 0.2, little reliance should be placed on the detail of the plot (Clarke *et al.*, 2014).

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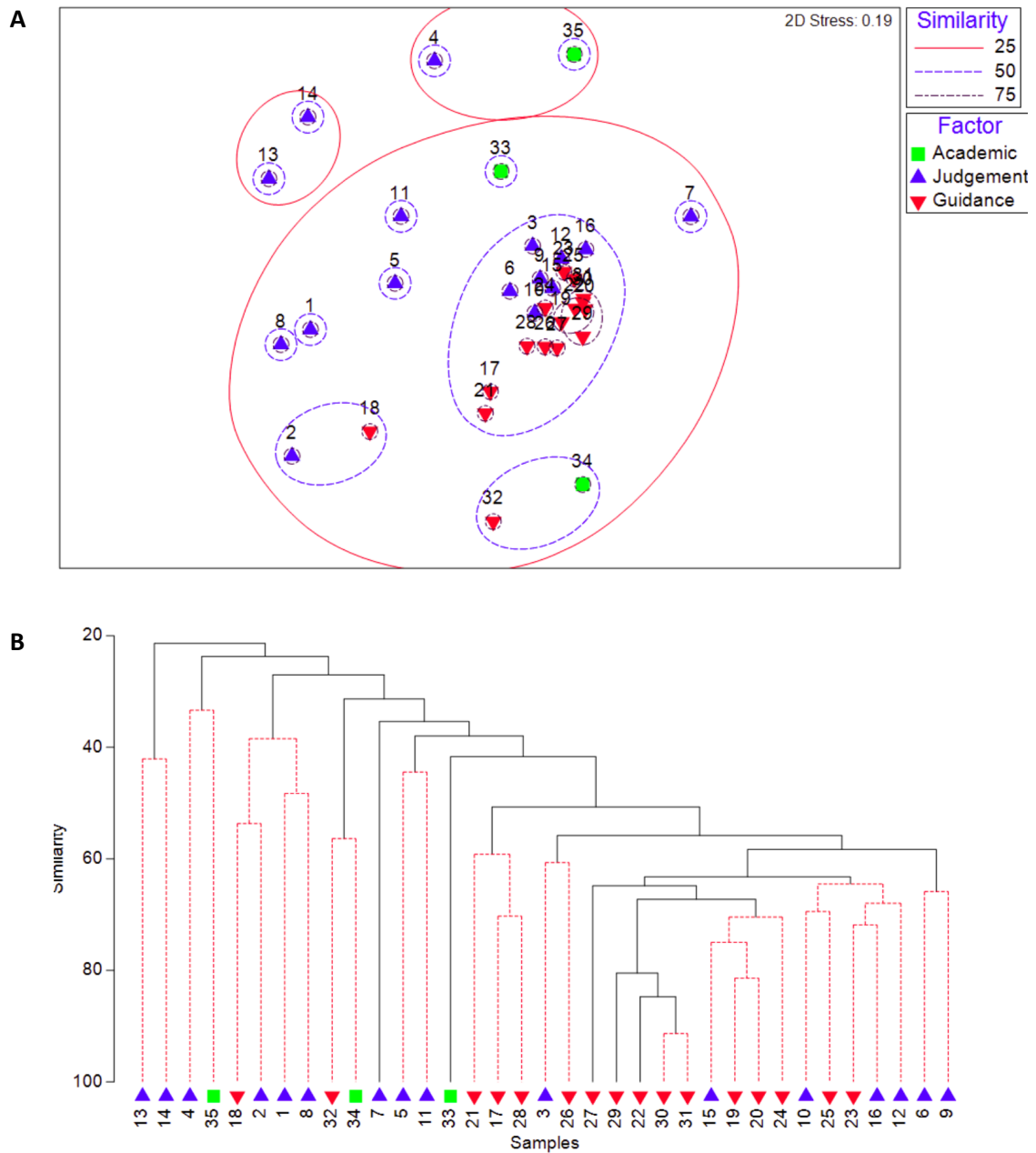


Figure 5.2: Ordination plot (A) and SIMPROF chart (B) exhibiting how the various frameworks included in the nMDS analysis relate to each other. (A) Group averaged clustering from resemblances using Sorensen distances: clusters formed at three arbitrary levels have been superimposed onto the two-dimensional nMDS (Stress = 0.19). (B) Solid black lines represent frameworks or groups that are statistically supported (i.e., the null hypothesis of no difference between the groups is rejected: the groups contain significantly different combinations of criteria) while broken red lines show associations where a statistically significant difference between them cannot be identified.

Discussion

The main aims of this chapter were to determine whether frameworks created for one purpose (guiding effectiveness) are more similar to each other than to those created for another purposes (judging or assessing effectiveness), and to compare the two groups of frameworks to see if they were different from each other. While seminal academic papers were included because of the important contribution they make to identifying effectiveness criteria, the small size of that group combined with the variability in composition observed in the SIMPROF analysis precludes us from including it in cross-group comparisons. Group comparison discussions hereafter are therefore limited to guidance versus judgment frameworks. Next I discuss the distribution of the 35 frameworks in multi-dimensional space, and the differences detected (number and composition of criteria) between the two groups of frameworks.

Distribution of frameworks

If there were no differences between guidance and judgment frameworks, I would expect cluster analysis to reveal completely random distribution of the frameworks in the ordination plot. Conversely, if there were clear differences, I would expect to see clustering into two areas, each containing either predominantly guidance or mostly judgment frameworks. Instead, what I saw in my ordination plot (Figure 5.2A) is clustering of some guidance frameworks, and a rather more dispersed distribution of academic papers and judgment frameworks. These latter two groups therefore display more variation in terms of risk similarities and more noise. Frameworks designed to guide effectiveness, on the other hand, are more consistent and more similar to each

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other. This suggests there is more agreement in the combination of criteria needed to guide effectiveness than to judge it.

It may be tempting to assume that the increased consistency in guidance frameworks is driven by a number of frameworks having the same starting point. For example, the McKinsey framework (number 22) is acknowledged as being the basis for those developed by SVT (29), Seeds of Change (30) and the Marguerite Casey Foundation (31). In the SIMPROF analysis, I would not expect frameworks that are compositionally similar to have statistical support for different compositions. Yet the SIMPROF analysis shows that both the McKinsey and SVT framework are statistically distinct from all others in terms of their composition. Small changes could, therefore, be enough to render frameworks statistically different. While this does not necessarily imply functional difference, it does present this as a risk.

Judgment frameworks and academic papers showed even more dissimilarity and were more widely dispersed, suggesting less agreement on appropriate composition. This could result from each judgment framework being designed independently of the others but could also just be because there is less agreement on how to judge NPO effectiveness from the outside. The three academic papers were compositionally different despite all aiming to assess essentially the same thing. The cluster analysis shows variability in composition and the SIMPROF test revealed that all three papers were in different statistically supported groups. This suggests that study design can affect conclusions on what the determinants of effective organisations are.

Comparisons of guidance versus judgement frameworks

Results of the ANOSIM, SIMPROF and cluster analyses all revealed differences between judgment and guidance frameworks. These differences could relate to the numbers of criteria each group contains, or composition of the criteria within the groups, or both.

Guidance frameworks were found to contain almost double the number of criteria that judgment frameworks contain. This is in line with expectation since one requires more information to set up a system than to test how it works. It would also be too expensive for an outsider to test everything when trying to undertake due diligence on an NPO. Finally, it is not always possible for an assessor merely visiting an organisation to see evidence of some criteria unless they are embedded in the organisation. For example, merely having an environmental policy does not necessarily translate into more environmentally aware daily behaviours in the workplace (personal observation). A visitor may not be able to see those behaviours if only on site for a day or two.

While it is possible that some of the differences seen in the ANOSIM, SIMPROF and cluster analyses might result from the widely different numbers of criteria required by different groups of frameworks, I do not believe this is telling the whole story. For example, Figure 5.2B shows that while frameworks 6 and 9 are both similar to each other and distinguishable as a group to other frameworks, the former has half the number of criteria as the latter. I therefore think that the composition of the frameworks, i.e., which criteria combine together to form a framework, must also be playing a role.

Some deeper probing into where the differences in number of criteria lie showed that while judgment and guidance frameworks required similar numbers of finance and leadership criteria, guidance frameworks required more than twice as many

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management criteria and more than three times as many governance criteria (Table 5.3). Similarly, looking at the largest overall differences between judgment and guidance groups (Table 5.4), we see that the criteria with the largest differences relate to governance, with many more guidance frameworks including them than judgment frameworks. Of the 14 largest differences, ten relate to governance and two to management of business risk.

At the dimension level, leadership did not differ between guidance and judgment frameworks, both in terms of the numbers of criteria included and in terms of the popularity of criteria within each group. This suggests more similarity in the criteria used to judge and guide effectiveness from a leadership perspective. By contrast, large differences in the numbers of criteria required for governance and management, and in the numbers of frameworks requiring individual criteria, suggest that the way those dimensions are implemented in effective organisations may not be the same as the way they are judged.

What is interesting is that trends in both numbers of criteria and the biggest differences in the numbers of frameworks requiring individual criteria mirror the maturity of the four dimensions. Since the inception of the charitable sector, financing ventures (finance) and understanding what it is they are trying to achieve (leadership) has been key. NPOs need money to function, and how they spend that money has been in the spotlight for many years (Lecy & Searing, 2015). Similarly, as mission-driven organisations, they need to be clear on what they are trying to achieve and how they might go about doing so (Sowa *et al.*, 2004). Governance, while vital in NPOs, has risen to prominence only in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries (Hall, 2003; House of Lords, 2017) and management, which predominantly revolves around managing people and

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identifying and mitigating risks to operations, is still less well developed in the non-profit sector.

Empirical research has shown that governance plays an important role in the effectiveness of NPOs. While both Green and Griesinger (1996) and Herman and Renz (2000, 2004) found significant relationships between the effectiveness of an NPO board and organisational effectiveness, a study by Jackson and Holland (1998) provided evidence supporting the suggestion that board effectiveness causes organisational effectiveness (Herman & Renz, 2008). Brown (2005) presented results suggesting that strategic contributions from the board are more robust in organisations with higher financial performance, and LeRoux and Wright (2010) found that having an effective governance body increased the effectiveness of strategic decision-making in NPOs.

There have also been some high-profile cases of failures in NPOs that have highlighted the importance of effective governance. 2015 saw the collapse of Kid's Company in the UK, a charity that had received £42m in public funding. A House of Commons (2016) report explains that its downfall was primarily down to failures of the board. Not only did they fail to protect the interests of the charity and its beneficiaries by not acting upon repeated warnings about the organisation's precarious financial position, which rendered the organisation incapable of surviving any variance in funding streams, but they also lacked the skills and experience necessary to interrogate the decisions of the founder-chief executive. Similarly, The United Way, one of the US's most well-known and respected charities, was hard hit in the 1990s when previous high-ranking officials within the organisation were found guilty of embezzling and mismanaging the organisation's finances for personal gain (see Gilkeson, 2007). Had United Way had appropriate governance structures in place, this might have been

managed better. While there is clarity over the roles and responsibilities of NPO trustees, many organisations still do not fully comply with governance requirements (e.g., see House of Lords, 2017). My results show that while governance is included within frameworks designed to guide organisations along the path to increased effectiveness, there is still room for improvement in how this dimension is judged by external parties.

Management of NPOs is also undergoing a transition, with increased emphasis now on the need for more business-like approaches (see Maier *et al.*, 2016). Although there has been some debate about whether these approaches are needed in NPOs, there is a growing acceptance that good management is the same whatever sector one is working (Grant, 2012). Two areas of management where NPOs need to focus is on the management of their staff and risk.

Despite NPOs spending a large proportion of their budgets on staff, few have well-developed Human Resources (HR) management (Culick *et al.*, 2004). Good HR systems and strategies are important because they can encourage performance among employees (Sowa *et al.*, 2004) and align employee objectives and organisational goals (Ya-Anan & Bunchapattanasukda, 2011a). Yet, many NPO managers find HR management the most challenging and least energising aspect of their work (Cornelius *et al.*, 2011).

The concept of risk management is also still fairly new in the NPO sector. But effective risk management, which involves identifying and analysing the risks associated with the business (SAICA, 2009), is essential if trustees are to achieve their key objectives and safeguard their NPO's funds and assets (Charity Commission, 2010). With many NPO leaders continuing to see it as a luxury that they cannot afford, often turned off by

business-oriented language found in traditional risk management texts (Herman, 2010), there is still a large majority of NPOs that do not have formal risk management policies within their organisations (Bugg & Dalhoff, 2006). Yet, it is external risks that can often pose the biggest challenges to success in NPOs (Chapter 2). Once again, my results show that while management criteria are increasingly included within guidance frameworks, there is also room for improvement in how this is assessed by those judging NPOs from outside.

Conclusions

My research has shown that, overall, guidance and judgment frameworks differ in both the number of criteria they require, and in the composition of these criteria. There is a risk here that organisations are using one set of criteria to help them become more effective, but they are being judged using a different set of criteria. In order to look better and increase their chances of funding, this could lead organisations to focus on those criteria which donors will consider in their due diligence processes rather than on other criteria that are equally as important in an effective organisation. Key differences observed in visually comparing the two groups suggests that deficiencies in governance and management criteria in judgment frameworks are the main reason for these differences. NPOs could therefore focus on 'leadership' and 'finance' and omit to give due consideration to the other two dimensions, which could be detrimental to their effectiveness overall.

I have also shown here that while there is consistency, and therefore more agreement, in which criteria to include in a guidance framework, judgment frameworks and academic papers are more variable in the criteria they include. For the academic

community, the implication is that different study designs may impact conclusions drawn with regard to how to determine organisational effectiveness. From those using judgment frameworks, the implication is that choice of framework may well influence the view of whether or not an organisation is effective. Although statistical difference may not necessarily mean functional difference, this possibility should be tested since we are seeing an increase in the use of judgment tools to aid decision making (e.g., see Chen, 2009) and NPOs are suffering from an increased burden with more and more donors requiring more robust, but different, due diligence and application processes (Bearman, 2008). Overall, this study has shown that Lecy *et al.*'s (2012) conclusions are still valid – there remains no theoretical or practical consensus on how to operationalise NPO effectiveness.

Limitations of this research and next steps

This study arose from the research to identify the determinants of NPO effectiveness conducted in Chapter 4. That study analysed the determinants required in 35 different effectiveness frameworks. It is possible that doing this same exercise with a larger sample size could lead to slightly different results.

Although I have found statistical differences between different frameworks, my methodology or findings do not allow me to examine functional differences. I feel that this would be a useful next step given the burden that the use of these frameworks is placing on NPOs.

6: CHAPTER SIX

**Judging organisational effectiveness in
conservation organisations: Are we asking
the right questions?**

Abstract

Although there is increasing application of organisational effectiveness frameworks within non-profit organisations, the opinions of conservation practitioners regarding the importance of individual effectiveness determinants has never been sought. I address this knowledge gap by using an online survey of conservation practitioners. When all determinants were considered together, these results were not influenced by the size, age, autonomy and area of operation of the conservationists' organisations, but some pairwise differences between large and small/micro organisations were detected in the governance and management dimensions when tested at the dimension level. Comparing ranked lists of effectiveness determinants given by conservationists and those required by organisational effectiveness frameworks used by funders and other interested third parties detected no significant difference between the lists, but the correlation between them was weak, suggesting some key differences. Examples of these differences, and the implications of my results, are discussed.

Introduction

Despite conservation having some successes (e.g., see Hoffmann *et al.*, 2015) and reducing biodiversity loss in many countries (Waldron *et al.*, 2017), pressures on natural resources remain high and biodiversity continues to decline (Butchart *et al.*, 2010). Current conservation efforts are therefore still not mitigating drivers of biodiversity loss (e.g., see Hoffmann *et al.*, 2011). While funding for conservation has increased (e.g., see Miller *et al.*, 2012), spending on biodiversity remains insufficient to deal with the threats to it (McCarthy *et al.*, 2012).

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Although conservationists operate in a world where economic growth is prized and given preference over the preservation of our natural resources (see Chapter 1), it has been proposed that conservationists could do more for less (Sutherland, 2005). There have been calls for more evidence-based approaches (Pullin & Knight, 2003; Sutherland *et al.*, 2004) and empirical evaluations of conservation investments (Ferraro & Pattanayak, 2006). Pullin and Knight (2003) compared conservation to medicine: both are crisis disciplines needing urgent action in the absence of complete information. The medical field has employed systematic evaluation of effectiveness of scientific research and this has seen successes in healthcare interventions. Pullin and Knight (2003) therefore argue that scientific evidence should similarly underpin the allocation of scarce conservation resources. These concerns are starting to be addressed, especially through the publication of synopses of scientific evidence on the effectiveness of conservation interventions of a range of species, including bats (Dicks *et al.*, 2010), birds (Williams *et al.*, 2012), and amphibians (Smith & Sutherland, 2014).

The choice of intervention is an important consideration in determining likely success, but there are others. Unfortunately, some NPOs are corrupt, compromising the chances of their success in achieving positive outcomes for conservation. Igoe and Kelsall (2005) discuss how many groups in Africa see the influx of donor money into the continent merely as a way to make money for themselves. These “briefcase” NPOs, which exist only on paper but do not actually do any work, have become commonplace. In the West, NPOs have been criticised for paying executives too much, being unprofessional, lacking transparency, and engaging in tax scams and questionable investment strategies (see Wixley & Noble, 2014). Some of the worst NPOs devote very low percentages (less than 4%) of donations to aid, award expensive contracts to family

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members and drive the charities into debt (Hundley & Taggart, 2013). In some cases, offenders have even been formally charged for misusing funds (Bartz, 2015). Low pay and reliance on voluntary work in the sector has also meant that business skills required to run an effective organisation can be lacking. Successful interventions need effective organisations to implement them, but not all NPOs are effective. Analysis of charitable donations in the UK suggested that within the charitable sector as a whole, £1.7bn (\$2.7bn) could be reallocated to better-performing charities (Bagwell *et al.*, 2013), but identifying these NPOs is extremely difficult.

Donors increasingly undertake due diligence processes to help them distinguish those NPOs with a greater likelihood of success (Culick *et al.*, 2004; Woodwell, 2010). Although NPO effectiveness is well studied, there is little consensus, either theoretically or empirically, as to what constitutes it and how best to measure it (Chapter 5; Sowa *et al.*, 2004; Lecy *et al.*, 2012). The majority of American NPO leaders define organisational effectiveness in terms of outcome accountability, i.e., keeping their promises to their stakeholders (Mitchell, 2013). But in order to do this, an NPO needs to have certain policies and practices in place. NPO effectiveness is therefore often represented by a set of managerial practices and financial controls (Lecy *et al.*, 2012) deemed to be 'correct' (Herman & Renz, 2008).

Despite the difficulties in determining exactly what is needed for due diligence (Bearman, 2008), there is increased use of frameworks to help guide decisions to support NPOs (Chen, 2009). In Chapter 5, I found considerable variability in the effective determinants (referred to herein as criteria) used to judge NPOs, with some criteria, such as the need for a clear mission being very popular. Unfortunately, there is little empirical research to validate this focus (Lecy *et al.*, 2012). These criteria might not

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always be the most appropriate, and their continued use can also lead to the persistence of standards that are used simply because they are commonplace (Bryman, 2016).

Conservationists are increasingly subjected to due diligence and application processes, but we do not know whether external judgments of effectiveness in conservation organisations correlate with conservationists' opinions of what is important. I aim to address this knowledge gap, thereby bringing the subject of organisational effectiveness closer to the conservation community. Specifically, I aim to:

- Identify which determinants of organisational effectiveness are seen as most important by conservationists;
- Identify whether these opinions are influenced by the size, age, independence and area of operation of the conservationists' organisations; and
- Determine whether these opinions support the criteria currently being used to judge and promote effectiveness.

Methods

An online survey was constructed using the list of criteria identified in Chapter 4 as the starting point. Those criteria were organised into four dimensions:

- Governance – adequate oversight and appropriate legal and regulatory compliance provided by a strong and independent board;
- Finance – availability and appropriate management of financial resources;
- Leadership – clarity over what the organisation is trying to achieve and how it will do so; and

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- Management – effective procedures to manage operational issues, including risk and human resources.

To make the criteria more relevant for a survey, some improvements were made to the list. These included adding or removing criteria or making the existing criteria clearer to conservationists. These changes were made either because of recommendations by due diligence or business management specialists, or because they made the questions more appropriate for Likert-scale questioning. These improvements included:

- Grouping criteria to reduce the number of questions asked. For example, instead of asking seven questions relating to aspects of board structure, a single question about the importance of a well-structured board was asked;
- Expanding some criteria, e.g., the general point of financial literacy raised in Chapter 2 was split into three financial literacy points aimed at different levels within the organisation – board, senior management and employees.
- Excluding criteria if it was clear they were unlikely to ‘make or break’ funding decisions, e.g., document retention and destruction policies.
- Adding in missing criteria, e.g., a mechanism for integrating monitoring and evaluation findings into the organisation's work.

Since it was impossible to generate a complete list of conservationists, I used non-probability sampling (Bryman, 2016) to generate the list of survey invitees. Methods for identifying the conservationists invited to take part in the survey and making contact with them are outlined in Chapter 3. I define conservation as any act with the intention of conserving nature (Game *et al.*, 2013:3) and have adopted (and refined) the definition of a conservationist as set out in the Oxford English Dictionary (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/conservationist>): ‘a person (or

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organisation) who advocates or acts for the protection and preservation of the environment and wildlife.’ I therefore invited individuals, conservation non-governmental organisations and conservation scientists actively working on conservation on the ground, but not state-run national parks, to participate in the survey. The full list of sources used to identify invitees in each location is available in Appendix 2. All email communications and procedures received appropriate research ethics approvals from the University of Oxford. Of the 865 emails sent, 68 were returned as undeliverable. The survey was partially or fully completed by 154 recipients, giving a response rate of 19.4%. Partial completions of the survey were not included in the analysis.

Responses were converted to a relative score for each criterion using the following conversion: Extremely important = 4, Relatively important = 3, Neither important nor unimportant = 2, Relatively unimportant = 1, Not at all important = 0. Any missing responses or those answered as ‘Not sure’ were excluded from the calculation.

In addition to the Likert scale questions, participants were asked to provide basic information about their organisations – annual income (indicative of size), top three areas of operation, how long they had been operating and whether they were independent, part of a larger group or dependent but with autonomy. The Kruskal-Wallis H statistic (Zar, 2010) was used to determine whether relative scores received were influenced by those organisational attributes, both for all criteria taken as a whole and for each dimension.

The 106 criteria identified in Chapter 4 (Frameworks) were mapped to the 99 criteria included in the survey (Practitioners). Any criteria that were not present in both lists were excluded from the analysis. Where necessary, criteria were combined to enable

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direct mapping, e.g., a single criterion for financial literacy in the frameworks versus three in the survey. These final mapped lists can be found in Appendix 7.

The 78 common criteria were ranked from most to least commonly required (Frameworks) and from highest to lowest relative score (Practitioners). Since I expect agreement between those being judged (Practitioners) and those doing the judging (by using effectiveness Frameworks), I would expect the two ranked lists of criteria to be statistically similar to and correlated with each other. To test this, I compared the ranked lists using Spearman's rho rank correlation coefficient (De Vaus, 2002).

Spearman and Kruskal-Wallis analyses were run in R (R Core Team, 2017). Pairwise Kruskal-Wallis comparisons were run using the `pgirmess` package (Giraudoux, 2018).

Results

The breakdown of respondents displaying each organisational attribute suggests a reasonable spread of respondents from different categories within each attribute except for independence, where the vast majority of organisations were independent (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.1). This suggests that there was good representation among all the various sizes, ages and locations of organisations in the survey responses.

The relative scores given to each of the 99 criteria by Practitioners are shown in Table 6.1. Of the 15 highest scoring criteria, six were in the management dimension, and three each in the leadership, governance and finance dimensions. As found in the review of Frameworks (Chapter 4), criteria from all four dimensions were seen as important by Practitioners. Contrary to the findings from the framework review, leadership had the

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lowest average (± 1 standard deviation) relative score (governance = 84.6 ± 5.1 ; finance = 86.4 ± 6.5 ; leadership = 81.3 ± 7.6 ; management = 84.4 ± 5.6).

Table 6.1. Relative scores achieved by each criterion in the survey. The total possible relative score is 100. The 15 highest relative scores are designated with a * followed by the rank for that criterion. Note that two criteria are tied in 10th place.

Criterion	Relative score
<i>Governance</i>	
A strong and effective working relationship between the board and the senior management	89.5* ¹⁵
A well-functioning board of trustees	88.0
Trustees that are clear on their roles and responsibilities	86.8
Trustees that are clear on the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team	86.1
A mechanism for evaluating the performance of the board	75.0
Appropriate training and development for trustees	71.3
A board that is well structured (i.e., right size, relevant skills and experience, diverse backgrounds, term limits, use of subcommittees)	84.9
Trustees that are committed to your organisation (i.e., willing and able to give time to it and who buy in to its mission and purpose)	92.0* ⁵
Regular trustee meetings (at least two per year)	85.1
Good attendance at and involvement in trustee meetings	86.4
Trustees that are independent (i.e., not paid, remunerated, employed or directly related to anyone employed by your organisation)	83.3
A mechanism for evaluating the performance of senior management	84.2
A mechanism for holding senior management accountable for your organisation's performance	86.2
Appropriate training and development for senior management	84.8
A mechanism to ensure compliance with all relevant laws and regulations	88.8
A conflict of interest policy and procedure	83.8
	<i>Cont.</i>

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Criterion	Relative score
A whistleblowing policy and procedure	78.8
 Finance	
Diverse and/or stable income sources	95.7* ²
Income generating activities (e.g., sales of good or services, charging volunteers to get involved, etc.)	67.5
Adequate fundraising resources (i.e., professional fundraisers, time and skills for grant and proposal writing, etc.)	84.6
A mechanism for maintaining good relationships with funders (e.g., reporting to them, answering their questions, etc.)	90.9* ⁹
A stable reserve of funds to cover expenses for a few months in the case of a financial emergency	89.9* ¹⁴
Financial literacy within operational teams (i.e., a basic understanding of financial considerations)	83.9
Financial literacy within the senior management team	93.0
Financial literacy within the board	88.9
An external financial audit	87.8
Integration of financial information into operational decision-making	87.7
A suitable budgeting process	89.3
A suitable cash flow management process	89.3
Prioritisation of programme/field expenditure over spending on overheads, infrastructure and head office functions	82.0
Prioritisation of programme/field expenditure over fund raising costs	80.0
Robust internal controls that help to prevent and detect fraud, theft and error	89.3
Careful management of debt	83.3
 Leadership	
A transparent and/or consultative decision-making process	86.9
Effective teamwork within the organisation	96.2* ¹
A strong, skilled and committed leadership team	95.3* ³
	<i>Cont.</i>

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Criterion	Relative score
A clear, written mission statement	77.1
A written vision	73.9
A common set of values and beliefs within your organisation	84.0
All employees, managers and board members being clear about your organisation's mission and purpose	90.4* ¹³
Ensuring that all programmes are aligned to your organisation's mission and strategy	85.1
Ensuring that all decisions place the mission at the heart of all operations	84.7
Refusing funds or activities that will force your organisation to deviate from its mission	76.9
A written, updated strategic plan	75.6
A written and well-articulated logic model or theory of change	66.5
A mechanism for ensuring that any written plans underpin decisions made and activities conducted	70.5
Clarity about HOW the organisation is going to achieve its goals	86.4
Undertaking a needs assessment prior to beginning any new programmes or activities	76.3
A procedure to ensure that internal threats and opportunities are identified and acted on (e.g., loss of key staff, lack of capacity, etc.)	80.0
A procedure to ensure that external threats and opportunities are identified and acted on (e.g., physical danger to staff, external conflict, availability of funding or resources, etc.)	80.6
Exit strategies for all projects and programmes	72.9
Clear and realistic goals and targets	90.5* ¹²
Monitoring progress against planned goals and targets	85.9
Monitoring inputs (e.g., number of people, amount of money spent, etc.)	81.2
Monitoring outputs (e.g., number of workshops held, number of people trained, etc.)	78.5
Feeding results of employee appraisals into organisational monitoring and evaluation	65.0
	<i>Cont.</i>

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Criterion	Relative score
Monitoring outcomes and impacts (e.g., reduction in charcoal burning, less habitat encroachment, etc.)	86.8
Long-term monitoring of impact	87.9
Adaptive management	88.6
A mechanism for reviewing and amending any strategic plans/theories of change in light of lessons learned and new information gained	77.7
A mechanism for integrating measurement, monitoring and evaluation findings into your organisation's work	81.3
Using a balanced scorecard/dashboard style performance measurement system	60.6
Ability to scale up successful interventions and actions	79.4
A mechanism to enable your organisation to learn from its previous experience	84.9
A system for gathering feedback from relevant stakeholders (e.g., communities you interact with, governments where you operate, etc.)	81.7
A mechanism for undertaking research and data collection	79.2
An openness to discussing things that didn't work as planned and why	89.0
Willingness and ability to innovate	88.8
Willingness to collaborate with others where this will provide better results than acting alone	91.7* ⁶
 Management	
Effective communication throughout the organisation	95.0* ⁴
Relationships that are dictated mainly by organisational needs rather than hierarchy or politics	82.5
Management skills training for anyone responsible for supervising employees or volunteers	80.0
Clear operating rules and procedures for all employees	86.2
Efficient working procedures within your organisation	83.8
A system to identify and manage strategic and operational risks to the organisation	82.3
Appropriate health and safety management procedures	80.7
	Cont.

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Criterion	Relative score
Appropriate insurances in place (e.g., for loss of life, damage to property, etc.)	84.9
A mechanism to ensure that your organisation's reputation remains intact	85.5
A formal operational plan	77.9
Sufficient capacity and other necessary resources to enable the organisation to deliver on its goals	90.7* ¹⁰
Adequate IT systems	85.2
Appropriate personnel policies (e.g., contracts of employment, means for setting and reviewing pay, etc.)	84.8
A mechanism to ensure that employees are clear on their roles and responsibilities	87.9
Clear lines of management and reporting for all employees	85.4
Appropriate skills, experience and/or qualifications within the organisation	90.7* ¹⁰
A diverse workforce (in terms of gender, religion, race, ethnicity, etc.)	74.0
Clear recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers	75.4
A performance review process for all employees	85.1
Appropriate training and development opportunities for all employees	82.9
Low employee turnover	78.8
The use of volunteers where this is appropriate	79.3
A mechanism to ensure that volunteers are clear about their roles and responsibilities	83.0
Appropriate support and supervision for volunteers	84.0
Succession planning for all key posts	79.0
Business continuity and/or disaster recovery plans	77.0
Effective external communication	91.0* ⁸
Effective stakeholder engagement (where needed and appropriate)	91.5* ⁷
Being responsive to stakeholders	88.6

Results of the Kruskal-Wallis analyses (Table 6.2) showed that relative scores given by Practitioners when tested at the whole framework level (i.e., all criteria together) were not significantly influenced by any of the organisational attributes measured. After

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application of a Bonferroni correction to reduce the increased risk of a false positive that undertaking multiple comparisons causes (Bryman & Cramer, 2011), the cut off point for significance of pairwise comparisons was reduced from 0.05 to 0.0125. These comparisons (Table 6.3) showed that there were differences between large and small/micro organisation in the management and governance dimensions. There were no significant pairwise comparisons in the leadership or finance dimensions.

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Table 6.2. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis analysis combining all dimensions and all organisational attributes. All data includes criteria from all four dimensions tested together. Significant *p*-values are shown in bold and with an *.

Dimension	Attribute	Degrees of		
		Freedom	H Value	<i>p</i> -value
All data	Continent of operation	6	3.455	0.750
	Age	4	1.727	0.786
	Autonomy	2	2.496	0.287
	Size	4	1.971	0.741
Finance	Continent of operation	6	6.543	0.365
	Age	4	1.593	0.810
	Autonomy	2	1.948	0.378
	Size	4	11.614	0.020
Governance	Continent of operation	6	5.236	0.514
	Age	4	4.873	0.301
	Autonomy	2	2.453	0.297
	Size	4	19.825	0.001*
Leadership	Continent of operation	6	3.047	0.803
	Age	4	0.758	0.944
	Autonomy	2	3.476	0.176
	Size	4	8.236	0.083
Management	Continent of operation	4	2.435	0.656
	Age	6	5.937	0.430
	Autonomy	2	2.931	0.231
	Size	4	13.43	0.009*

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Table 6.3. Pairwise comparisons run on size in the governance and management dimensions. Obs.diff depicts the observed difference and crit.diff shows the critical difference. Statistical differences are shown in bold.

Dimension	Pair	obs.diff	crit.diff	Difference
Governance	large-major	14.92	36.84	FALSE
	large-medium	15.98	24.37	FALSE
	large-micro	47.39	33.50	TRUE
	large-small	29.96	25.84	TRUE
	major-medium	1.06	35.67	FALSE
	major-micro	32.48	42.43	FALSE
	major-small	15.05	36.69	FALSE
	medium-micro	31.41	32.21	FALSE
	medium-small	13.98	24.14	FALSE
	micro-small	17.43	33.33	FALSE
Management	large-major	14.98	37.11	FALSE
	large-medium	11.56	23.71	FALSE
	large-micro	34.19	33.35	TRUE
	large-small	27.40	25.21	TRUE
	major-medium	3.42	36.11	FALSE
	major-micro	19.21	43.06	FALSE
	major-small	12.42	37.11	FALSE
	medium-micro	22.63	32.23	FALSE
	medium-small	15.84	23.71	FALSE
	micro-small	6.79	33.35	FALSE

When the mapped and ranked lists of criteria as identified by Frameworks and Practitioners were compared to each other, Spearman's rho was significant ($S = 53,637$; $p = 0.004$) but the correlation weak ($\rho = 0.322$). The significant result suggests that the lists are similar. A qualitative comparison of the two lists shows that five of the top 15 criteria were valued highly by both Frameworks and Practitioners (Table 6.4). The two lists also shared four of the least commonly required criteria (Table 6.5). There were, however, some notable disagreements, which may have contributed to the weak

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correlation. While *vision*, *mission* and *strategy* were all within the most commonly required criteria required by Frameworks, they were all among the lowest scoring criteria according to Practitioners. Similarly, while *teamwork* was one of the least popular criteria according to the Frameworks, Practitioners gave it the highest relative score.

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Table 6.4. Comparison of the bottom 16 criteria as identified by the number (No) of Frameworks including each criterion and the relative score (RS) awarded by Practitioners in the survey. Criteria present in both lists are in bold and denoted by *. Criteria present in this list and in the opposing list in Table 6.5 are in italics and denoted by ^.

Top criteria per Frameworks	No	Top criteria per Practitioners	RS
<i>Organisation has a mission statement</i> [^]	31	<i>Effective teamwork within the organisation</i> [^]	96.2
Progress against plans is monitored	31	Diverse and/or stable income sources*	95.7
<i>Strategic plan</i>	25	A strong, skilled and committed leadership team	95.3
Clear, realistic goals/targets*	25	Effective communication throughout the organisation	95.0
Sound budgeting and cash flow forecasting processes	24	Trustees that are committed to your organisation (i.e., willing and able to give time to it and those who buy in to its mission and purpose)	92.0
Robust systems and controls protect against fraud, theft and error	24	Willingness to collaborate with others where this will provide better results than acting alone*	91.7
Impact/outcomes of work are monitored	24	Effective stakeholder engagement (where needed and appropriate)	91.5
Income sources are diverse and stable*	23	Effective external communication*	91.0
Financial statements audited	23	A mechanism for maintaining good relationships with funders (e.g., reporting to them, answering their questions, etc.)	90.9
Complete annual financial reports prepared	22	Sufficient capacity/other necessary resources to enable delivery on goals	90.7
<i>Organisation has a vision</i> [^]	22	Appropriate skills, experience and/or qualifications within the organisation	90.7

Cont.

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Top criteria per Frameworks	No	Top criteria per Practitioners	RS
The organisation networks and collaborates with others as appropriate*	22	Clear and realistic goals and targets*	90.5
Board members understand their roles and responsibilities	20	All employees, managers and board members being clear about your organisation's mission and purpose	90.4
Adequate reserves policy enabling cash flow management*	20	A stable reserve of funds to cover expenses for a few months in the case of a financial emergency*	89.9
Engages in effective external communications*	20	A strong and effective working relationship between the board and the senior management	89.5

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Table 6.5. Comparison of the top 16 criteria as identified by the number (No) of Frameworks including each criterion and the relative score (RS) awarded by Practitioners in the survey. Criteria present in both lists are in bold and denoted by *. Criteria present in this list and in the opposing list in Table 6.4 are in italics and denoted by ^.

Bottom criteria per Frameworks	No	Bottom criteria per Practitioners	RS
Continuity/disaster recovery plans in place*	5	Low employee turnover	78.8
Comprehensive, integrated system (e.g., balanced scorecard) used*	5	A whistleblowing policy and procedure	78.8
Continual assessment of gaps in ability of programmes to meet assessed needs	5	A formal operational plan	77.9
<i>Teamwork is promoted within the organisation^</i>	5	<i>A clear, written mission statement^</i>	77.1
Debt levels are carefully managed	5	Business continuity and/or disaster recovery plans*	77.0
Internal code of conduct/ethics policy	5	Refusing funds or activities that will force your organisation to deviate from its mission	76.9
Appropriate mechanisms for data and privacy protection	5	Undertaking a needs assessment prior to beginning any new programmes or activities	76.3
Names of officers and board members available/published	5	<i>A written, updated strategic plan^</i>	75.6
Appropriate training and development for trustees	5	Clear recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers	75.4
Organisation acts with respect to the environment	4	A mechanism for evaluating board performance	75.0
			<i>Cont.</i>

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Bottom criteria per Frameworks	No	Bottom criteria per Practitioners	RS
Exit strategies are set out*	4	A diverse workforce (in terms of gender, religion, race, ethnicity, etc.)*	74.0
Financial resources available to enable strategic planning	4	<i>A written vision^</i>	73.9
Procedure for handling urgent matters between scheduled meetings	4	Exit strategies for all projects and programmes*	72.9
Employees/managers drawn from diverse backgrounds*	3	Appropriate training and development for trustees	71.3
Intellectual property is effectively managed	2	Income generating activities (e.g., sales of good or services, charging volunteers to get involved, etc.)	67.5
Staggered term process for board members	2	Using a balanced scorecard/dashboard style performance measurement system*	60.6

Discussion

My results show that overall, size, age, autonomy and continent of operation did not influence the relative scores given by practitioners. I found this result surprising as, at the very least, I expected size to influence responses. Typically, smaller organisations can show more flexibility in adapting to change (Gunasekarana, *et al.*, 2011), so at least some variation in responses related to size was expected. I was also concerned that the large variability observed in the various frameworks (Chapter 4) could mask possible relationships at a finer scale. Because of this, I chose to ignore statistical convention, which states that a test should first be done at the overall level, with tests only done at the dimension level if the overall result is significant (Whitlock & Schluter, 2008). When I conducted pairwise comparisons, I did indeed see that size influenced responses, but only in the governance and management dimensions.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the leadership and finance dimensions are more mature than governance and management dimensions. I explain there that NPOs have always needed to be clear on what they are trying to do (leadership) and how they will pay for that (finance), but that legal governance requirements have only really come to the fore more recently (e.g., see House of Lords, 2017) and NPO management is still undergoing transition, with acknowledgement growing that more business-like approaches are needed in NPOs (see Maier *et al.*, 2016). While larger NPOs have the capacity to implement sound governance and management criteria, smaller organisations often do not. Saxton and Linström (2012) explain that small organisations, which are more dependent on grant-making income, find it hardest to access the core funds necessary for NPOs to address governance and management needs. Furthermore, since grant makers have a desire to be strategic and measure impact (Bearman, 2008), grant

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applications and reporting tends to focus more on leadership (what the organisation plans to do) and finance than on how the organisation is managed or governed. Finally, smaller organisations need less formal systems for management. Compare, for example, the Human Resources system, complete with policies and procedures, required for an organisation with three employees to that required for an organisation with 300 employees. Similarly, the larger an organisation is, or the more complex or diverse its activities are, the more difficult it is for them to identify major risks and put proper systems in place to manage them (Charity Commission, 2010). Risk management is therefore more complicated and more important in larger organisations. I therefore find it is unsurprising that smaller organisations attach less importance to governance and management.

Other than the influence of size in the governance and management dimensions, the Likert responses chosen by survey respondents were not influenced by any of the other organisational attributes measured, suggesting that there is a fairly consistent view among Practitioners about what the most important criteria are. I therefore focus the remainder of the discussion on the overall differences between the views of Frameworks and Practitioners.

The survey results show that, as in Framework review (Chapter 4), Practitioners consider criteria from all four dimensions to be important in effective NPOs. The results of the Spearman's rho correlation suggested general agreement between Frameworks and Practitioners in the ranking of the criteria required in an effective organisation.

There was agreement between the two groups on the importance of some criteria: clear, realistic goals and targets, diverse and stable income sources, adequate financial reserves, effective external communications and appropriate networking and

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collaboration were all among the most commonly required or highly rated criteria by Frameworks and Practitioners, respectively. NPO performance measurement is increasingly seen as crucial to achieving impact (Lynch-Curello & Cooney, 2011), and various studies have found that setting clear goals positively contributes to organisational performance (e.g., Siciliano, 1997 and Edwards, 1999). To achieve these goals, NPOs need sufficient money to fund their work. Financial stability in NPOs is enhanced when funding is obtained from multiple sources (Carol & Stater, 2009) and when there are sufficient financial reserves to allow imbalances between income and expenses to be smoothed out, thereby enabling the NPO to continue goal delivery in the presence of fiscal shocks (Calabrese, 2013). Reputation, which is at the heart of organisational survival (Busuio & Lodge, 2017), can impact an NPO's ability to attract funding (Omona & Mukuye, 2012). Accurate external communication programs are required to manage this reputation (Starstedt & Schloderer, 2010). Judgments about organisational effectiveness depend on stakeholder subjectivity (Mitchell, 2016), and that subjectivity will be affected by what information is communicated to stakeholders by the NPO. Finally, in a study of American NPO leaders, Mitchell (2016) identified being collaborative as one of the attributes that leaders regarded as particularly effective in their peers.

Likewise, there was agreement between the two ranked lists about some of the least important criteria: employee diversity, scaling up of initiatives, and the use of balanced scorecards (i.e., looking at more than just financial information), disaster recovery plans and exit strategies were among the least commonly required or lowest rated criteria by Frameworks and Practitioners. While these criteria may be important in effective for-profit companies, this importance has not been translated into the non-profit sector.

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For example, a valuable tool within the for-profit sector is the balanced scorecard, management system that focuses on strategic goals and helps identify what should be measured to reach those goals (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). But I found its use rarely mentioned in the non-profit literature and infrequently included in NPO effectiveness frameworks. The importance of other criteria has been identified in the non-profit sector. For example, risk management guidance published by the United Kingdom's Charity Commission (2010) highlights that disaster recovery planning should form part of an effective risk management process for an NPO. However, my results suggest that this has yet to be translated into practice by practitioners, hardly surprising given the perpetuating misconceptions within NPO leaders about what risk management is and its importance (Herman, 2010).

Since the results were significant, the lists correlate, suggesting similar ranking. However, the correlation was not strong, suggesting variation/differences in at least some areas. Qualitative examination of lists revealed some items worthy of discussion. Some criteria appeared at the top of one ranked list and the bottom of the other. I shall now discuss one example of each.

A clear mission statement was one of the most commonly required criteria in the Framework review, but one of the lowest scoring criteria in the Practitioner survey. The presence of a mission statement has become widely accepted as vital in the non-profit sector because NPOs exist to fulfil their missions (Connolly, 2006): you have to know what your mission is in order to determine whether or not you are achieving your objectives (Starr, 2012). Although there is a strong logical argument for having a clear mission, the empirical evidence linking its presence to effectiveness is somewhat less convincing. Some studies have shown that a clear mission is key for enhanced NPO

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effectiveness. Edwards (1999) found that clarity in long-term direction and a determination not to be distracted along the way were key success factors in social development NPOs in India/Bangladesh. Jepson and Canney (2003) found that a compelling mission, combined with sufficient capacity, was central to effective conservation of elephants in Africa. Looking at success factors in Indian NPOs, Sridhar and Nagabhushanam (2008) found a perception that more specialised organisations – those with a focused objective – are more successful. But not all studies have come to these same conclusions. Kirk and Nolan (2010) were concerned about the almost ubiquitous use of mission statements, and the collective confidence in them, with little attention paid to their actual link with performance. They reviewed the literature and found very mixed results. While some authors pointed towards the importance of having a mission for the purposes of both performance (Crott *et al.*, 2005) and perceived performance (Bart & Hupfer, 2004), others found only limited evidence to support the link (Weiss & Piderit, 1999). Kirk and Nolan (2010) themselves investigated the link in women’s rights NPOs and found only limited evidence to support a relationship. As well as evidence for a direct link between mission and performance being weak, there is also often a mismatch between the mission statements of many NPOs and their achievements: ending homelessness, stopping cruelty to children and curing Alzheimer’s are all way too ambitious for any one organisation to achieve (Sloan, 2013). Yet the requirement for a clear mission statement persists in the literature and practice around “effective” organisations.

Although survey responses ranked the presence of a clear mission statement amongst the bottom criteria, they did rank clarity of mission and purpose within the organisation as one of the most important. This suggests that more important than just

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having a mission is the need for it to be embedded within the organisation, underpinning what the organisation does. Unless it is operationalised by ensuring that everyone within the organisation, regardless of their level of seniority, understands what the mission is and how their individual work helps to drive the organisation towards it, a mission can merely become a tool to attract funding rather than a core to guide the organisation.

One of the criteria least commonly required by the Frameworks was teamwork, despite an increasing empirical evidence base linking it to organisational performance. Delarue *et al.* (2008) scrutinised the literature examining links between team working and performance, focusing on studies that captured both in a quantitative way. Their results showed that team working had a positive impact on performance. Richter *et al.* (2011) examined the theoretical and empirical literature of the 1970s and 1980s. They found empirical research linking teamwork positively to organisational effectiveness through both performance outcomes and staff attitudes. A recent study on the health sector in Turkey also found a positive linear relationship between teamwork and organisational performance variables (Zincirkiran *et al.*, 2015).

Strong teamwork has been found to be important not only within employees of organisations, but also among board members. Comparing board practices of failed corporations (like Enron and WorldCom) to those considered best practice, Sonnenfeld (2002) found that the most significant difference between the two was the degree to which the board performed as a high-functioning work group, where openness, trust and candour prevailed. Detailed research on the UK's top 500 charities also found that two of the strongest behavioural drivers of effective governance were board members working well as a team and members operating in an atmosphere of openness,

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confidence and mutual trust (see Hudson, 2012). These findings suggest that the exclusion of teamwork from a list of organisational effectiveness criteria, both at staff and board levels, may represent a significant oversight. The results presented here show that survey respondents agree with this: they gave teamwork the highest relative score out of all of the criteria presented to them.

Comparing the top and bottom criteria in both the Practitioners and Frameworks lists (Tables 6.3 and 6.4), we see that all five criteria ranked highly by both could be considered 'hard' indicators. Ijiri (1975) defines a hard measure as one constructed such that it is difficult for people to disagree, while a soft measure is one that is more subjective and can be pushed in one or other direction (Sabac & Tian, 2015). The ten remaining top criteria as required by only the Frameworks are also all hard indicators. Top criteria identified by Practitioners, however, included a mixture of hard and soft indicators.

Given the subjectivity of soft indicators, these are inherently more difficult to measure, particularly for an outsider not embedded in an organisation. It is much easier to identify whether an NPO has appointed an Executive Director (hard indicator) than to identify whether that leader is strong, skilled and committed (soft indicators). There are concerns that soft information can increase the risk of misreporting and call into question the credibility of hard information (Bertomeu & Marinovic, 2016).

Because hard indicators (e.g., written mission statement) are easier to measure and offer less scope for debate, they are often used as proxies for soft indicators (e.g., mission-driven organisation) in due diligence and evaluation processes. But these indicators do not always give a complete picture of an organisation, and they are often not reliable. Having a mission statement does not automatically make an NPO mission-

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driven, particularly in the non-profit sector where unreliable income can promote mission creep (Major, 2011). Herman and Renz (2004) similarly found that merely following best practice indicators did not automatically lead to increased effectiveness. And Kirk and Nolan's (2010) mission statement work led them to suggest that what may be more important than having a focussed mission statement is actually just the perception of having one. A due diligence process might conclude that an organisation with a clear mission and goals, and a detailed strategic plan is more likely to deliver on its stated aims, but without consideration of soft indicators it may fail to identify that those 'vital' documents do not underpin what the organisation does because the leader of that organisation instead chases funding not aligned to that mission in order to stay in business. Although still in its infancy, there is a growing recognition that soft indicators can help in determining whether impact has been achieved (e.g., see Gardner *et al.*, 2008).

Conclusions

Overall, the results of this paper suggest that there may be concerns over the continued use of criteria that have to date been based only on presumed importance. The results of Kruskal-Wallis test suggest that relative scores awarded were generally not influenced by the age, size, autonomy or continent of operation of an organisation, though I did see an impact of size on responses given in the governance and management dimensions. This suggests that there is relative agreement within the conservation community as a whole about the importance of various determinants of effectiveness.

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The comparison of important criteria as judged by Frameworks and Practitioners suggests that although the two ranked lists of criteria are not statistically different, correlation between them is weak. I found that the differences between the lists related mostly to Practitioners showing a preference for soft, more qualitative indicators while Frameworks preferred the use of harder quantitative indicators. But while hard indicators are easier to measure, they do not necessarily provide a complete picture of what is really happening inside an organisation. I suggest that more work is needed to identify soft indicators for the assessment of conservation organisations and determining how best to measure them. As such, I propose that more work needs to be done in identifying and validating the assumed importance of the criteria used to make judgements about organisational effectiveness.

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Conclusions

Introduction

“Due diligence, when done well, can help ensure greater alignment between a grant-maker’s mission and grant-making. It also helps ensure that a grant-maker understands and can manage the risks associated with various grants, and that it is working with nonprofit organisations that have a clear likelihood of successfully achieving their goals” (Woodwell, 2010:3).

This thesis set out to examine what could stand in the way of more effective conservation practice: what barriers or risks to success might prevent a conservationist from achieving its goals. There are significant threats to our natural resources presented by the overarching model of constant economic growth (Brüsher & Arsel, 2012; Chapter 1) that, if left unchecked will continue to thwart the efforts of all conservationists. But there are also behaviours and activity more locally that can influence the success of conservation. The inappropriate choice of intervention by conservationists is one definite contributor (e.g., see Williams *et al.*, 2012 and Smith & Sutherland, 2014), but there are many other barriers that might inhibit success. Rather than starting with existing ideas about barriers, which I felt might influence my thinking from the start, I chose to follow an inductive approach (Bryman, 2016) and start with a blank canvas on which opinions gathered could be painted. Specifically, this thesis examines the following key questions:

- What are barriers to progress or success in conservation as perceived by conservation practitioners?

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- What external barriers to success do conservation practitioners feel are important when trying to understand the context in which conservation work is undertaken?
- What internal barriers to success, in the form of deficiencies in NPO effectiveness criteria, should be considered when trying to identify an effective conservation NPO?

Next I will summarise the purpose and findings of each data chapter, outlining the contributions each makes to knowledge and practice.

Chapter summaries and contributions

There are seven chapters in this thesis, touching on the topics of conservation, operating context and NPO effectiveness. Figure 7.1 shows how the various chapters relate to each other and the work as a whole.

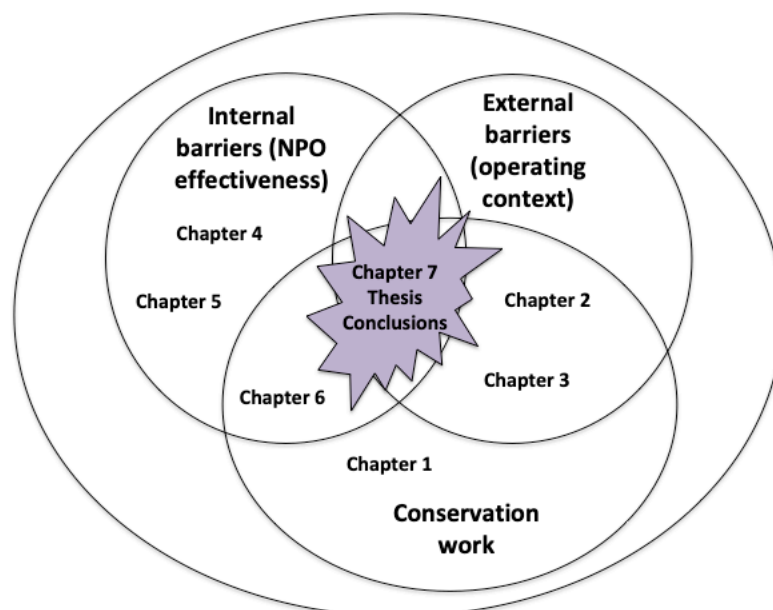


Figure 7.1: Schematic showing the various chapters in this thesis relate to internal and external barriers to conservation work and to the work itself.

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Chapter 1 sets the scene for this thesis. It explains that there are many threats to conservation that are increasing in number and severity (Butchart *et al.*, 2010) and an increasing number of conservationists working to address those (Scholfield, 2013). While the efforts of conservationists are having some positive effects (Hoffmann *et al.*, 2015; Waldron *et al.*, 2017), biodiversity continues to diminish, with wildlife populations declining by 60% since 1970 (WWF, 2018). There are many overarching geopolitical influences, such as the capitalist model and desire for continuous economic growth (e.g., see Brüsher & Arsel, 2010), that contribute significantly to the destruction of our natural resources. Without these, conservation would undoubtedly be better placed to protect those resources. However, there are also barriers to success present both in the local operating environment and within conservation organisations themselves that can be better managed to improve the success of the conservation work that is undertaken. Identifying what some of these barriers are is a useful first step in designing both a risk management process that conservationists can use as a starting point for identifying risks and barriers to their organisations and operations, and a due diligence process that funders can use to help them identify conservationists more likely to achieve their stated aims.

There have been no previous attempts to consolidate the individual challenges that conservationists face in their work, e.g., human population growth (Brundtland, 2014), inadequate funding (McCarthy *et al.*, 2012), poor leadership (Black *et al.*, 2011), and so on. Chapter 2 addresses this shortfall. While there are various ways such a consolidation could have been done, I chose to use in-depth interviews with conservation practitioners since they are the people who brave these barriers in their work every day. In this research I identified a wide range of barriers and arranged them into a typology.

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The three overarching categories (internal, operational and external) indicate the origin of challenges. Internal ones are within a conservation organisation's control and external ones are outside of the control of the conservation community entirely. This chapter sees the first clear identification of operational issues, those outside the control of individual conservation organisations, but within the control of the conservation community, which comprises both conservationists and their funders. This is an important finding because, for the first time, it highlights the impact that the current funding model is having in conservation. This impact has been recognised within the fields of non-profit management (e.g., Leczy & Searing, 2015) and philanthropy (Bearman, 2008), but has not yet been adequately included in discussions about why the field of conservation might seemingly not be as impactful as it could be.

This chapter contributes to knowledge by providing the first synthesis of internal and external barriers to conservation as perceived by conservationists, and by bringing attention within the conservation community to the impact of operational issues on conservation success. It contributes to practice by providing the basis for a working framework useful to both conservationists as a guide to identification and management of risk, and to funders of conservation, who might want to consider the internal and external challenges faced by conservationists as part of their due diligence and assessment procedures. Both parties would benefit from having expectations of achievement managed by considering the elements of this framework in their management and assessment processes.

Having a typology of challenges to conservation is very useful. It consolidates all challenges perceived by conservationists into a single place, assisting them and their donors in identifying possible risks to success. But the sheer number of challenges

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identified in Chapter 2 could deter people from trying to think about risks to success. In Chapter 3, I examine whether the typology can be simplified to create a more parsimonious and globally relevant risk framework for understanding the operating context for conservation. Since the typology in Chapter 2 was derived using feedback from a predominantly African-based population of conservationists, I used a Likert-scale survey to expand the study to consider a wider sample of conservationists, thereby providing a more global perspective. Principal component analysis (PCA) and linear discriminant analysis (LDA) showed that understanding of external operating context could be derived using only 21 of the challenges.

This chapter contributes to knowledge by identifying which external challenges my sample of conservationists think are most important when trying to understand the external operating context of a conservation organisation. It also shows that those challenges do differ depending on the size of the organisation and where it operates. This work contributes to practice by providing conservationists (and their funders) with a list of 21 key challenges that could impact on conservation outcomes. This list could form the basis of a risk management process in conservation organisations and can inform funders of potential pitfalls in the plans of the organisations they choose to support.

While the first chapter looked at identifying all barriers perceived by conservationists, and the second considered the external ones, the next three chapters of this thesis focus on internal challenges, which essentially result from some kind of deficiency or shortfall within an organisation.

While there is no standardised measure of NPO effectiveness (Despard, 2017), many studies have tried to identify what the determinants (criteria) of effective NPOs are

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(Forbes, 1998; Herman & Renz, 2004; Liket & Maas, 2015). Despite the lack of empirical evidence supporting individual determinants (Lecy *et al*, 2012), we are seeing increased use of effectiveness frameworks comprising various criteria in practice (e.g. Chen 2009). What is missing from the literature is empirical examination of which determinants are being used in the operationalisation of NPO effectiveness in practice. Chapter 4 addresses this shortfall by using 35 NPO effectiveness frameworks to develop a typology of NPO effectiveness. This revealed four overarching dimensions of organisational effectiveness: governance, finance, leadership and management.

This chapter contributes to knowledge by providing the first synthesis of criteria used in practice to promote NPO effectiveness. It also examines the theoretical reasons underpinning use of the most prevalent determinants. I found that there is agreement on the importance of four effectiveness dimensions. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, it rebukes the popular view that donors are still relying on unidimensional measures of effectiveness based around financial ratios (see Lecy *et al.*, 2012). Secondly, it shows that there is more inclusion of criteria from the two more mature dimensions (leadership and finance), but somewhat less inclusion of criteria from the two more emerging dimensions (governance and management). This suggests there is still some way to go in due diligence processes to ensure that all components of an effective organisation are adequately assessed during the process.

Chapter 5 examines whether effectiveness frameworks used to guide an NPO towards increased effectiveness are different in their composition to those used by an outsider to judge that effectiveness. It also considers the criteria included in three seminal academic papers. Statistical analyses revealed that there were differences between the two groups of frameworks examined, and between academic papers and

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guidance frameworks. Statistically different structures between the various frameworks, and greater variability in composition among academic studies and guidance frameworks than judgement frameworks were also observed.

This chapter contributes to knowledge by offering the first comparison of frameworks designed for different purposes. Its findings highlight the risk that organisations use one set of criteria to help them become more effective while actually being judged by a different set. In order to increase the chance of successfully competing with other NPOs, or standing out from them, NPOs may choose to focus their limited time and attention on those criteria that look good to donors rather than to those that increase the NPOs' likelihood of enhanced success. This is particularly problematic with application processes becoming increasingly burdensome for NPOs (see Bearman, 2008 and Brock *et al.*, 2012). This chapter also calls into question the variability in criteria deemed to be important by various academic studies. While statistical difference does not necessarily imply functional difference, this chapter introduces the risk that differences in study design could be leading to very different conclusions about the ideal combination of NPO effectiveness determinants.

Although there is increasing application of organisational effectiveness frameworks within NPOs (see Chen, 2009), both by the NPOs themselves and by those judging them (e.g., BirdLife, 2008), the opinions of conservation practitioners regarding the importance of individual effectiveness criteria has never been sought. This knowledge gap is addressed in Chapter 6, where the ranked list of effectiveness determinants as rated by conservationists was compared to the ranked list of determinants as identified by the numbers of frameworks requiring their inclusion. No significant difference between the lists was observed, but the correlation between them was weak,

suggesting that there are differences. Qualitative comparison showed that although the two lists shared five of the most and four of the least popular criteria, four items were among the most popular in one list but among the least popular in the other.

This chapter contributes to knowledge by capturing the views of conservationists regarding what an effective organisation looks like. Results highlight that conservationists agree with the view in the NPO management literature that criteria from all four effectiveness dimensions are important. However, they also show that conservationists place more importance on criteria associated with the management of an organisation than with its leadership. This is contrary to the current operationalisation of NPO effectiveness. This chapter provides the first clear evidence for this divergence in opinion, and this is something that should be investigated further if we want the concept of NPO effectiveness to be more practically useful, not just in the field of conservation, but for non-profit management and the processes underpinning the due diligence of NPOs.

Addressing the research questions

Overall, the work supporting this thesis was undertaken in an attempt to identify what funders should include in a due diligence process. While I was not able to answer this question within the time and resource constraints of undertaking a D.Phil., I did uncover some novel and important thoughts that can add to that development process. In general, I found that:

- Conservationists face many barriers to success, and these can originate both inside and outside of their organisations.

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- The context for conservation is complex and is influenced by the size of an organisation and where it operates.
- There is no 'one size fits all' answer to what challenges are important, but there is a reduced number of 21 barriers that can be used as a proxy to understand the barriers faced by conservationists.
- Organisational effectiveness is complicated, and there is still no agreement on what criteria will indicate the most effective conservation organisations.
- There is agreement, both by conservationists and within the fields of NPO management and effectiveness, that there are four dimensions of an effective organisation: governance, finance, leadership and management.
- Frameworks used to judge NPOs are structurally different to those used to guide NPO effectiveness.
- There are structural differences between the lists of criteria used by frameworks to guide effectiveness and those suggested by academic studies. Indeed, the lists of criteria generated by the three academic studies are also structurally different to each other.
- There are different opinions regarding which criteria most adequately reflect an effective organisation.

In addition to the above findings, which relate directly to my original research questions, the results in this thesis also highlight a third category of barriers that relate primarily to how the conservation community currently operates. Funding was given as a key barrier both by interviewees and survey respondents, and how that funding was allocated was heavily criticised by interviewees, and rated highly by survey respondents.

Overall observations and broader implications

This thesis helps to enhance our understanding of the internal and external challenges that conservationists face, prioritisation of the external challenges perceived by conservationists, the operationalisation of organisational effectiveness, the views of conservationists regarding organisational effectiveness, and the impact that organisational attributes have on their views regarding internal and external challenges. In conducting this work, I was also able to see some of the impacts that the current funding model is having on conservation. In this section, I discuss my overall observations noted in conducting this work, driven primarily by information gained during my interviews and the review of the frameworks, but supported by the literature. I also consider the broader implications of the work.

Challenges to conservation are vast and often unacknowledged

The interviews and survey results presented in this thesis show that conservationists face a wide range of barriers to success. While there is general agreement on what the challenges are, their significance differs depending on where conservation work is being undertaken. Some challenges are manageable: for example, a lack of awareness of why an issue is important to a local community can be addressed through effective stakeholder engagement. Others seem insurmountable to practitioners – there seems to be little one organisation can do about global consumption or political and business decisions that adversely impact biodiversity regardless of what conservation actions are undertaken. While my interviewees did raise geopolitical and economic barriers (see ‘Wider issues’ in Appendix 6), those barriers closer to home tended to dominate their

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conversation, possibly because these issues are in their minds more than broader issues that are seemingly just facts of life.

The local operating context in any conservation intervention plays a critical role in the ability of an organisation to achieve its stated objectives. But there seems to be little consolidation of information about that context, and virtually no consideration of it in an assessment of whether or not an organisation is efficient, effective and having an impact. Many donors are located in countries far removed from the conservation activities they fund. They may not appreciate local difficulties that seem incomprehensible in a developed nation. For example, the lack of stable Internet connection, and even the electricity to power it, may seem unbelievable to those with constant power and fibre-optic broadband. Similarly, the state of some roads in developing countries, or the sheer lack thereof, can result in very long journey times between places or even an inability to access an area if there has been heavy rain: but this may not be considered by people from London or New York (Figure 7.2). If changes in local practices, such as bushmeat hunting or poaching, are required to enable effective conservation (e.g., see Milner-Gulland *et al.*, 2003), an organisation can only be effective if the community agrees to forsake these activities, or even take ownership for protecting the area itself. Also, a seemingly efficient organisation, one that has all the attributes currently required to demonstrate the highest probability of success and impact, would have little ability to deliver effective and impactful solutions if the local government issues a mining concession in the forest that the organisation is trying to protect.



Figure 7.2: Road to Mount Elgon in Kenya. Taken in November 2013.

External challenges can work independently or together to inhibit the success of a conservation intervention. They may present minor irritations or severe barriers to success, yet they are still not routinely considered in assessments of which organisations to support. The implication of this is that unrealistic expectations will continue to be placed on practitioners. These expectations will, unsurprisingly, not be met. A lack of truth, trust and transparency in the sector will be promulgated, as will a lack of progress. This will drive yet more demands for increased effectiveness that, as will be explained below, are often counter-productive.

It is hard to find the majority of conservation organisations

It is increasingly acknowledged that we live in a world where nature and people are inextricably linked (Lewis, 2014), and where issues of poverty can be connected to issues of natural resource destruction (see Roe & Nelson, 2009; Sachs, 2009). Consequently, there is growing recognition that the local peoples living within and among nature are often best placed to protect it (Chapin, 2004; Rodríguez *et al.*, 2007). There are many local groups doing phenomenal work, but they are often unknown to donors wanting to support conservation. A new donor to the field of conservation that googles ‘conservation NPOs’ would be greeted with page after page of the same names – the big conservation NPOs that have the budgets to develop attractive websites and apply search engine optimisation to guide traffic to them.

With no central repository of information about where funding is most needed, and which organisations are doing the best work in those areas, donors have little choice but to listen to those with the biggest profiles. This can and has resulted in big organisations growing ever larger while smaller organisations, which may have a more local focus, find it increasingly difficult to find funding for their work (Jepson, 2017). There has been a significant redistribution of the charitable sector’s spending power from smaller to larger organisations (Birtwistle & O’Brien, 2015), both in the sector generally and in conservation more specifically. The top 10 conservation organisations now control the majority (more than 80%) of observed expenditure (Brockington & Scholfield, 2010b).

My interviews revealed that many smaller organisations have neither the time nor the skills to compete effectively for funding. They may be unaware that calls for proposals have been announced (Chapin, 2004) and even if they are aware and do apply, success rates in these highly competitive application procedures are low. With the big

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organisations continuing to grow unbounded, priorities are increasingly being set on a global rather than a local scale (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2007). This leaves interventions at risk of being stopped before they reach their full impact (Brick *et al.*, 2009) as funding moves with changes in global priorities. This concern was echoed by my interviewees. While word of mouth does help smaller organisations to have a voice, donors generally remain poor at sharing information (Unwin, 2005; Fleishman, 2006; Buteau *et al.*, 2013; Ravenscroft, 2013), thus limiting the effectiveness of this method of publicity for most small organisations. The implication of the shortfalls in the current methods available to enable donors to identify different NPOs is that big organisations will just get bigger and the environment for smaller ones even more competitive.

Much charitable money goes through foundations, where it awaits further distribution to charities working on the ground (e.g., see Breeze, 2012). This adds a layer of overhead (Porter & Kramer, 1999), but is needed when donors cannot immediately identify the most deserving recipients of grant money. With every donor, be it an individual or a foundation, having to do their own research into issues and assess their own reports after each funding cycle, much time is wasted not only by the NPOs being drowned in the paperwork (see later) but also by the donors doing all the research, assessment and evaluation of their chosen NPOs. Charities in the UK spend about £350 million a year applying for funds from trusts and foundations, an amount equivalent to the annual grants given by the UK's largest grant-maker – the Wellcome Trust (Brick *et al.*, 2009). Overall, Grant (2012) has calculated that more efficient funding processes within the non-profit sector generally would release more than US\$3 trillion for additional charitable funds in the USA alone. Unless we change the way we award funding, the amount 'wasted' will only continue to grow.

It is difficult for donors to choose the most effective organisations

Many of my interviewees highlighted that there is often a chasm between donors and NPOs. Time and budget restrictions for many donors prevent many of them from visiting potential grantees prior to awarding funding. Some donors do not even speak to NPOs before awarding funds, merely allocating funds on the basis of the best-written proposals. But some interviewees felt that these often do not equate to the best or most urgent work. The distant or non-existent relationships common between donors and the NPOs they support leave the system of awarding funds open to significant abuse. At best, funds can be allocated to organisations not best placed to conduct work, but at worst can be given to organisations that do nothing. On a small scale, briefcase NPOs might secure funding for work that is never done (see Igoe & Kelsall, 2005) and NPOs might resort to underhanded and dishonest behaviour to paint themselves in a better light in the hopes of securing funds (e.g., see Jepson & Canney, 2003). They might also be fronted by charismatic and likeable characters, but lack the procedures to prevent mismanagement (e.g., Kid's Company: House of Commons, 2016). Fraud, while uncommon, is a risk and can be significant. The United Way, one of America's most respected charities lost significant amounts of money through fraud, embezzlement and mismanagement (Gilkeson, 2007). Similarly, in 2005, a group of fraudsters perpetrated a major fraud on a large number of UK grant-makers: private foundations, government funders and lottery distributors were hit with hundreds of bogus applications and several million pounds was extracted in the process (Grant, 2012).

With little interaction between NPOs and most of their donors, there are few established relationships and limited donor engagement. This lack of engagement can increase the likelihood of a donor falling victim to fraudulent applications (Unwin, 2005)

but, more importantly, it also prevents donors from really knowing what is happening with their money. Overall, funds are not always being targeted at the most effective solutions. Giving away money responsibly is hard to do because the system is so easily gamed (Friedman, 2000). Unless that system changes, funding will continue to be used less effectively than it could be.

There is a lack of clarity over what the indicators of effective organisations are

Once suitable organisations have been identified, donors need to choose those that they think will do the best work. But it is challenging for outsiders to assess effectiveness when charities themselves rarely measure it (Silverman & Beatty, 2007). NPOs often set overly vague objectives against which it is hard to be judged or set overly ambitious objectives that lead to high expectations not being met even if impact is achieved (Cannon, 2013). Donors try to cut through this and identify the best organisations by applying due diligence processes. While these often do ask some very important questions, they are still open to debate about which criteria really do give an indication of effectiveness. Progress towards meeting social and environmental missions can be slow and laborious, and it can take many years before any progress is seen. Steps along the way might not seem to have an immediate impact, but without them the mission can never be achieved.

Many frameworks have been developed to guide donors' giving decisions. Many of these are based on business principles suited to the corporate world, but with less relevance to the non-profit sector. Demands for voluntary organisations to be better managed are not based on any systematic evidence of dysfunctional activity: rather they are based on assumed poor management and media coverage of problem organisations

(Otto, 2005). But these acclaimed and advised corporate ideals are often inappropriate and overly burdensome in the NPO context (Froelich *et al.*, 2011).

There is general agreement, both among conservation practitioners and in the non-profit management literature, that sound governance, strong leadership, effective general management, and financial stability and sustainability are all required in an effective organisation. But there is little agreement on which criteria give true indications of these dimensions. Effectiveness and due diligence frameworks often use hard indicators that are easy to measure as proxies of performance: does the organisation have a policy, is there a process, and so on. Practitioners, on the other hand, place more importance on soft indicators, such as whether the policy has been embedded into practice and the process is effective. These are difficult to impossible for outsiders to gauge, especially if they are relying on proposals, or application/reporting forms completed by NPOs that they have little to no direct contact with. Not only is there a lack of agreement regarding indicative criteria between practitioners and existing frameworks, but also among the frameworks themselves. This suggests that the question about how to assess an effective conservation organisation externally remains unanswered. The continued application of untested methods to the selection of organisations is likely to result in funds continuing to be channelled to those organisations most able to comply with requirements rather than those most able to have an impact in the long-term.

The non-profit funding model is a key challenge for practitioners

Findings in this thesis suggest that the NPO funding model as applied is not only a source of great frustration to practitioners but also a real barrier to their success. This

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was confirmed by examination of the effective philanthropy literature. A key issue in the field of conservation is that positive changes resulting from interventions can take time to reveal themselves (Kaltenborn *et al.*, 2008). In fact, most issues that NPOs work on are not solvable in a year or two (McCray, 2011): the concept of hospices took 20 years to take hold; the fight against slavery took 41 years to win; and the right to roam campaign in the UK continued for 121 years before rights were granted (Grant, 2012). Systematic changes are complex, and they need more time than a single project (Windau, 2006). But funding for conservation, and many other areas of the charitable sector, continues to be awarded on the basis of short-term projects. This unreliable and restrictive funding prevents NPOs from either planning for the long-term or managing adaptively. Longer-term support allows NPOs to concentrate efforts on fulfilling their missions rather than on fundraising (McCray, 2011). One case study found that small, restricted, short-term grants succeed 20% of the time while larger grants over longer timescales with more engagement only failed 20% of the time (Fiennes, 2012). Unless we move away from the short-term project basis for funding, progress in conservation will remain slow and uncoordinated.

In a bid to be seen to undertake due diligence, grant-makers play it safe and ask for redundant and often unnecessary information (Bearman, 2008). This can put pressure on organisations to implement policies or procedures that do little to further their aims and instead reduce their effectiveness. This issue is particularly prevalent for smaller organisations. Bearman (2008) explored how NPOs are being distracted from their purposes because they are drowning in paperwork. The bad behaviour of a tiny minority of NPOs, and the associated media coverage of it, have lead donors, both state and individual, to place increasing demands for better performance. In trying to weed out

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the poor performers, donors ask for more and more information as part of their application and reporting procedures. Many have developed unique systems for monitoring and reporting (Fiennes, 2012). The time spent responding to compliance and due diligence requirements can render the true value of a grant much less than the actual grant amount (Woodwell, 2010). With short-term funding, the time burden is even worse, with application forms completed every year or two rather than every five to ten years (Cohen, 2007).

In a recent review of civil society conducted by Civicus, the top justification given by donors for not providing support directly to local organisations was that many smaller civil society organisations, and those from developing countries, do not have the capacity to fill in all their forms, let alone spend money effectively (Sriskandarajah, 2015). Once again, the big international NPOs with more resources, professional fundraisers and well-connected individuals are in a better position to compete for funding than the small/medium-sized organisations, which are often better placed to deliver long-term conservation impacts (Smith, 2008). Until this situation changes, conservation funds will continue to be diverted away from potentially more locally relevant solutions.

Donors can be driven more by what they know or what they have experienced than by need or urgency. This has contributed to the ad hoc nature of conservation funding as witnessed today. It is easy to obtain funding for some species and areas but garnering funds for others can be extremely challenging. Keppell *et al.* (2012), for example, explain that even though most endemic biodiversity in the Pacific resides on land (Wardell-Johnson *et al.*, 2011), most conservation effort there is invested in better-studied marine environments (Kool *et al.*, 2010). An analysis of UK foundation grants by Murray

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et al. (2014) found a very unequal distribution of grants made by UK foundations between species. Butterflies captured the highest value of foundation grant funding (£1.1 million), more than twice the value awarded to the next most supported species – elephants (£553,273). Orang-utans, though categorised as Endangered and feared to be the first Great Ape at risk of an extinction (SOS, 2015), captured a mere £81,997 of foundation grants. Halpern *et al.* (2006) conducted an audit of global conservation spending patterns. They found that while on average, countries with priority conservation areas did receive greater conservation investment, there are a number of potential mismatches and gaps in how conservation funds are spent. As the need for conservation and competition for limited funds grows, there is a risk that priority areas will remain seriously underfunded, thus putting the species and ecosystems in those areas at greater risk of harm or ongoing damage.

Overall, the findings of this thesis suggest there is significant room for improvement in how non-profit funding is disbursed. This finding is not unique to the conservation sector: Wallace *et al.* (2006) examined the structure of funding for international aid and similarly concluded that it significantly hindered progress in development and poverty reduction.

“The funding relationship is essentially a power relationship, and has increasingly become one in which the applicants and the funders are engaged in a complex dance in which neither side is able to be totally truthful” (Unwin, 2004:95).

High levels of competition prevent the necessary collaborative approach

Many of my interviewees suggested that increasing number of organisations operating in the non-profit sector, both as practitioners and as funders, combined with the shortage of funds needed to address the growing threats to biodiversity, is creating a highly competitive sector where the need to stand out is greater than the desire to effectively address conservation issues. Discussions about scaling impact are often taken to mean increasing an organisation rather than scaling a good response to a problem (Stowe, 2013). But a focus on growing your own organisation and budget as a way of increasing impact can lead to the primary focus of work moving from mission execution to fundraising (GEO, 2013) and personal development. It is well established that while evaluation and assessment can show evidence of contribution to solving a problem, they cannot provide proof of attribution (Woodwell, 2007). Yet many organisations speak as if they are the solution to the problem, and they work as if they do not need the help of others in implementing that solution. Interviewees suggested that hiding failures, exaggerating successes, and keeping your cards close to your chest are all tactics employed to make organisations stand out and ensure that no one else steals their good ideas. The system prohibits rather than rewards collaboration.

There are ad hoc examples of NPOs working together to coordinate their efforts (e.g., White-bellied Heron Working Group (Goodman, 2015), Wildlife Conservation Network (www.wildnet.org) and Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (<http://www.savethehighseas.org/>)), and donors working together to increase their impact (e.g., Oceans 5 (<http://oceans5.org/>)), but there are very few well-known official collaborations involving both donors and NPOs. Instead, most organisations typically look for their own funding and most donors look for organisations to fund. Some

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organisations re-grant the monies that they receive to smaller, local organisations, but many spend it themselves as part of their attempts to scale impacts.

Pearce (2014) believes that we need to stop trying to bring everything to scale and stop looking for big ideas. Instead, we need to think small, listen and tailor projects to local needs and landscapes so that they remain respected. Scale and standardisation are the problem for many public services, not the solution: public services should be local by default, helping people to help themselves (Locality, 2014). This applies equally to conservation. Applying a more integrated and coordinated approach will enable both the individual fires that conservationists and development agencies are currently fighting and the underlying sparks catalysing them to be fought at the same time. Only then would we stand a much better chance of achieving conservation aims.

Currently, the root causes of poverty, humanitarian issues and ecosystem damage remain poorly funded. Relatively little money is spent on systematic challenges like rethinking economic growth, grappling with consumption or reforming financial systems (Cracknell *et al.*, 2013). These issues are difficult to deal with, and can take a long time before any changes are seen. The apparent lack of clear impact and visible progress makes them hard to fund. The need for a more integrated approach, considering both biodiversity and the underlying causes of its destruction, and a more coordinated approach, where organisations share and collaborate more and compete less, came out clearly during this research.

Overall, the implications of continued application of the current funding model are that a significant amount of precious resource is spent on applying for funding that organisations have only low chances of winning. NPOs are increasingly being asked to act like businesses, but they continue to be treated like NPOs: they are asked to have

long-term plans and strategies but given only short-term funding, or required to have transformational leaders and strong teams given no core funding to develop them. Without giving them the funding, flexibility and security needed to behave more like a business, continuing demands for business-like behaviour from NPOs are likely to be met with wasted time and energy, increased frustration and even more burnout. Ultimately, biodiversity will suffer.

Limitations and areas for further research

While this research has provided some useful results, the necessary time and cost restraints for a D.Phil. mean that there are inevitably some limitations to it. The first is around sample adequacy of interviewees and survey respondents. The samples of neither interviewees nor survey participants had sufficient representation of small, grassroots organisations. While efforts were made to reach out to them in developing lists of interviewees, they often did not respond to requests for interview, thus making them effectively unreachable. As a result, only around 15% of interviewees were from very small organisations or groups. Similarly, the list of NPOs to whom survey invitations were sent was weighted towards larger organisations. Some smaller, grassroots organisations were identified via the Synchronicity Earth database, but only those organisations with a web presence were identified if not already captured by that source. Nonetheless, 8% of the organisations that responded to the survey were micro (less than £10,000 per annum) and 25% were small (between £10,000 and £100,000 per annum), suggesting that the views of smaller organisations were captured to some extent. The survey was also only sent to organisations in English, thus not capturing in any way the views of those organisations unable to communicate in English. Given,

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though, that I was not looking to rank the challenges raised, the risk of lower representation in smaller organisations may not be too severe. Nonetheless, more research to identify the challenges seen by those very small conservationists and non-native speakers would be a useful addition to the work presented here.

There may be some concerns with generalisability of my findings since many of my interviewees were working in an African context. Had they been drawn from a more diverse population it is possible that some different challenges might have been raised. The interviewees identifying the original list of challenges did have international experience, and the questions were phrased to ask about challenges generally and not specifically to an individual organisation. Although the 'other' group contained people operating outside of Africa was not representative of the global conservation community, it did provide a voice to those not operating on that continent. Similarly, survey respondents were from a global audience, and there was a section in the survey where participants could name any additional challenges not already covered in the survey, though none were identified (results not shown). While I feel that my findings do lend themselves to being generalisable, I do think that it would be interesting to expand this study to capture more narrative views of those operating in other countries to see how different the responses and attitudes are. Further research would also be warranted in individual locations to try and identify challenges more specific to individual contexts.

Common problems in conducting interviews include the wrong choice of wording, bias, poor rapport and asking loaded questions (Burgess 1990). While every care was taken to minimise these problems during all interviews, there is always the risk of them arising in conversational style interviews. However, the large number of interviews

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conducted, confirmation of the validity and severity of concerns raised via the survey, and corroboration of the importance of these issues by the academic and grey literature (not fully presented in this thesis due to time and word constraints) all suggest that these problems were appropriately minimised. In arranging the interviews, participants were told that I was representing a small funder (Synchronicity Earth), for whom this research was being done. As a result, there is a risk that interviewees may have put more emphasis on issues to do with funding than they might otherwise have done. I did try to counter this by making sure that if funding-related issues were raised, I specifically asked them about barriers not related to funding. Furthermore, the survey was sent out under the auspices of Oxford University and mentioned no links to funding organisations. Three barriers related to funding (short-term nature, core funding, lack of funding available) were within the ten highest scoring barriers (3rd, 4th and 9th highest relative scores, respectively). This suggests that this issue is high on participants' minds.

In this inductive study, I asked conservationists what barriers to success they face. These views are important and have not been consolidated before. However, in the absence of independent analysis of these findings, there is the risk of a circularity in the production of knowledge that could give rise to a conflict of interest. Barriers identified by conservationists could differ from those that might be identified through an independent assessment. Were an independent analysis of barriers to be carried out, it is possible that different barriers might be discovered, or that the prevalence of individual barriers might be altered. It should be noted, however, that even in independent analysis, the biases of any researcher will influence the results obtained. While I am not suggesting in this thesis that funding decisions are made on the basis of the external barriers identified (these were identified merely to inform rather than to

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judge), it is important to acknowledge the potential subjectivity and bias that can result from this data source.

There have been concerns about high levels of nonresponse increasing the risk of bias, but a low response rate does not necessarily translate into nonresponse bias. Peytcheva (2013) explains that the risk of bias only increases when participants are related to the survey topic or sponsor. While in this study I was asking conservationists about their views, the views were about subjects unrelated to them personally or their behaviour. I therefore feel that the risk of nonresponse bias was low in this study. Nonetheless, there is a risk that there may be views that were not adequately captured here, and a risk that respondents picked challenges based on a snapshot of what is currently happening, meaning the results could be quickly invalidated. Although the effect of these limitations is reduced because data on barriers came from more than one source (survey, interviews and framework review), it would nonetheless be interesting to repeat this study in future and compare results to see if and how prioritisation of challenges have changed. Conducting further work in individual locations and with different types of conservation could help to hone in on challenges more specific to individual contexts.

Regarding the methodology applied in the survey, Bertram (2009) highlights some common biases expressed when using Likert scales. These include respondent biases towards the central tendency (avoiding extreme response categories), acquiescence (agreeing with statements to 'please' the experimenter), and social desirability (portraying themselves in a more socially favourable light rather than being honest). Social desirability bias tends to be larger for respondents with less knowledge and interest in the topic (Ornstein, 2014). As the results obtained for the survey confirm

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those obtained from interviews and the literature, it is thought that these problems were not encountered here. There was certainly no central tendency detected, with most respondents instead tending to classify issues as important or extremely important. None of the responses would have pleased the experimenter in this study, and the anonymity offered by the survey would have provided no benefit to respondents to favourable portrayal. Since I was asking senior level conservationists to rate issues outside of their control rather than provide information regarding their own behaviours or morals, I felt the risk of social desirability bias affecting my results was extremely low. In any survey there is always a risk that respondents will misread or misunderstand a question. Every attempt was made to ensure that questions were clear, though there will inevitably be people who read them and interpret them differently anyway.

There is a risk of respondent fatigue given the large number of questions in the survey. Although there is strong evidence that such concerns are overstated (Hess *et al.* 2012), I conducted an informal analysis of the number of responses for each question (result not shown) to check for evidence of fatigue in respondents. I did not see any reduction in responses to later questions. Given that the first drop off in response levels for online surveys tends to occur after 18 minutes (see Duffy *et al.*, 2005) and my survey would have taken less than this to complete, I feel this risk is minimal, but still worthy of mention.

For the framework review work, all attempts were made to include as many frameworks for which criteria and indicators were publicly available as possible, and to group the frameworks together in the most logical way. Although I made every effort to be consistent in how I grouped criteria, there is always some subjectivity in identifying

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what a criterion is actually asking for. It is possible that inclusion of a larger sample of frameworks, including those for which payment for access were required and those used by private donors, would have produced different results. However, previous iterations of the statistics undertaken with slightly different groupings (not reproduced here) showed a similar amount of inconsistency in the clustering identified.

Although I have found statistical differences between different frameworks, my methodology or findings do not allow me to examine functional differences. I feel that this would be a useful next step given the burden that the use of these frameworks is placing on NPOs.

There will have been some subjectivity in the consolidation of criteria. When trying to group seemingly similar items together to remove duplication, it is possible that the essence of what the framework's creator had in mind was missed. As framework authors were not interviewed, it is therefore possible that some criteria have been interpreted differently to how they were intended. However, people using the frameworks to judge NPOs would not be interviewing the authors either, so any misreading of criteria is likely to be suffered by users as well as reviewers.

There are undoubtedly many interdependencies between the frameworks. For example, the McKinsey (2001) Occupational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) was used as a starting point for some of the other OCATs included here, and the PCNC (Philippine Council for NGO Certification) Guidebook used the Central and Eastern European Working Group Handbook of NGO Governance as a starting point (Wyatt, 2004). There are also many connections between the providers of frameworks used for charity analysis. For example, Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance, Guidestar USA and Independent Sector have all worked together to develop a project called Charting

Impact (www.chartingimpact.org) in response to the increased interest being shown in the effectiveness of charities and other NPOs. GreatNonprofits (www.greatnonprofits.org), a US-based website that allows people to find, review and share information about NPOs, is a partner of Guidestar, CharityNavigator and GlobalGiving. While the interconnections between these organisations suggest that their frameworks have not been developed independently of each other, the results presented here show that they are not actually that similar to each other anyway.

While I have collated a list of criteria that appear, on the face of it, to be important in effective organisations, there is still little empirical evidence supporting them (Lecy *et al.*, 2012). Following supposed ‘best practices’ is not a guarantee of effectiveness (Herman & Renz, 1998). Despite increased intellectual interest in organisational effectiveness, there remains little consensus, either theoretically or empirically, as to what constitutes it and how best to measure it (Sowa *et al.*, 2004; Liket & Maas, 2015).

The impact of operational issues on conservation success should be explored further, particularly with funders. Exactly how much of an impact this is having could be examined by quantifying man-hours spent applying for funding, considering success rates for applications, and exploring how many projects have ended unsuccessfully because of donor withdrawals.

Recommendations

This thesis has revealed that conservation organisations face a number of barriers that could prevent them from successfully delivering on their stated aims. Some of these barriers arise inside conservation organisations, through deficiencies in capacity or policy, but others are completely outside of the organisations’ control. This final section

of my thesis considers how my findings could be used by conservationists and their funders to improve the effectiveness of conservation. This will be done by considering:

- How conservationists might use the tools developed in this thesis to identify and manage their risks, thereby improving decision-making, planning and impact;
- How funders might apply the findings of this thesis to inform and improve their giving decisions; and
- What kind of alternative funding models and arrangements might allow conservation organisations to become more effective.

Conservationists

Effective risk management allows NPOs to know about and monitor significant risks. This enables them to make informed decisions and take timely action, make the most of opportunities and develop them with confidence, improve forward and strategic planning, and achieve the NPOs aims more successfully (Charity Commission, 2010). The process of risk management involves (Herman, 2010):

- Considering the context in which the NPO operates;
- Identifying risks the organisation faces in that context;
- Evaluating each risk to determine its likelihood of materialising and the severity of the impact it will have;
- Deciding what action to take to mitigate the risk and manage any residual risk; and
- Monitor risks on an ongoing basis and adjust activity accordingly if required.

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Although context is vital to understand, Grant (2012) points out that it is largely missing from the logic models that are widely used by both NPOs and their funders. The typology of barriers presented in Chapter 2 can use a useful starting point for this risk management process in conservation NPOs, particularly in gaining an understanding of operating context and identifying the (internal and external) risks present therein. This fits with the systems thinking approach advocated by Black *et al.* (2013), in which knowledge of natural systems and human behaviour inform decision making and problem solving.

Two risk management tools commonly used by companies for this process are PESTLE and SWOT analyses. While the former considers threats originating outside of the organisation, the latter looks both inside an organisation and at its relationship with the outside world. Both tools involve a brainstorming session, attended by risk committee members, trustees and/or senior management, during which potential risks are identified and their likelihood and severity debated. Those risks with high likelihood and/or severity are given priority in the resulting risk management process.

The externally focused PESTLE analysis considers **Political**, **Economic**, **Social**, **Technological**, **Legal** and **Environmental** risks (Collins, 2010). This analysis helps to identify risks in the operating environment. Working through the external barriers in my typology would inform a brainstorming session in which potential risks can be identified. There is, however, one category of risks that is missing from a tradition for-profit PESTLE analysis: operational issues. While most for-profit companies generate their own income, NPOs have to find theirs from outside (Hull & Lio, 2006), thus presenting an additional category of risks for nonprofits to deal with. I therefore recommend creating a slightly different external risk tool – a POSTEEL, which considers Political, Operational,

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Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental and Legal risks. Working through the eight categories in my typology ensure that each of these risk categories is considered. Any brainstorming session should also consider whether there are also additional categories not currently captured in my typology and should add any that are identified.

Using the results of the POSTEEL analysis, the SWOT analysis then identifies unique **Strengths** and **Weaknesses**, and how these help to take advantage of **Opportunities** and avoid **Threats** present in the operating environment (Helms & Nixon, 2008). The internal barriers in my typology would help identify those strengths and weaknesses, while consideration of the operational and external barriers might reveal opportunities and threats. This may be useful to conservationists because it forces interrogation of the underlying assumptions about *how* goals will be achieved. For example, an assumption might be that consultation with communities will help them see the value of the conservationist's proposition. But are there suitably skilled people to undertake the consultation? Yes = strength; no = weakness. Does the organisation have the time and funding to engage in proper consultation? Yes = strength; no = weakness. Is the community open to engaging in discussion with the organisation? Yes = opportunity; no = threat (to the proposed intervention). Is there the possibility of collaborating with other conservationists already in discussions with communities? Yes = opportunity. Has the community been lied to in the past about what interventions can do for it? Yes = threat. And does the community have more pressing issues, like finding food or money? Yes = threat.

My typology provides a useful starting point to risk management for conservationists because it was developed using direct input from those it intends to serve. Once both risks and the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation have been identified, the

organisation can then work out how to mitigate significant risks (defined as those with high likelihood or potential impact) and manage any residual risk. This would increase the likelihood that its activities will have the desired outcomes. Because the risks facing an organisation change constantly (Merna & Al-Thani, 2008), this risk management process should constantly be reviewed and updated to ensure that it remains current and relevant. Risk reduction has been shown to add value to shareholder wealth in for-profit companies (Godfrey et al., 2009) so perhaps it can also improve the efficacy of the work that conservationists undertake and therefore play a role in helping to curtail global biodiversity loss.

Funders

When done well, due diligence does help to distinguish NPOs that have a greater likelihood of success (Woodwell, 2010). But my interviewees suggested that it is not always done well. Creating criteria lists against which to judge grant applicants can be problematic. While it does force donors to ask serious questions about what they are looking for, thereby enhancing accountability and transparency, the criteria applied are still largely arbitrary and established *by fiat*, i.e., theoretically asserted with no further testing to determine true reliability or validity (see Bryman 2016). Astute grantees simply write proposals to fit the criteria. Where donors describe so clearly what they look for in a proposal, grantees can create perfect proposals, often using professional proposal writers to do so. What results is a confusing game in which everyone tries to trick the other to get what they want (Ellsworth, 2001). This thesis sought to answer what questions funders should be asking when undertaking due diligence on

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conservation organisations. My results show that while this is not an easy answer, there is opportunity for funders to improve their due diligence practices.

The first way funders could use my results is to use the typology of barriers to help them gain an understanding of the context in which potential grantees operate in. This not only ensures that the donors' expectations of what the organisations can achieve are more realistic, but also allows them to really assess whether the chosen intervention is likely to work in that particular context. At the moment, donors often merely rely on information given to them by grant applicants, which inadvertently allows potential grantees to gloss over potentially important barriers to success. Better understanding of the area in which NPOs operate will make donors more informed, thereby enabling better decision-making.

The second way that donors could use these results is to really think about what organisational effectiveness frameworks they use are really telling them. While they might well show that an NPO has all the appropriate documentation, it does not show whether the policies written in that documentation are actually applied in practice. Demands for voluntary organisations to be better managed are not based on any systematic evidence of dysfunctional activity: rather they are based on assumed poor management and media coverage of problem organisations (Otto, 2005). But these acclaimed and advised corporate ideals are often inappropriate and overly burdensome in the NPO context (Froelich *et al.*, 2011).

My findings show that while there is much variability in the criteria included in effectiveness frameworks, the five most commonly required criteria did examine arguably the most important factors: what is the organisation planning to do (mission), how is it planning on doing it (strategy), and how will it know it's doing it well (setting

targets and monitoring progress and impacts). The next most common criteria considered how the organisation would pay for its work, how it would ensure funds are not mismanaged, and how it would collaborate with others to achieve its goals. All very sensible criteria, and very good to consider in context. The typology of barriers reveals further criteria that donors might want consider in assessing organisational effectiveness. My recommendation to donors would be to use this typology as an aide memoire rather than a checklist. A series of red flags would lead to deeper digging when appropriate, which is much more useful than a checklist that asks for too much information from the beginning.

An alternative funding model

The non-profit funding system currently in use is based on a simple relationship: A gives money to B to do C, which will result in D. For example, individuals give money to a bird charity to persuade people not to use bird feathers in hats, which results in recovery of some threatened bird populations. This system is a perfect charity model, which is designed to address symptoms and change very little (Anheier & Leat, 2006). Conservationists, and indeed many other actors within the third sector, now operate in a significantly more globalised world where it is harder to isolate individual issues to deal with. However, they possess a legacy of institutional structures, tools and practices that are better suited to simpler systems (Game *et al.*, 2013). Not only is complexity increasing but financial pressure has also risen concurrently with demand for charitable services (Goulden, 2014). The severity of the problems that we face in the 21st Century, and the scale of the destruction we are witnessing, calls into question the wisdom of relying on charity to solve societal issues.

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According to Anheier and Leat (2006), philanthropy, unlike charity, tends to deal more with causes rather than symptoms. It can therefore have much wider potential impact. Its focus is on goodwill toward fellow humans, especially through efforts to promote human welfare. Its focus is longer-term. But Anheier and Leat (2006) also point out that it often fails to appreciate that the path to effective problem solving is often long, slow, complex and expensive. Instead, the practice of philanthropy is confused with that of charity. The result is that we try and solve long-term problems with short-term charitable solutions. Our track record of solving those problems to date has shown that this is not an effective way to operate. Organised philanthropy – through private foundations, public grant making foundations, supporting organisations and donor advised funds – has combined assets of close to a trillion dollars (Cohen, 2007). Just imagine what we could achieve if we actually developed systems to enable philanthropy to operate as designed!

One key shortfall of the current funding model is the perpetual tendency to fund conservation with short-term funding mechanisms. Whether provided by government or individuals, grants typically run from one to three years (Unwin, 2004), often supporting specified projects. But short-term projects are not well suited to supporting locally driven conservation efforts (Nelson, 2009) and they can drive the advancement of global rather than local conservation agendas (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, short-termism can force NPOs to plan only for the time for which funding is available (Unwin, 2004). Short funding cycles do not give enough time to produce, promote and implement successful conservation programmes (Keppel *et al.*, 2012). Conservation is a long-term issue and it needs long-term funding for long-term solutions. Unfortunately, the current funding model does not provide this. A new funding model might instead

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see donors providing longer term and less restrictive funds to the organisations they fund.

The current funding model results in an unequal distribution of activity and funding between species (e.g., see Murray *et al.*, 2014) and between places suffering from the same issues. For example, research by Synchronicity Earth (www.synchronicityearth.org) has found that while there is considerable activity and funding available for addressing palm oil in South-east Asia, there are just a handful of environmental funders supporting work to address this threat in Africa (Katy Scholfield, personal communication, 4 December 2013). This is despite the fact that Africa has been identified as a primary target in a wave of land encroachment driven by palm oil (Carrere, 2010). Media attention can also drive sudden bursts of funding to particular issues. A good example is Cecil the lion, killed in Zimbabwe by an American dentist in 2015 in what was initially thought to be an illegal hunt. Within days of his death, WildCRU, the research institute that had been studying him, received hundreds of thousands of pounds in donations for the protection of wild lions, leaving them momentarily unsure of how to spend the money (Becker, 2015). A new funding model might see a better coordination of efforts by donors and conservationists such that there is more oversight of the sector as a whole. One way to think about it is a flotilla, containing ships focussing on great apes, or South America, or palm oil, etc. Rather than each donor funding whatever comes to their attention, they could 'invest' in the 'boat' of interest to them. While this would add a layer of overhead, the increased in efficiency would more than offset this cost.

With increasing recognition of the shortfalls in the process of channelling conservation funding through big international NPOs, and increasing acknowledgement

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that local people, who are more invested in their own space, might be best placed to take the conservation agenda forward, the need to develop systems to assess and allocate funding directly to them without imposing an onerous burden is urgent. An interesting model is that employed by Global Green Grants (www.greengrants.org). It supports local, grassroots organisations that are found by its network of local, in-country boards of advisors – people who are present in the area, active in the field and knowledgeable about who is doing great work on the ground. This concept could be taken further to represent one of a global financial model somewhat akin to that used in the pension industry. Investors (donors) select the fund managers (intermediary – local boards) that they wish to invest in and they then invest in individual companies (NPOs). The fund managers are more tapped in to the local people and therefore more able to know what is going on at the front-line. Closer relationships can be built on trust and the need for redundant and unnecessary individual due diligence can be removed.

Building trust in one another, and developing institutional rules well matched to the ecological systems being used, and the context within which they are used, is of central importance for solving social dilemmas (Ostrom, 2009). But we have built a system that ignores trust. Bearman (2008) found that many NPOs did not feel trusted by foundations, interpreting the burden of application and reporting as evidence of that distrust. Fundraising by building relationships with individual donors, on the other hand, resulted in donors typically putting their faith and money into the organisation. There is a problem with basing funding relationships solely on trust as there are always those who will try to take advantage of such a system (Grant 2012). A balance needs to be achieved. At the moment the scale has tipped too far towards checks and balances. A

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new funding system with closer and longer-term relationships would help to bring it closer to trust, while still maintaining some element of verification.

Wallace *et al.* (2006) explain that within the aid sector, there have been moves away from the traditional project funding approach, for which transaction costs are high and shortfalls prevalent, by funders such as the World Bank and DFID. Instead, they have moved towards Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs), where donors contribute to a pool of funding for a sector on the basis of a sector strategy plan. The reasons for this change include ideological shifts within the donor community, a growing desire to build sustainability into the way work is done such that the work can continue post-project, and a reduction of transactional costs of project funding. The approach sounds reasonable, though there will undoubtedly be issues regarding who gets to set the strategy. This idea, and the relevance of it for conservation, should be investigated and its merits/pitfalls identified.

In a bid to be seen to undertake due diligence, donors often play it safe and ask for redundant and often unnecessary information (Bearman 2008). This can put pressure on organisations to implement policies or procedures that do little to further their aims and instead reduce their effectiveness, a problem particularly prevalent for smaller organisations. The time spent responding to compliance and due diligence requirements can render the true value of a grant much less than the actual grant amount (Woodwell 2010). This current funding model not only places an administrative burden on NPOs (see Bearman, 2008) but can also drive underhanded and/or downright dishonest behaviour (e.g., see Jepson & Canney, 2003 and Igoe & Kelsall, 2005) as NPOs compete for the little money that is available to them. Not only does this behaviour lead to increased rivalry between NPOs, and no doubt a subsequent reduction in the desire to

collaborate (Cracknell *et al.* 2013), but also to a lack of balance and learning overall. Most funders want to know the same information, so mechanisms to enable them to obtain and share that information with their peers could be developed. In the early days of supply chain auditing, every organisation undertook their own supply chain audits. Now, there is a single organisation, Sedex (www.sedexglobal.com) that undertakes the majority of supply chain audits and allows members to store, share and report on information they have about organisations with respect to labour standards, health and safety, environmental harm and business ethics. A similar system developed for the conservation community would remove the need for every donor to undertake their own organisational due diligence. Alternative solutions include the development of a kitemark and a Which! guide for conservation.

There are many large changes that could be made to the funding model to improve it, but there is likely to be resistance to it because donors may feel they are losing control. While some of the suggestions made here could be aspirations for the future, some are quick wins that, in the meantime, might make philanthropy and therefore conservation more effective, if only everyone would be willing to question how they currently operate.

Contributions of this thesis

Despite the limitations set out here, I believe that this thesis makes a valuable contribution to knowledge. Silverman (2013) explains that originality of PhD work in practice can mean making a synthesis not made before, using already known material but with a different interpretation, or bringing new evidence to bear on an old issue, and adding to knowledge in a way not done before. In this thesis, I have:

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- Synthesised the organisational effectiveness determinants that are being used in practice;
- Created a typology of organisational effectiveness criteria based on what is currently used in practice;
- Sought the views of conservationists on the importance of the organisational effectiveness determinants identified;
- Used a novel, broad-brush approach to ask conservationists about barriers to conservation, and developed a typology from that; and
- Used statistics commonly used in community ecology but not in business studies, to identify a short list of barriers that tell the same story about context as all barriers together.

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9: APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Typology of barriers to conservation success. The themes and examples given within each category aim to provide a flavour of what people were talking about. The promise of anonymity prevents the full list of issues/comments being presented here.

Categories and themes

External – further divided into Behaviour (B); Local context (LC) and Wider issues (W)

B Different cultural/ethical norms

- a. Cultural norms can be very different in different countries
- b. Conservationists may employ /suggest methodologies that are culturally inappropriate or unlikely to work locally
- c. Education systems and levels are not the same everywhere
- d. Pace of life is slower in some countries
- e. Misguided beliefs that all conservationists are driven by passion, but for many it is merely a well paid job

B Inability to change people's behaviour

- a. Conservationists can find it hard to show the good they do, instead often focusing on doom and gloom
- b. Communities can be resilient to change
- c. Local community champions can play an important role
- d. Need to invest in changing our thinking, but behaviour change takes time
- e. Youth can play a role in behaviour change

LC Lack of capacity and infrastructure in the local environment

- a. Poor local infrastructure or facilities
- b. It can be really hard to find good people
- c. General lack of skills and capacity in the local environment
- d. Communities do not always have the skills /knowledge about what to do
- e. There is a need to build capacity of local conservation organisations
- f. Knowledge exchange can be a useful capacity building tool
- g. Lack of funding for capacity building
- h. Lack of training and training facilities
- i. Cultural and educational differences can translate into capacity issues
- j. Many people in the conservation sector are overworked and under strain

APPENDIX 1

Categories and themes

- k. Reliance on volunteers can be problematic
 - l. High levels of employee turnover in the sector
 - LC Lack of political will/priorities/mainstreaming
 - a. Lack of political will to protect biodiversity
 - b. Conservation is not the main priority for many governments
 - c. Governments can be pro-conservation in speech, but not in action
 - d. More lobbying of government is needed
 - e. It is essential to get conservation on the government agenda, and mainstream the issue
 - LC Weak or absent enforcement of laws and regulations
 - a. Poorly devised policies, laws and regulations
 - b. Poorly implemented policies, laws and regulations
 - c. Policies, laws and regulations are poorly enforced
 - d. Laws and regulations may be disregarded
 - e. Some laws and regulations can end up being counter-productive
 - LC Poor understanding of local context when planning/implementing/funding conservation
 - a. Application of inaccurate assumptions about local context prior to devising interventions
 - b. Insufficient or incorrect information about local communities
 - LC Weak or ineffective government institutions
 - a. Existing government structures can be difficult to work with or under
 - b. Government institutions are not always as effective as they could be
 - c. Lack of capacity and appropriate skills and experience in governments
 - d. Governments not delivering on work or issues that should sit within their remit
 - e. Decisions may be politically motivated
 - f. Governments may not have the information they need to make better decisions
 - g. There is a need for champions and/or mainstreaming of change-makers
 - LC Corruption
 - a. Bribery can influence decisions
 - b. People of power may intimidate others
 - c. Funds can be misappropriated or misallocated
-

APPENDIX 1

Categories and themes

- d. People may operate with impunity
 - LC Heterogeneous, complex and dynamic community structures
 - a. A 'local community' can be very heterogeneous
 - b. Heterogeneous communities will have complex and dynamic structures and inter-relations
 - c. Benefits from conservation can be captured by a small, powerful elite
 - d. Conservation can have unintended consequence of bringing new people to an area
 - LC Human-wildlife connection
 - a. Human-wildlife conflict
 - b. Resource extraction, including poaching and charcoal burning
 - c. Poisoning of animals
 - LC Difficult issues with land tenure
 - a. Lack of clarity over land ownership and access
 - b. Local people with no land tenure may lose the desire to conserve/protect
 - c. Land rightfully belonging to communities can be usurped by governments or corrupt elites
 - d. Local people can be evicted from their lands
 - LC Threats to action from security issues, conflict and war
 - a. Danger to practitioners
 - b. Increased costs of action as a result
 - c. Loss of trust from local communities if practitioners need to withdraw
 - W Increased demand for resources and land
 - a. Growing population
 - b. Conservation cannot compete with industry, agriculture, leisure and development
 - c. Different sectors present challenges to biodiversity and conservation, e.g., extractive industry, leisure, etc.
 - d. Increased demand for resources
 - e. Large-scale land-use change
 - f. Unsustainable or destructive land use
 - g. Poor or absent land use planning
-

Categories and themes

- W Disconnection of people from nature
- a. People in power do not understand or accept the importance of nature
 - b. People living away from nature do not understand the importance or value of it to them or wider society
 - c. Local people are increasingly disconnected from nature
 - d. Users of natural resources do not understand the impacts of acquiring those products
 - e. Global need to promote the value that nature and ecosystems add
- W Many variables interact in our complex world
- a. Many variables interact with each other
 - b. Conservation is an example of a wicked problem

Operational – comprising Funding (FU), Coordination (C), Continuous improvement (CI), Local involvement and impact (LII) and Reputation (R)

- CI Poor learning and knowledge sharing within the sector
- a. Insufficient reflection within the sector
 - b. Little learning from the information that is generated
 - c. Practitioners are not always good at sharing information
 - d. Practitioners are not always up to date with developments in the field
 - e. Knowledge and information are often unavailable to conservation practitioners
 - f. Conservation practitioners do not always input into and benefit from scientific research
- CI Unwillingness to discuss failure
- a. People generally don't want to discuss failures, even though it is a useful and essential thing to do
 - b. Difficulties and failures can be covered up
 - c. Lack of transparency over what funds are spent on
- C Conservation does not employ an integrated approach
- a. Conservation is operating at the wrong scale
 - b. Important to have a trans-disciplinary approach to conservation

APPENDIX 1

Categories and themes

- c. Conservation success requires input from a wide range of stakeholders, but they are not all/always involved
 - d. Issues with communication and collaboration between various stakeholders, including government, conservation and development practitioners, business, and civil society organisations
 - e. There is a shortage of funds for interdisciplinary work
 - C Lack of collaboration among and between NGOs and donors
 - a. Though the need for collaboration and partnerships is clear, there is not enough of it
 - b. True collaboration can be difficult to achieve
 - c. Many collaborations don't work particularly well
 - C Poor co-ordination of effort and funding
 - a. Coordination of effort is often poor or non-existent, despite many advantages to coordinated approaches
 - b. Lack of, but a need for, coordination among donors
 - c. Much duplication of work and replication of effort
 - d. Some issues/organisations/areas get too much money while others get none
 - e. Many barriers to using integrated approaches, despite clear advantages thereof
 - C Unintended consequences of conservation
 - a. The need for conservation may create dilemmas, such as downplaying of development
 - b. There can be impacts of intervention other than conservation gains
 - c. Displacement of issues
 - FU Lack of funding available for conservation
 - a. Insufficient funding available to meet conservation needs
 - b. Insufficient funding to obtain resources that are needed to do the job
 - c. Insufficient funding to enable knowledge sharing and learning
 - d. Lack of funds makes it hard to attract and retain the right people
 - e. Conservation practitioners spend a lot of time looking for funding
 - f. There is a need to look beyond traditional sources of funding to obtain more funds
-

APPENDIX 1

Categories and themes

- FU Long-term conservation is usually managed and funded in the short-term
 - a. Funding cycles too short
 - b. Project financing can be a barrier to success
 - c. It takes time to build relationships and develop capacity
 - d. Changes in people, politicians, decision-makers, etc. makes it difficult to implement long-term strategies
 - e. Long-term change requires long-term investment
 - FU Problematic methods for awarding or allocating funding
 - a. Too much reliance on external donor funding
 - b. Many donors are unwilling to provide core or flexible funding
 - c. Donors can be very specific about conditions and offer little or no flexibility
 - d. Absorption capacity of organisations is often not considered before funds are awarded
 - e. No follow up to ensure that funds spent have achieved conservation goals
 - FU Conservation agendas driven by donors rather than need
 - a. Conservation organisations may change what they do to fit in with funding that is available
 - b. Donors often omit to base their funding decisions on need
 - c. Donor priorities can change quickly, thereby resulting in loss of funding for some issues before they have been dealt with
 - d. Donors can keep changing what they support in a quest for novelty
 - e. Donors can become fatigued when they support the same organisations/causes for long periods of time
 - FU Unsustainable conservation interventions
 - a. Much work is being done, but much of it isn't achieving anything
 - b. Funding often runs out before real change is realised
 - c. Conservation organisations do not always leave a legacy from their work
 - d. Conservationists can work to embed themselves in an area, but they should be working to empower local people
 - e. Conservation action often does not deal with the root cause of the problem
 - FU High levels of competition within the sector
 - a. Many conservation organisations, all competing for funds, recognition, ownership of issues, etc.
-

APPENDIX 1

Categories and themes

- b. Smaller organisations find it harder to compete with larger, better known ones
 - FU Donors do not always select the best organisations
 - a. Funding is often awarded to the best proposals rather than the best work/people
 - b. Less well-known /less outspoken people can find it harder to get funding
 - c. Some conservation organisations are not honest with donors/potential donors
 - FU Weak due diligence processes
 - a. Due diligence is not always done before awarding funding
 - b. Large amounts of money can be awarded before concepts have even been tested
 - c. Due diligence procedures do not always highlight prevalent issues
 - d. Funders are not always aware of what is happening locally
 - FU Desire for recognition within the conservation community
 - a. Conservation organisations prize organisational survival, individuality and recognition over success
 - b. Excessive jargon and division prevents the sector from working as a whole
 - c. Organisations and egos can be bigger than what they are trying to achieve
 - d. Donors seeking recognition aim to fund visible things
 - FU Poor relationships between funders and the organisations they support
 - a. Despite benefits to stronger relationships between funder and recipient, these are often absent
 - b. While funds are essential, they are often not the only benefit that donors can give to their recipients
 - c. Conservation organisations may prioritise increased numbers of donors over improved quality of funding relationships
 - d. Donors and the organisations they support can have different perspectives
 - e. Trust may not be developed and nurtured
 - FU Dishonesty within the sector
 - a. Many conservation organisations are not credible
-

APPENDIX 1

Categories and themes

- b. Proposals can contain untruths, with a focus on what donors want to hear rather than on what is reality
 - c. Widespread abuse of donor funds
 - FU Onerous application and reporting procedures
 - a. Many application processes are difficult to understand or very time consuming
 - b. Donors are not always clear on what they are funding or why they have/have not selected particular proposals
 - c. Grant writing skills are often lacking among conservation practitioners
 - d. Bureaucratic donor requirements place a burden on organisations
 - e. Most donors require reporting in their own format, making reporting very time consuming
 - LII Lack of community buy-in
 - a. May not get buy-in from local people
 - b. Concept of conservation can be abstract to local people, or seen as elitist
 - c. Myths that conservation is bad for people
 - d. Money earmarked for communities is not always given to them
 - e. Conservation may not be a choice for very poor people
 - f. High levels of poverty where biodiversity is highest
 - g. Benefits from conservation need to be clear to those being asked to protect it
 - h. Benefits from conservation need to be shared in an equitable way
 - LII No local ownership or empowerment
 - a. External conservation organisations embed themselves into an area rather than build the capacity of local organisations/individuals
 - b. Community involvement from the start is important
 - c. While communities should own interventions, they may need support in devising/running them
 - d. Western organisations try to create Western institutions, but this doesn't always work locally
 - e. Participatory approaches are often preferable, but badly done
 - LII Unavoidable interplay between conservation and development
 - a. Consideration of economics in isolation
-

APPENDIX 1

Categories and themes

- b. Development is often prioritised over conservation
 - c. Conservation goals should consider development needs, but can end up being pushed by the development agenda
 - d. There is a link between conservation and development, each needing the other
- LII Poor/absent consultation with communities
- a. Communities may not be consulted, or consultation processes might be badly done
 - b. Conservationists should really listen to local people and get them involved from the start
 - c. It is vital to consider and take on board local knowledge and experience
- R Lack of accountability of practitioners, donors and governments within the sector
- a. People are not held accountable for their actions and decisions
 - b. People can act with impunity
- R Poor reputation of conservation(ists)
- a. Conservationists can be very radical and pushy in their messaging
 - b. Conservationists need to work with people, not against them
 - c. Activism and negative engagement can put people off
 - d. Evictions in the name of conservation create resentment

Internal – further subdivided into Finances (F), Leadership (L), Governance (G) and Management (M)

- F Inappropriate financial management
- a. Inability to manage funds
 - b. Bad budgeting
 - c. Lack of cash flow management
 - d. Weak financial position
- G Poor governance structures
- a. Inappropriate or unstable board structure
 - b. Not having the right people or skills represented on the board
 - c. A poorly functioning board
 - d. Poor working relations between the board and Executive Director
-

APPENDIX 1

Categories and themes

- L Difficulty in demonstrating the impact of conservation work
 - a. Monitoring and evaluation is challenging/absent
 - b. Monitoring and evaluation may not be well designed/executed
 - c. Data obtained are not always effectively used
- L Lack of organisational strategy
 - a. Conservation organisations are not always good at planning
 - b. Conservation as a field is not very strategic – players often operate in crisis mode
 - c. Lack clarity about the organisation's mission, targets or end goal
 - d. Organisations are not always true to their mission, sometimes getting side tracked by alternative ideas or ill-fitting funding opportunities
 - e. Assumptions of what the intervention will achieve, now and in the future, can be incorrect
 - f. Some organisations know what they want to do, but not how they to do it
 - g. Ideas are not always tested out before being implemented
 - h. Logframes, while useful, are often not used in the most effective way
 - i. The principles of adaptive management are often not applied
- L Ineffective leadership
 - a. Insufficient leadership skills and capacity
 - b. Leadership and values are not shared throughout the team
 - c. Succession planning is not done/effective, leaving the organisation at risk when key staff leave
 - d. Teamwork is lacking
 - e. Poor/ineffective communication within the organisation
- M Inadequate management policies and practices
 - a. Poor management of operations
 - b. Too much bureaucracy within organisations
 - c. Insufficient identification and management of risks to success
- M Inappropriate hiring, management, development and retention of people
 - a. Not hiring the right people, i.e., values, work ethic, passion, skills and experience
 - b. Poor employee management policies and procedures
 - c. Not offering employees enough incentives to stay with the organisation

APPENDIX 1

Categories and themes

d. Poor working relations between office and field staff

APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2: Source of information for conservation organisations operating in each location.

Area of operation	Source of conservation organisation names
Global	<p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_environmental_organizations</p> <p>BirdLife partners – these are all independent organisations who operate in partnership with BirdLife</p> <p>http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/partnership/birdlife-partners</p> <p>The list of IUCN partners was examined but excluded as some organisations were not strictly involved in conservation and there was a high number of non-English speaking organisations</p> <p>Where an organisation had branches in different countries, such as Friends of the Earth or WWF, only the head office was targeted unless relationships with the heads of individual branches had already been established as these were thought to be more likely to respond</p>
UK	<p>Charity Commission advanced search –</p> <p>http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/AdvancedSearch.aspx. Search terms included biodiversity conservation and biological conservation. Only those organisations large enough to require the submission of Annual Reports were included as contact information for these was easier to obtain</p>
US and Canada	<p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_environmental_agencies_in_the_United_States</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Environmental_organizations_based_in_Canada</p>
Australia	<p>Conservation Council of South Australia members list –</p> <p>http://www.conservation.sa.org.au/list-of-members.html</p> <p>Conservation Council of Western Australia members list –</p> <p>http://ccwa.org.au/members2/list</p>

APPENDIX 2

Area of operation	Source of conservation organisation names
New Zealand	New Zealand's national environmental protection network, ECO (Environmental and Conservation Organisations) – http://www.eco.org.nz/member-groups/eco-member-groups.html
Africa	List of African NPOs in Scholfield & Brockington (2008) Africa Green Directory – http://www.greenafricadirectory.org/
SE Asia	Focus was on Indonesia and Malaysia as these were thought most likely to have a large number of organisations where English is spoken well. Organisations names were taken from MENGO – http://www.mengo.org/members
Caribbean, Asia, Pacific	GEF-NGO network – www.gefngo.org
Middle East	Pengon network - http://www.pengon.org/

Appendix 3: Online survey questions. For Chapter 3, question 4 was included in analysis and for Chapters 5 and 6, questions 5-8 were included in the analyses.

Email invitation sent out for survey participation:

Dear ...

I do hope you don't mind me getting in touch with you, but as someone with considerable knowledge and experience in conservation, I would like to invite you to take part in a survey, the results of which will, I hope, ultimately influence the way funding decisions are made. Please allow me to explain.

Donors do not have a universally accepted way of assessing conservation organisations. There is also no standard means of judging effectiveness because of difficulties in measuring the long-term impacts of short-term projects, and attributing change to any one particular intervention.

Many non-profit organisational assessment tools employ metrics that are outdated, untested or of questionable value. Donors turn to them in the absence of other options as a means of making and justifying choices.

Research is being conducted by the University of Oxford to understand how best to assess organisations/interventions and undertake due diligence. Its findings will be used to build a robust and relevant tool that considers how an organisation is led, governed and managed, and how local context affects its scope and impact.

Having finalised the first stage of research, including assessments of existing tools, examination of academic literature and in-depth interviews, we are now seeking input from conservation practitioners. Your help would be appreciated.

The following link will take you to a survey highlighting criteria that our research has identified as being important in a well-managed and effective organisation. We would like to know if you agree or disagree with these: we need to take your views into account in our analysis and tool development.

The survey can be accessed here - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GXDPSDJ>

To ensure the best possible interpretation of survey findings, we require you to provide background information about the size of your organisation, your role within it and the countries in which it operates. Results will also be made freely available to survey participants, so please provide your email address if you would like us to send them to you. Please note that all feedback received will be consolidated and as such, all answers given will be completely anonymous.

APPENDIX 3

The survey should take around 20 minutes to complete. If you feel that someone else in your organisation is better placed to respond to this then please do forward this email to them.

If you feel that there are key lessons that you have learned that would benefit this research and tool development, then please feel free to email me at michele.sanders@zoo.ox.ac.uk. If you wish to provide feedback by phone then please let me know by email and I can arrange a suitable time to speak

Thank you in advance for your input into this research.

Kind regards

Michele Sanders

Survey questions

Question 1 - Please tell us a little about your organisation so we can see if there are any trends in the data (text boxes for each question)

What is the name of your organisation?

What is your position in the organisation?

Which country/countries are you operating in? If more than three, please list the top three

Roughly, how many employees does your organisation have?

Is your organisation independent or part of a larger group?

Roughly what was your total income in the last financial year? A ball-park figure is all we need. Please indicate currency used.

Question 2 - What kind of organisation are you filling this in for? (select one)

University/research organisation

Conservation NGO

Government body

Donor/funder of conservation

Individual operating alone

Independent consultant

Other (please specify)

Question 3 - What is your position within the organisation? (select one)

Trustee

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Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer

Member of senior management team

Middle management

Practitioner

Intern/student

Other (please specify)

Question 4 - How much of a barrier are the following external factors to effective conservation? (select one from column choices: Extremely important; Relatively important; Neither important nor unimportant; Relatively unimportant; Not at all important; Not sure)

Weak government institutions

Lack of political will

No enabling environment (e.g., ineffective policies, poor legislation, etc.)

Ineffective law enforcement

Corruption

Economics and the need/desire for development

Poverty

Natural resources being seen as external to humanity

Conservation being seen as an elitist issue and a 'nice to have'

No integrated approach that considers both conservation and the underlying causes of damage to natural resources

Inability to work at a landscape scale

Lack of land use planning

Lack of collaboration between conservation organisations

Poor knowledge sharing within the sector

A general lack of discussion about, and learning from, failures

A lack of funding for conservation

A lack of core funding for conservation organisations

The short-term nature of conservation funding

Donors setting and changing conservation agendas

Donors failing to select the most effective organisations

Lack of local community buy-in

APPENDIX 3

Lack of trust by local communities

Lack of local community ownership

Communities being seen as external to conservation

Interventions being planned/delivered with little understanding or consideration of the local context

Prevalence/promotion of Western models of conservation

Lack of appreciation by international donors and NGOs for how things work in different countries (e.g., things can take longer in Africa, per diems are expected in some cultures, etc.)

Disconnect between head office staff and those working on the ground in conservation organisations

Over-confidence of conservation organisations

Poor local infrastructure (e.g., unsuitable roads, lack of fuel or vehicles, etc.)

Conflict/war in areas where conservation organisations operate

Outbreaks of disease in areas where conservation organisations operate

Security/safety issues for conservation practitioners

The way people are educated globally

The way people are educated in the communities in which conservation organisations operate

Lack of capacity in local communities

Lack of capacity in local government

A lack of understanding about community structure/dynamics by conservation practitioners

The heterogenous nature of local communities

Conflict between neighbouring communities

inequality of benefits derived from conservation interventions

Lack of employment opportunities for local people

Ill conceived incentive schemes

Inappropriate alternative livelihood interventions

Creation of dependency on conservation or development organisations

Conservation activity attracting more people to sensitive areas

Human-wildlife conflict

APPENDIX 3

Many people competing for limited resources

Competition for land (mining, golf courses, grazing, tourist spots, etc.)

Extraction of resources by local people for food or personal use

Extraction of resources for profit or business use

Industrial scale activities (mineral extraction, logging, plantations, etc.)

Lack of clarity over land tenure and ownership

Evictions in the name of conservation

Growing population

Consumerism and Western ideals

Question 5 - How important are the following internal leadership factors in an effective conservation organisation? If you do not understand the question, please answer 'not sure'

A strong, skilled and committed leadership team

A transparent and/or consultative decision-making process

A written vision

A clear, written mission statement

All employees, managers and board members being clear about your organisation's mission and purpose

Ensuring that all decisions place the mission at the heart of all operations

Ensuring that all programmes are aligned to your organisation's mission and strategy

Refusing funds or activities that will force your organisation to deviate from its mission

A common set of values and beliefs within your organisation

Clarity about HOW the organisation is going to achieve its goals

A written, updated strategic plan

A written and well articulated logic model or theory of change

A mechanism for ensuring that any written plans underpin decisions made and activities conducted

A mechanism for reviewing and amending any strategic plans/theories of change in light of lessons learned and new information gained

Undertaking a needs assessment prior to beginning any new programmes or activities

A procedure to ensure that internal threats and opportunities are identified and acted on (e.g., loss of key staff, lack of capacity, etc.)

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A procedure to ensure that external threats and opportunities are identified and acted on (e.g., physical danger to staff, external conflict, availability of funding or resources, etc.)

Ability to scale up successful interventions and actions

Exit strategies for all projects and programmes

Efficient working procedures within your organisation

Clear and realistic goals and targets

Monitoring progress against planned goals and targets

Monitoring inputs (e.g., number of people, amount of money spent, etc.)

Monitoring outputs (e.g., number of workshops held, number of people trained, etc.)

Monitoring outcomes and impacts (e.g., reduction in charcoal burning, less habitat encroachment, etc.)

Long-term monitoring of impact

Using a balanced scorecard/dashboard style performance measurement system

Feeding results of employee appraisals into organisational monitoring and evaluation

An openness to discussing things that didn't work as planned and why

Adaptive management

A mechanism to enable your organisation to learn from its previous experience

A system for gathering feedback from relevant stakeholders (e.g., communities you interact with, governments where you operate, etc.)

A mechanism for undertaking research and data collection

A mechanism for integrating measurement, monitoring and evaluation findings into your organisation's work

Willingness and ability to innovate

Willingness to collaborate with others where this will provide better results than acting alone

Relationships that are dictated mainly by organisational needs rather than hierarchy or politics

Question 6 - How important are the following financial factors in an effective conservation organisation? If you do not understand the question, please answer 'not sure'

Diverse and/or stable income sources

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Income generating activities (e.g., sales of good or services, charging volunteers to get involved, etc.)

Adequate fundraising resources (i.e., professional fundraisers, time and skills for grant and proposal writing, etc.)

A mechanism for maintaining good relationships with funders (e.g., reporting to them, answering their questions, etc.)

A stable reserve of funds to cover expenses for a few months in the case of a financial emergency

Financial literacy within operational teams (i.e., a basic understanding of financial considerations)

Financial literacy within the senior management team

Financial literacy within the board

Integration of financial information into operational decision-making

A suitable budgeting process

A suitable cash flow management process

Prioritisation of programme/field expenditure over spending on overheads, infrastructure and head office functions

Prioritisation of programme/field expenditure over fund raising costs

Robust internal controls that help to prevent and detect fraud, theft and error

Careful management of debt

Question 7 - How important are the following governance factors in an effective conservation organisation? If you do not understand the question, please answer 'not sure'

A well functioning board of trustees

Trustees that are clear on their roles and responsibilities

Trustees that are clear on the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team

A mechanism for evaluating the performance of the board

A mechanism for evaluating the performance of senior management

Appropriate training and development for trustees

Appropriate training and development for senior management

A board that is well structured (i.e., right size, relevant skills and experience, diverse backgrounds, term limits, use of subcommittees)

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Trustees that are committed to your organisation (i.e., willing and able to give time to it and who buy in to its mission and purpose)

Regular trustee meetings (at least two per year)

Good attendance at and involvement in trustee meetings

Trustees that are independent (i.e., not paid, remunerated, employed or directly related to anyone employed by your organisation)

A mechanism for holding senior management accountable for your organisation's performance

A mechanism to ensure compliance with all relevant laws and regulations

A strong and effective working relationship between the board and the senior management

A conflict of interest policy and procedure

A whistleblowing policy and procedure

An external financial audit

Question 8 - How important are the following management factors in an effective conservation organisation? If you do not understand the question, please answer 'not sure'

Effective communication throughout the organisation

Effective teamwork within the organisation

Clear operating rules and procedures for all employees

A system to identify and manage strategic and operational risks to the organisation

A performance review process for all employees

Appropriate health and safety management procedures

A formal operational plan

Sufficient capacity and other necessary resources to enable the organisation to deliver on its goals

Appropriate skills, experience and/or qualifications within the organisation

A diverse workforce (in terms of gender, religion, race, ethnicity, etc.)

Clear recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers

A mechanism to ensure that employees are clear on their roles and responsibilities

Clear lines of management and reporting for all employees

Appropriate personnel policies (e.g., contracts of employment, means for setting and reviewing pay, etc.)

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Appropriate training and development opportunities for all employees

Low employee turnover

Management skills training for anyone responsible for supervising employees or volunteers

The use of volunteers where this is appropriate

A mechanism to ensure that volunteers are clear about their roles and responsibilities

Appropriate support and supervision for volunteers

Succession planning for all key posts

Adequate IT systems

Appropriate insurances in place (e.g., for loss of life, damage to property, etc.)

Business continuity and/or disaster recovery plans

A mechanism to ensure that your organisation's reputation remains in tact

Effective external communication

Effective stakeholder engagement (where needed and appropriate)

Being responsive to stakeholders

Question 9 - And a final chance to have your say in your words

Are there other factors that are important that have not been included above?

What do you see as the three most important things a conservation organisation must have/do in order to increase the likelihood of it being successful? *[NOTE – this was only added after the first 39 people responded]*

What do you see as the three most significant barriers to conservation success?

If money were no object, what would help to make conservation interventions achieve better results?

Do you have any other comments?

Question 10

Thank you so much for taking the time to fill in this survey.

If you would like to be kept informed of results to this study or you would like to receive a copy of this questionnaire, please provide your email address

APPENDIX 4

Appendix 4: Complete LDA results for continent of operation. Most negative loading is depicted with ** and most positive with ^^.

Barrier	LD1	LD2	LD3	LD4	LD5	LD6
B1	0.394	-0.514	-0.107	0.439	0.473	-0.174
B2	-0.364	0.095	-0.382	** -0.877	-0.153	0.343
B3	** -0.551	-0.215	0.070	-0.287	-0.295	0.249
B5	^^ 1.129	0.235	0.093	-0.172	-0.017	0.084
B6	-0.061	0.208	-0.001	-0.567	-0.117	-0.500
B15	-0.160	-0.317	0.223	-0.086	0.076	** -0.646
B16	-0.100	0.382	0.478	-0.547	0.554	0.354
B17	0.071	0.031	0.126	^^ 0.497	-0.555	-0.207
B19	0.235	** -0.546	-0.159	0.318	-0.206	0.318
B21	0.245	0.201	-0.072	-0.228	0.068	^^ 0.415
B29	-0.156	^^ 0.870	-0.009	0.201	-0.531	0.295
B33	0.079	-0.369	0.284	0.068	-0.095	-0.309
B35	0.069	-0.342	-0.230	0.266	-0.109	0.411
B38	0.107	0.178	^^ 0.568	0.373	0.574	0.026
B40	-0.274	0.076	-0.004	-0.089	** -0.557	0.013
B43	0.156	-0.425	-0.046	-0.428	-0.126	-0.407
B46	-0.189	0.596	-0.646	0.190	^^ 0.635	-0.337
B48	0.057	0.086	0.188	0.224	-0.477	-0.210
B52	-0.246	0.203	** -0.849	0.243	-0.201	-0.149
B55	0.339	0.205	-0.160	-0.572	0.116	0.388
B56	-0.069	-0.243	0.189	0.218	0.290	0.178
Variation explained (proportion of trace)						
Individual	0.53	0.17	0.13	0.08	0.05	0.04
Cumulative	0.53	0.70	0.83	0.91	0.96	1.00

APPENDIX 5

Appendix 5: Complete LDA results for size, showing most negative loading is depicted with ** and the most positive with ^^.

Barrier	LD1	LD2	LD3	LD4
B1	0.040	-0.560	0.480	-0.555
B2	-0.593	-0.084	0.020	0.307
B3	-0.355	^^0.540	-0.411	-0.132
B5	0.297	-0.483	-0.353	0.029
B6	0.490	0.401	0.151	-0.517
B15	-0.086	-0.545	-0.042	0.442
B16	^^0.615	0.279	-0.349	-0.004
B17	** -0.636	** -0.890	0.468	0.136
B19	0.593	0.380	-0.125	-0.302
B21	0.426	0.293	0.262	-0.181
B29	-0.283	0.303	-0.181	0.002
B33	0.100	-0.531	0.193	-0.233
B35	-0.454	-0.358	0.285	0.404
B38	0.164	0.107	-0.304	0.088
B40	-0.019	0.178	0.460	0.264
B43	0.192	0.038	^^0.511	0.022
B46	-0.203	-0.173	** -0.417	0.002
B48	0.489	0.479	0.195	^^0.480
B52	0.169	-0.038	-0.402	0.149
B55	-0.369	0.246	-0.278	** -0.573
B56	-0.194	0.154	0.167	0.276
Variation explained (proportion of trace)				
Individual	0.367	0.360	0.158	0.115
Cumulative	0.367	0.727	0.885	1.000

APPENDIX 6

Appendix 6: Full set of comparisons between the numbers of judgment and guidance frameworks requiring each criterion. The five most commonly required criteria in each group are depicted with ** and the five least commonly required depicted with ^^.

Criterion	Dimension	Judgment	Guidance	Difference
<u>STRONG BOARD-EXECUTIVE RELATIONSHIP</u>				
Trustees and managers work well together	Governance	4	9	-5
Good communication between trustees and rest of the organisation	Governance	2	5	-3
<u>TRUSTEES CLEAR ON ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES</u>				
Trustees understand their roles and responsibilities	Governance	5	**14	-9
Trustees understand the mission and aims of the organisation	Governance	2	12	-10
Trustees receive an induction into the organisation	Governance	^^0	9	-9
Mechanisms for board evaluation & accountability	Governance	1	12	-11
Appropriate training and development for trustees	Governance	^^0	5	-5
<u>BOARD STRUCTURE IS APPROPRIATE</u>				
Board size is appropriate for the organisation	Governance	5	9	-4
Trustees have relevant backgrounds, skills, experience and professional network connections	Governance	3	11	-8
Trustee term limits	Governance	2	6	-4
Staggered term process for trustees	Governance	^^0	^^2	-2
Diverse board with a range of skills	Governance	5	13	-8

APPENDIX 6

Criterion	Dimension	Judgment	Guidance	Difference
Appropriate use of committees	Governance	2	9	-7
Names of officers and trustees available/published	Governance	3	^^2	1
<u>TRUSTEES ARE COMMITTED</u>				
Trustees are committed to the organisation	Governance	3	10	-7
Regular scheduled board meetings	Governance	4	12	-8
Meetings are well planned and run	Governance	1	10	-9
Board meeting minutes prepared	Governance	2	8	-6
Good attendance at board meetings	Governance	2	13	-11
Procedure for handling urgent matters between scheduled meetings	Governance	1	3	-2
<u>TRUSTEES ARE INDEPENDENT</u>				
Independence of board	Governance	3	5	-2
Trustees do not receive inappropriate financial benefits from the organisation	Governance	5	6	-1
Appropriate board appointment process	Governance	1	8	-7
<u>LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ACCOUNTABLE</u>				
Executive director held fully accountable	Governance	3	13	-10
Process for determining executive compensation	Governance	3	4	-1

APPENDIX 6

Criterion	Dimension	Judgment	Guidance	Difference
<u>INTERNAL GOVERNANCE</u>				
Compliance with applicable laws and regulations of the country	Governance	6	13	-7
Conflict of interest policy and procedure	Governance	8	8	0
Whistle-blower policy	Governance	4	7	-3
Document retention and destruction policies and procedures	Governance	3	6	-3
Data and privacy policies and procedures	Governance	1	4	-3
Internal code of conduct/ethics policy	Governance	^^0	5	-5
<u>FINANCIAL STABILITY/SUSTAINABILITY</u>				
Income sources are diverse and stable	Finance	10	13	-3
Income generating activities used where appropriate	Finance	4	6	-2
Adequate resources employed in fundraising	Finance	6	12	-6
Good relationships with funders are maintained	Finance	2	9	-7
Adequate reserves policy enabling cash flow management	Finance	9	11	-2
<u>FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY</u>				
Adequate financial literacy	Finance	3	9	-6
Complete annual financial reports prepared	Finance	**11	10	1
Financial statements audited	Finance	**11	11	0
Integration of finance and operations	Finance	4	11	-7

APPENDIX 6

Criterion	Dimension	Judgment	Guidance	Difference
Sound budgeting and cash flow forecasting processes	Finance	10	**14	-4
Value for money is provided	Finance	9	9	0
Robust systems and controls protect against fraud, theft and error	Finance	9	**15	-6
Careful management of debt levels	Finance	3	^^2	1
<u>EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE</u>				
Transparent and consultative decision making process	Leadership	4	6	-2
Teamwork promoted within the organisation	Leadership	2	3	-1
Strong, skilled and committed leadership team	Leadership	7	8	-1
<u>CLEAR MISSION AND PURPOSE</u>				
Organisation has a mission statement	Leadership	**12	**16	-4
Organisation has a vision	Leadership	9	10	-1
Common set of basic beliefs and values	Leadership	2	8	-6
Criterion	Dimension	Judgment	Guidance	Difference
Clarity over the organisation's purpose	Leadership	5	11	-6
All programmes are well defined and aligned with the organisation's mission and strategy	Leadership	3	10	-7

APPENDIX 6

Criterion	Dimension	Judgment	Guidance	Difference
<u>STRATEGIC PLANNING UNDERTAKEN</u>				
Strategic plan	Leadership	9	**14	-5
Participatory planning process	Leadership	3	5	-2
Financial resources available to enable strategic planning	Leadership	1	3	-2
Needs based work	Leadership	7	9	-2
Continual assessment of gaps in ability of programmes to meet assessed needs	Leadership	2	3	-1
Context/threats and opportunities in the operating environment considered	Leadership	7	8	-1
Exit strategies defined	Leadership	2	^^2	0
<u>MONITORING OF PROGRESS AND IMPACT</u>				
Clear, realistic goals/targets	Leadership	**11	13	-2
Progress against plans monitored	Leadership	**14	**14	0
Impact/outcomes of work monitored	Leadership	**11	13	-2
Long-term impact monitored	Leadership	2	6	-4
Monitoring and evaluation are fully integrated / adaptive management is practiced	Leadership	6	10	-4
Comprehensive, integrated system (e.g., balanced scorecard) used	Leadership	1	4	-3
Track record/evidence of previous impact	Leadership	7	3	4

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Criterion	Dimension	Judgment	Guidance	Difference
<u>STRIVES FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</u>				
Possibility of scaling up frequently assessed and acted on	Leadership	3	4	-1
The organisation strives to improve quality, e.g., by learning	Leadership	3	3	0
Intention towards continuous improvement	Leadership	6	10	-4
System for gathering feedback	Leadership	3	9	-6
Complaints system in place	Leadership	2	6	-4
Research and data collection undertaken	Leadership	2	4	-2
Practice of sharing knowledge and learning outcomes	Leadership	5	9	-4
Innovation supported and promoted	Leadership	5	9	-4
<u>OPEN TO COLLABORATION</u>				
The organisation networks and collaborates with others as appropriate	Leadership	10	12	-2
<u>EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT STYLE</u>				
Effective communication throughout the organisation	Management	3	7	-4
Appropriate management skills	Management	3	4	-1
Clear operating procedures	Management	4	9	-5
<u>RISKS ARE EFFECTIVELY MANAGED</u>				
Appropriate risk management process	Management	4	12	-8

APPENDIX 6

Criterion	Dimension	Judgment	Guidance	Difference
Suitable health and safety policies and practices	Management	1	6	-5
Intellectual property effectively managed	Management	1	^^1	0
Appropriate asset management procedure	Management	3	7	-4
Insurance requirements up to date and regularly reviewed	Management	1	9	-8
Steps taken to protect organisation's reputation	Management	5	10	-5
Organisation acts with respect to the environment	Management	2	^^2	0
<u>APPROPRIATE CAPACITY</u>				
Operational planning undertaken	Management	4	11	-7
Adequate internal infrastructure	Management	8	12	-4
<u>EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES</u>				
Appropriate personnel policies place	Management	3	8	-5
Employees clear on their roles and responsibilities	Management	6	9	-3
Staff and management have appropriate experience and/or qualifications	Management	8	9	-1
Staff drawn from diverse background	Management	^^0	3	-3
Equality and diversity policies are appropriately applied	Management	3	5	-2
Clear recruitment process for staff and volunteers	Management	3	11	-8
Employee performance review process	Management	6	11	-5
Appropriate training and development opportunities for employees	Management	10	9	1

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Criterion	Dimension	Judgment	Guidance	Difference
Procedures to promote low employee turnover	Management	9	9	0
<u>VOLUNTEERS USED AS APPROPRIATE</u>				
Volunteers used as appropriate	Management	3	11	-8
Volunteers clear about their roles and responsibilities	Management	4	6	-2
Volunteers get appropriate support and supervision	Management	2	7	-5
<u>BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANS IN PLACE</u>				
Succession planning for key posts	Management	3	9	-6
Continuity/disaster recovery plans	Management	1	4	-3
<u>EFFECTIVE EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION</u>				
Effective external communications	Management	7	12	-5
Effective stakeholder engagement procedures	Management	4	9	-5
Financial reports communicated to stakeholders as appropriate	Management	4	6	-2
Responsiveness exhibited	Management	3	7	-4

APPENDIX 7

Appendix 7: Mapped criteria lists. Criteria per Framework Review have been ranked according to how many frameworks required each particular criterion. Where ranks are tied, the middle rank is taken (e.g., three criteria tied for first, second and third place will receive overall rank each of 2). Criteria as per Survey Participants are ranked according to the relative scores (as a percentage) they received.

Criteria as per Framework Review	Rank	Criteria as per Conservation Practitioner Survey	Score
<u>GOVERNANCE</u>			
<u>STRONG BOARD-EXECUTIVE RELATIONSHIP</u>			
Board members and managers work well together	14	A strong and effective working relationship between the board and the senior management	89.5
Good communications between board and rest of the organisation	8		
		A well-functioning board of trustees	88.0
<u>BOARD MEMBERS CLEAR ON ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES</u>			
Board members understand their roles and responsibilities	20	Trustees that are clear on their roles and responsibilities	86.8
		Trustees that are clear on the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team	86.1
Trustees understand the mission and aims of the organisation	14		
Trustees receive an induction into the organisation	10		
Mechanisms for board evaluation and accountability	14	A mechanism for evaluating the performance of the board	75.0
Appropriate training and development for trustees	5	Appropriate training and development for trustees	71.3
<u>BOARD STRUCTURE IS APPROPRIATE</u>			
	28	A board that is well structured (i.e., right size, relevant skills and experience, diverse backgrounds, term limits, use of subcommittees)	84.9

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Criteria as per Framework Review	Rank	Criteria as per Conservation Practitioner Survey	Score
Board size is appropriate for the organisation	14		
Board members have relevant backgrounds, skills, experience and professional network connections	14		
Board member term limits	9		
Staggered term process for board members	2		
Diverse board with a range of skills	18		
BOARD STRUCTURE IS APPROPRIATE (continued)			
Appropriate use of committees	11		
Names of officers and board members available/published	5		
<u>BOARD MEMBERS ARE COMMITTED</u>			
Board members are committed to the organisation	13	Trustees that are committed to the organisation (i.e., willing and able to give time to it and those who buy in to its mission and purpose)	92.0
Regular scheduled board meetings	17	Regular trustee meetings (at least two per year)	85.1
Meetings are well planned and run	12		
Board meeting minutes prepared	10		
Good attendance at board meetings	16	Good attendance at and involvement in trustee meetings	86.4
Procedure for handling urgent matters between scheduled meetings	4		
<u>BOARD MEMBERS ARE INDEPENDENT</u>			
Independence of board	9	Trustees that are independent (i.e., not paid, remunerated, employed or directly related to anyone employed by the organisation)	83.3

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Criteria as per Framework Review	Rank	Criteria as per Conservation Practitioner Survey	Score
Board members do not receive inappropriate financial benefits from the organisation	12		
Appropriate board appointment process	10		
<u>LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ACCOUNTABLE</u>			
CEO held fully accountable	17	A mechanism for evaluating the performance of senior management	84.2
		A mechanism for holding senior management accountable for the organisation's performance	86.2
		Appropriate training and development for senior management	84.8
Process for determining executive compensation	7		
<u>INTERNAL GOVERNANCE</u>			
The organisation complies with applicable laws and regulations of the country	19		
Conflict of interest policy and procedure	16	A mechanism to ensure compliance with all relevant laws and regulations	88.8
Whistle blower policy	11	A conflict of interest policy and procedure	83.8
Appropriate document retention and destruction policies and procedures	9	A whistleblowing policy and procedure	78.8
Appropriate mechanisms for data and privacy protection	5		
Internal code of conduct/ethics policy	5		
<u>FINANCE</u>			
<u>FINANCIAL STABILITY/SUSTAINABILITY</u>			
Income sources are diverse and stable	23	Diverse and/or stable income sources	95.7

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Criteria as per Framework Review	Rank	Criteria as per Conservation Practitioner Survey	Score
Income generating activities are used where appropriate	10	Income generating activities (e.g., sales of goods or services, charging volunteers to get involved, etc.)	67.5
Adequate resources are employed in fundraising	18	Adequate fundraising resources (i.e., professional fundraisers, time and skills for grant and proposal writing, etc.)	84.6
Good relationships with funders are maintained	11	A mechanism for maintaining good relationships with funders (e.g., reporting to them, answering their questions, etc.)	90.9
Adequate reserves policy enabling cash flow management	20	A stable reserve of funds to cover expenses for a few months in the case of a financial emergency	89.9
<u>FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY</u>			
Adequate financial literacy	12	Financial literacy within operational teams (i.e., a basic understanding of financial considerations)	83.9
		Financial literacy within the senior management team	93.0
		Financial literacy within the board	88.9
Complete annual financial reports prepared	22		
<u>FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY (continued)</u>			
Financial statements audited	23	An external financial audit	87.8
Finance and operations integrated	15	Integration of financial information into operational decision-making	87.7
Sound budgeting and cash flow forecasting processes	24	A suitable budgeting process	89.3
		A suitable cash flow management process	89.3
The organisation should provide value for money	18	Prioritisation of programme/field expenditure over spending on overheads, infrastructure and head office functions	82.0
		Prioritisation of programme/field expenditure over fund raising costs	80.0
Robust systems and controls protect against fraud, theft and error	24	Robust internal controls that help to prevent and detect fraud, theft and error	89.3

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Criteria as per Framework Review	Rank	Criteria as per Conservation Practitioner Survey	Score
Debt levels are carefully managed	5	Careful management of debt	83.3
<u>LEADERSHIP</u>			
<u>EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE</u>			
Transparent and consultative decision making process	10	A transparent and/or consultative decision-making process	86.9
Teamwork is promoted within the organisation	5	Effective teamwork within the organisation	96.2
Strong, skilled and committed leadership team	17	A strong, skilled and committed leadership team	95.3
<u>CLEAR MISSION AND PURPOSE</u>			
Organisation has a mission statement	31	A clear, written mission statement	77.1
Organisation has a vision	22	A written vision	73.9
Common set of basic beliefs and values	11	A common set of values and beliefs within your organisation	84.0
Clarity over the organisation's purpose	18	All employees, managers and board members being clear about your organisation's mission and purpose	90.4
All programmes are well defined and aligned with the organisation's mission and strategy	14	Ensuring that all programmes are aligned to your organisation's mission and strategy	85.1
		Ensuring that all decisions place the mission at the heart of all operations	84.7
		Refusing funds or activities that will force your organisation to deviate from its mission	76.9
<u>STRATEGIC PLANNING UNDERTAKEN</u>			
Strategic plan	25	A written, updated strategic plan	75.6
		A written and well articulated logic model or theory of change	66.5

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Criteria as per Framework Review	Rank	Criteria as per Conservation Practitioner Survey	Score
		A mechanism for ensuring that any written plans underpin decisions made and activities conducted	70.5
		Clarity about HOW the organisation is going to achieve its goals	86.4
Planning process is participatory	8		
Financial resources available to enable strategic planning	4		
Needs-based work	19	Undertaking a needs assessment prior to beginning any new programmes or activities	76.3
Continual assessment of gaps in ability of programmes to meet assessed needs	5		
Consideration of context/threats and opportunities in the operating environment	15	A procedure to ensure that internal threats and opportunities are identified and acted on (e.g., loss of key staff, lack of capacity, etc.)	80.0
		A procedure to ensure that external threats and opportunities are identified and acted on (e.g., physical danger to staff, external conflict, availability of funding or resources, etc.)	80.6
Exit strategies are set out	4	Exit strategies for all projects and programmes	72.9
<u>MONITORING OF PROGRESS AND IMPACT</u>			
Clear, realistic goals/targets	25	Clear and realistic goals and targets	90.5
Progress against plans is monitored	31	Monitoring progress against planned goals and targets	85.9
		Monitoring inputs (e.g., number of people, amount of money spent, etc.)	81.2
		Monitoring outputs (e.g., number of workshops held, number of people trained, etc.)	78.5
		Feeding results of employee appraisals into organisational monitoring and evaluation	65.0

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Criteria as per Framework Review	Rank	Criteria as per Conservation Practitioner Survey	Score
Impact/outcomes of the organisation's work is monitored	24	Monitoring outcomes and impacts (e.g., reduction in charcoal burning, less habitat encroachment, etc.)	86.8
Long-term impact is monitored	8	Long-term monitoring of impact	87.9
Monitoring and evaluation are fully integrated / adaptive management	17	Adaptive management	88.6
		A mechanism for reviewing and amending any strategic plans/theories of change in light of lessons learned and new information gained	77.7
		A mechanism for integrating measurement, monitoring and evaluation findings into your organisation's work	81.3
Comprehensive, integrated system (e.g., balanced scorecard) used	5	Using a balanced scorecard/dashboard style performance measurement system	60.6
Track record/evidence of previous impact	11		
<u>STRIVES FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</u>			
Possibility of scaling up frequently assessed and acted on	7	Ability to scale up successful interventions and actions	79.4
The organisation strives to improve quality, e.g. by learning	6		
Intention towards continuous improvement	16	A mechanism to enable your organisation to learn from its previous experience	84.9
System for gathering feedback	13	A system for gathering feedback from relevant stakeholders (e.g., communities you interact with, governments where you operate, etc.)	81.7
Complaints system in place	9		
Research and data collection are undertaken	6	A mechanism for undertaking research and data collection	79.2
Practice of sharing knowledge and learning outcomes	14		
		An openness to discussing things that didn't work as planned and why	89.0
Innovation is supported and promoted	15	Willingness and ability to innovate	88.8

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Criteria as per Framework Review	Rank	Criteria as per Conservation Practitioner Survey	Score
<u>OPEN TO COLLABORATION</u>			
The organisation networks and collaborates with others as appropriate	22	Willingness to collaborate with others where this will provide better results than acting alone	91.7
<u>GENERAL MANAGEMENT</u>			
<u>EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT STYLE</u>			
There is effective communication throughout the organisation	10	Effective communication throughout the organisation	95.0
Relationships that are dictated mainly by organisational needs rather than hierarchy or politics	2	Relationships that are dictated mainly by organisational needs rather than hierarchy or politics	82.5
Leaders have appropriate management skills	7	Management skills training for anyone responsible for supervising employees or volunteers	80.0
Clear procedures	14	Clear operating rules and procedures for all employees	86.2
		Efficient working procedures within your organisation	83.8
<u>RISKS ARE EFFECTIVELY MANAGED</u>			
Appropriate risk management process in place	17	A system to identify and manage strategic and operational risks to the organisation	82.3
Suitable health and safety policies and practices are in place	7	Appropriate health and safety management procedures	80.7
Intellectual property is effectively managed	2		
Appropriate asset management procedure	10	Appropriate insurances in place (e.g., for loss of life, damage to property, etc.)	84.9
Insurance requirements are up to date and regularly reviewed	10		
Steps are taken to protect the organisation's reputation	15	A mechanism to ensure that your organisation's reputation remains intact	85.5
Organisation acts with respect to the environment	4		

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Criteria as per Framework Review	Rank	Criteria as per Conservation Practitioner Survey	Score
<u>APPROPRIATE CAPACITY</u>			
Operational planning is undertaken	15	A formal operational plan	77.9
Sufficient resources to deliver current level of service	18	Sufficient capacity and other necessary resources to enable the organisation to deliver on its goals	90.7
Internal infrastructure is adequate to do the job	14	Adequate IT systems	85.2
<u>EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES</u>			
Appropriate personnel policies in place	11	Appropriate personnel policies (e.g., contracts of employment, means for setting and reviewing pay, etc.)	84.8
Employees are clear on their roles and responsibilities	15	A mechanism to ensure that employees are clear on their roles and responsibilities	87.9
		Clear lines of management and reporting for all employees	85.4
Staff and management have the appropriate experience and/or qualifications	17	Appropriate skills, experience and/or qualifications within the organisation	90.7
Employees and managers are drawn from diverse background	3	A diverse workforce (in terms of gender, religion, race, ethnicity, etc.)	74.0
Equality and diversity policies are appropriately applied	8		
Clear recruitment process for staff and volunteers	14	Clear recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers	75.4
Employee performance review process	18	A performance review process for all employees	85.1
Employees are provided with appropriate training and development opportunities	19	Appropriate training and development opportunities for all employees	82.9
Procedures to promote low employee turnover	18	Low employee turnover	78.8
<u>VOLUNTEERS USED AS APPROPRIATE</u>			
Volunteers are used as appropriate	15	The use of volunteers where this is appropriate	79.3

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Criteria as per Framework Review	Rank	Criteria as per Conservation Practitioner Survey	Score
Volunteers are clear about their roles and responsibilities	10	A mechanism to ensure that volunteers are clear about their roles and responsibilities	83.0
Volunteers get appropriate support and supervision	9	Appropriate support and supervision for volunteers	84.0
<u>BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANS IN PLACE</u>			
Succession planning for key posts	13	Succession planning for all key posts	79.0
Continuity/disaster recovery plans in place	5	Business continuity and/or disaster recovery plans	77.0
<u>EFFECTIVE EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION</u>			
Engages in effective external communications	20	Effective external communication	91.0
Effective stakeholder engagement procedures	13	Effective stakeholder engagement (where needed and appropriate)	91.5
Financial reports are communicated to stakeholders as appropriate	10		
The organisation is responsive	11	Being responsive to stakeholders	88.6
Total number of criteria = 106		Total number of criteria = 99	