



Strategy 2017-2022: Summary

There is overwhelming evidence that the biosphere – the thin and complex film of life that envelops our planet and sustains humanity – is not in a healthy state. The symptoms are manifold, including the extreme weather events associated with climate change, the deterioration of land, air and water quality, the loss of natural ecosystems and the decline of many species. Much of this deterioration, particularly that involving ecosystems and species, is commonly described as biodiversity loss.

The causes of these changes are complex, interlinked and operate at many different scales, from the local to the global. While some of them – most notably climate change – have galvanised significant action at the global level, others have not. There have been responses, particularly to biodiversity loss, and many local successes, but not enough to halt or reverse overall trends.

The Luc Hoffmann Institute was established by WWF and the MAVA Foundation in 2012 to mobilise world-class thinking in science, policy and practice to improve conservation outcomes, particularly for biodiversity. Drawing on experience gained in our first phase of work, our new strategy for 2017 to 2022 embraces the biosphere as a whole and is based on a strong understanding of what is needed to bring about real and lasting change.

One of our main aims is to use existing knowledge and evidence to create a dialogue between people from widely different backgrounds with differing perspectives, to understand the approaches that can lead to conservation success. **We strive to create the conditions in which different individuals and constituencies can meet on an equal footing to establish common ground – even if this means agreeing where they disagree as a basis for moving forward.** We know this is not easy or quick so we ensure that enough time is built into our activities. By working with a wide range of partners we are identifying new approaches to challenges, developing solutions and catalysing new networks or ‘champions’ to implement these.

The institute has finite resources but we are ambitious in what we hope to achieve and as strategic as possible in meeting our goals. Partnership is central to our activities and we ensure that everything we produce has an identified need, audience and plan for effective communication. To remain flexible, we operate with a small core team, drawing on a wide network of thinkers and practitioners in conservation and beyond.

We recognise that successful solutions to conservation problems nearly always entail changes in behaviour at all levels, from individuals to governments. To help bring this about we draw on the best science across a range of disciplines, not only conservation science and ecology, but also the social sciences including psychology, sociology and economics. **Our work is designed to advance science in multidisciplinary and applied fields,** building on our track record of publication in high-impact peer-reviewed journals.

The new approaches we develop and the solutions we seek are generated through four mutually supportive workstreams.

1. Thought leadership: We encourage those involved in conservation to think hard about some of their basic precepts and about the future. We create spaces for them to talk freely with each other and with those outside their immediate communities of practice who may not share all, or even any of their values. This involves fundamental questioning of the status quo as we try to bring transformative thinking to bear on conservation problems.

2. Insights: In many cases solutions require a focussed appraisal of current conservation practice to determine what works and what doesn't, and why. In part we do this using the extensive body of evaluations that institutions and organisations have made public over the years and by drawing on the personal experiences of conservation practitioners. In this way we strive with our partners to identify and replicate the conditions most likely to lead to success.

3. Incubation: We take emerging new ideas from any sector where these have the potential to change society and assess their potential impact on conservation policy and practice. We help define the key issues and questions that arise and set these up in a way that allows the conservation community to engage with them.

4. Rapid-response dialogues: These focus on immediate and often highly controversial issues. This workstream represents a strategy for dealing quickly and effectively with the unexpected in a coherent and scientifically sound way. Such strategies are becoming increasingly important in a time when social media can detonate issues without warning.

All of our activities are rigorously monitored and evaluated; we have a strong culture of learning so that our workstreams and methods are continually improved and updated.

The institute's new approach builds on past experience and some of our first-phase projects will contribute to this new phase. We have embarked on a number of exciting new initiatives, including a collaboration with the World Economic Forum, UN Environment and other partners to set out possible conservation futures.

Our work would not be possible without our close relationship with WWF and generous support from the MAVA Foundation. We intend to build on this support to become financially self-sustaining by 2022.



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