REDSTONE

Environmental Resilience GSP Evaluation

—

Yuendumu, Northern Territory, Australia

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Overview

Alto Mayo, Conservation International, Marlondag

The BHP Foundation (BHPF) commissioned this evaluation to better understand the impact to date of the Environmental Resilience Global Signature Program ("the Program") and to provide recommendations to strengthen the Program going forward.

BHPF issued an Invitation to Tender that requested an evaluation of a range of topics, including to: assess the extent to which Projects are collectively contributing to the aim, objectives and measures of success of the Program; assess the effectiveness of Program execution; review the Program status, strategy risks, and opportunities; and to consider the Program's strategic relevance, and its influence and impact on global conservation and sustainability aims.

The evaluation sets out to answer the questions above, among others, organized into the following chapters:

> **Program description:** how the Program developed its strategy and portfolio and the Program's key points of evolution over the last five years (chapter 2)

> **Results:** what the Program and its portfolio of projects have accomplished to date and what factors have shaped the level of success (chapter 3)

> **Reflections on the Program's strategy and operations:** how the Program's strategy and execution deliver on the Program's theory of change (chapter 4)

> **Recommendations:** strategic and operational recommendations (chapter 5)

This evaluation draws on conversations with 46 interviewees (18 project partners, 8 Foundation staff members and advisors, and 20 external

experts); review of Foundation strategy documents; review of grantee proposals, reports, evaluations, and supporting materials; and additional research on peer philanthropic efforts in biocultural and Indigenous-led conservation and trends in funding.

This evidence base provides a rich set of materials to draw upon. However, there are limitations to the evidence base. These include a lack of consistent and regularly-collected cross-project quantitative metrics (e.g., hectares conserved, employment days), limited collection of indicators of cultural integrity and increased local agency across projects, evolving Program priorities, the inability to travel to project sites due to COVID, and the relative reliance on grantees and partners for detailed information on project progress rather than direct interviews with local partners such as Indigenous Nations. While we believe the evidence base is more than sufficient to assess the Program's progress and inform strategic insights, these limitations do result in a less than perfectly complete view of the Program.

Also, this evaluation was shaped by both the Program's development and the larger global context. In particular, many of the projects are only a few years old, so results are largely limited to early indicators of progress. On the global scale, COVID has significantly disrupted projects, including making travel and many core project activities difficult. As a result, projects have had to adapt approaches to address the challenges and uncertainty COVID has created.

Overall, we found that the Program has made important progress to advance an ambitious vision of equitable, community-driven conservation. With the Program's and Foundation's support, Program partners have made important progress toward establishing foundational conditions, capacities and relationships for long-term resilient ecosystems and communities. At the same time, project teams, their evaluators, and our experience in the field all suggest that converting foundational elements into sustainable livelihoods and markets will take more time than previously suggested.

Going forward, the Program has an opportunity to further focus its strategic goals and niche within the conservation field; clarify objectives and intentions, particularly regarding the Program's approaches to scaling, Indigenous-led conservation, and global advocacy and influence; and further align practices with those intentions.

Program description

Martu womens ranger team

The following chapter summarizes the Program's strategy and portfolio development as context for the evaluation by answering three questions:

A. What is the Program's vision and goal?

B. How were projects selected and what common themes unite the portfolio?

C. What is the Program's theory of change and how has it evolved?

A. What is the Program's vision and goal?

The Program's stated vision is one of resilient natural environments that can sustain peoples' cultures and communities, support livelihoods, preserve biodiversity and ecosystem services,

and help society to respond to climate change.[1] In service of this vision, the Program has a goal to "support new ways of conserving and sustainably managing large-scale, globally significant natural environments for the benefit of future generations."[2] This vision and goal reflect the Foundation's ambition to achieve resilience at a global scale and the Foundation's recognition of the multiple dimensions of durable resilience.

The Foundation developed this vision and goal in collaboration with representatives from international NGOs and global development organizations via a set of workshops in 2016 designed to surface gaps in current conservation philanthropy. While not explicitly stated, our sense from interviews with Foundation leadership is that the vision has evolved and been clarified over the last few years in a few important ways. Specifically, the Program recognizes the importance of

1. *Environmental Resilience Program Snapshot memo*, July 2021
2. *Environmental Resilience Program Snapshot memo*, July 2021

Indigenous communities as stewards of ecological and cultural integrity; seeks to seed innovative, risk-seeking conservation models; and aims to shift the billions of dollars likely to flow to natural capital over the coming decades to better integrate Indigenous stewardship of land and sea and increase environmental and social benefits of this funding.[3]

B. How were projects selected and what common themes unite the portfolio?

The Program selected a portfolio of projects working across geographies and conservation models through a multi-stage, multi-year process. The Program sought to take a deliberately higher-risk, higher-return approach, in which it would invest in "innovative" projects with the recognition that not all projects were likely to succeed, but if they were successful, they had the potential to be "transformative."[4] The Foundation was initially established with a five year period of funding certainty from the donor, and so the Program's projects needed to have a compelling case that they could achieve sustainable outcomes during the initial grant period.

The portfolio of six projects were selected through four stages: identification, selection, definition, and execution. More than 30 organizations were invited to apply in the identification stage, resulting in 21 concept notes moving to the selection phase. The Program invited Board approval at the selection stage before moving

to definition, and upon completion of the definition stage before moving to execution. The Foundation selection panel included Program staff and leadership with NGO leaders, advisors, and relevant BHP staff serving as additional expert reviewers.

The projects were evaluated against and selected with the following criteria:

> **Strategic fit** with both the Environmental Resilience Program levers (to improve outcomes, mobilize markets, and enhance policy frameworks) and Project Criteria: to be globally significant, relevant to the resources sector, influential on policy, enduring, additional to BHP operational requirements, and catalytic. Place-based projects— which ultimately formed the initial portfolio's core—were assessed for their fit within a four-part typology:

— Enhance resilience of internationally significant and iconic landscapes

— Enhance resilience of high conservation value environments to socio-economic and climate change related pressures through establishing corridors

— Enhance resilience of Indigenous Peoples' land and community lands through projects which deliver environmental, cultural, and socio-economic benefit

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3. Foundation staff interviews.
4. Foundation staff interviews.

— Enhance resilience of vulnerable high carbon and conservation value environments through projects which reduce emissions from avoided deforestation by delivering socio-economic benefit to communities within these environments

› **Value of the project's contribution to sustainable development issues**, including material environmental and social outcomes at the global level, and the potential to scale outcomes or lessons from the project

› **Anticipated stakeholder support** from relevant stakeholders, including local community opinion

› **Regional alignment** with areas where BHP operates, has previously operated, or has customers, while avoiding undue proximity to operations that would suggest overlap with operational requirements (including rehabilitation, offsets, compensatory actions, and BHP conservation targets)

› **Implementation risk and operational capacities**, including the implementing organization's structure and experience to manage a project of this scale; presence of a long-term and realistic operational plan for sustaining project outcomes, and long-term budget estimates that were sufficiently thought through for enduring outcomes

These criteria resulted in the selection of six projects for development. See Appendix A for the list of resulting projects. At the development stage, projects received funding to develop a proposal for execution (a valuable and unusual practice in philanthropy, in our experience). They received support from external advisors to develop proposals into executable projects.

According to Foundation staff, the Program took an intentionally risk-tolerant approach to its grantmaking, seeking projects that "act as test-beds, piloting new approaches"[5] with the understanding that not all projects would accomplish all of their outcomes given the innovative nature of their work, but they should all generate important learnings for the field.[6] Relatedly, the Foundation has explicitly adopted a high appetite for strategic risk with the recognition that "transformational Projects are complex and carry risk to delivery of the intended outcomes."[7]

While project outcomes are quite varied, the portfolio shares a set of common themes, including: the integration of community self-determination and decision-making authority with conservation goals, the multi-dimensional perspective on holistic ecological and social resilience (including the importance of cultural integrity and revitalization to long-term resilience), a focus on long-term sustainability, and the intention to elevate and amplify Indigenous voices, science, and stewardship practices in multiple (although not all) projects. Our sense from interviews and early Program documents is that while the projects were selected against the common criteria above, they were not selected to test specific hypotheses and assumptions within a theory of change, as the theory of change came into focus over a longer period during the Program's early years.

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5. *Board Memo: Environmental Resilience GSP – Project Concept Notes*, November 28, 2016
6. Foundation staff interviews.
7. *BHP Foundation Risk Appetite Statement*.

C. What is the Program's theory of change and how has it evolved?

The Program's theory of change is that by investing in large-scale, multi-year, and innovative place-based conservation models alongside policy advocacy efforts and novel market-mobilizing tools, a set of discrete conservation investments can achieve sustainable place-based outcomes *and* mobilize global public and private stakeholders to take up these models and enhance long-standing conservation approaches (see Appendix B for visual). The current portfolio focuses largely on place-based conservation, though some projects are working to connect into global markets and advocate for local, national, and global policy change.

Our impression from interviews is that this theory of change and the Program's operations to support it has evolved in several ways over the last five years:

> **Increased emphasis on establishing foundational conditions for sustainable management** and an expanded focus on social and cultural elements of conservation and Indigenous-led conservation in particular, and the accompanying refinement of the monitoring and evaluation framework to reflect these markers of progress.

> **A growing intention to expand markets and policy efforts** beyond current place-based work, though this grantmaking is less-developed currently.

> **The recognition of the importance of cross-project learning**, the development of the Knowledge Network, and its conceptual expansion beyond an initial focus on Indigenous-led conservation exchange to encompass the full scope of the portfolio.

> **Refinement of operational processes** like insurance and sub-granting requirements to simplify processes for grantees.

Results

Over the last five years, the Program has established many of the building blocks of a potentially field-leading environmental resilience effort – one that strengthens local and Indigenous communities' roles in resilient stewardship of land and sea while demonstrating how conservation can be equitable, inclusive, and effective. As described in this chapter, there are early successes, particularly in community engagement and training, inclusive conservation planning and shared decision-making, and relationship building. These successes lay the groundwork for the Program's stated vision of resilient natural environments that sustain communities and cultures and support sustainable livelihoods and climate action, as well as the vision-in-practice of designing and developing Indigenous-led conservation approaches and other new conservation models.

However, it is still early days. Large-scale improvement in land management or ecosystem health are not yet evidenced. As described in section C, midterm evaluations suggest it will be difficult to convert foundational successes into Program outcomes in 2-3 years, meaning that they will likely take more time and funding (either from BHPF or others) to achieve than was accounted for in the initial five-year investment.

To understand what the Program has accomplished, we drew on interviews with 46 partners, external experts, and BHPF staff; a review of project design, evaluation, and annual reporting materials; and an analysis of each project's KPIs

Boreal Forest, Canada, The Nature Conservancy

and outcomes.[8] We catalogued each project's outcomes established in project design and their most recently reported annual KPIs, and we mapped these on to the Program's monitoring and evaluation framework (including outputs, outcomes, and indicators). We also reviewed all available midterm evaluations (MTEs). The following chapter shares the results of our investigation, focusing on four key questions:

A. What has the Program accomplished?

B. What is the Program's progress against its theory of change and outcomes?

C. How is the portfolio of projects performing against annual KPIs, project outcomes, and sustainability goals?

D. What enabling conditions have shaped the projects' overall levels of success and the Program's prospects for unlocking sustainable outcomes over time?

8. We recognize that these sources are subject to bias. In particular, grantees are incentivized to emphasize the progress they have made and the importance of the Program's funding, and hindsight is twenty-twenty. That said, we believe individual grantees' reflections, external expert interviews, and the patterns that surface across multiple projects via interviews and document review provide critical and trustworthy evidence of the Program's progress and stakeholder perceptions.

A. What has the Program accomplished?

The Program has grown from a concept into an established program managing over $10 million per year in grants dedicated to resilient and sustainable conservation. Getting a program, particularly one in a relatively new foundation, up and running is no small task. Operational highlights from the last few years include:

> **Sourced, co-designed, and funded six multi-million-dollar projects** in addition to taking over management of the Valdivian Coastal Reserve's endowment. The Program solicited 21 concepts for consideration. It then supported six of those projects with multiple months of strategy development, risk assessment, and due diligence, selected five for implementation, and solicited one additional proposal to progress to implementation as well. Several partners reported that this support was exceptional and thorough compared to experiences with other funders.

> **Established an initial theory of change and a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework** to test that theory and guide grantmaking and Program reporting

> **Funded five mid-term project evaluations** to inform ongoing design and execution and supported projects to act quickly on the evaluations' recommendations.

> **Served as an ongoing thought partner and strategic advisor** to projects through annual site visits (pre-COVID), annual report reviews, and quarterly KPI review check-ins. The Program also supported more frequent check-ins, ad hoc advising, and networking support for partners as desired.

> **Established a knowledge-sharing network** to facilitate cross project learning through annual partner workshops, monthly meetings, trainings, and an online community.[9]

> **Followed the Foundation's detailed risk mitigation and due diligence procedures**, refined those procedures with partners based on their feedback, and pilot-tested the Foundation's risk and resilience framework.

> **Built a knowledgeable Program execution team** through a combination of external advisors and accessing the expertise of additional Foundation-wide Program Officers.

This operational progress has translated into programmatic outcomes. Highlights include:

> **Helped launch and build the capacity of two new organizations to pursue innovative conservation strategies.**

> **Supported the creation of two collaborative efforts to scale resilient management** housed in existing NGOs.

> **Strengthened capacities of several large NGOs to support local, and especially Indigenous communities** in the management of their Traditional Territories, serving as a model within the larger organization.

9. As of June 2021, the Knowledge Network included 113 members, of whom 65 percent visit the site at least once per month. *Knowledge Network Year 2 Report*, June 2021

> **Supported Indigenous communities** in Canada, Peru, and Australia to develop community-led land use plans and engage on local conservation policymaking.

B. What is the Program's progress against its theory of change and outcomes?

At the Program's outset, Foundation leadership set an ambitious goal to catalyze landscape-scale change despite expecting that the Foundation's BHP brand connection may produce a "healthy skepticism" from some actors in the field that might slow progress in early years. Our sense from interviews is that this anticipated skepticism informed the Foundation's decisions to 1) focus on relationship-building and let partners lead in the early years, 2) develop an initial portfolio based on project proposals received through a structured solicitation process, and 3) design and test an accompanying theory of change over time based on partner and field guidance and an emergent monitoring and evaluation framework. Foundation staff see evidence that the Program and its partners have exceeded expectations in setting up complex, ambitious projects aligned with the emergent theory of change despite the potential for this "healthy skepticism."

The Program's theory of change (Appendix B) posits that "**IF the Foundation invests at scale to support people, and the policy and market conditions necessary to sustain resilient natural environments in a portfolio of large-scale, globally significant projects, THEN there will be enduring resilience of those environments and the achievements can be leveraged to**

stimulate resilience at a global scale." This hypothesis results in three interrelated strategies: 1) place-based, projects, 2) enhanced policy frameworks, and 3) mobilized markets. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Program's initial portfolio has focused almost entirely on the place-based investment strategy, though one project has taken on substantial global market development alongside its place-based pilots. The emphasis on place-based investments has therefore resulted in the Program pursuing its theory of change most significantly through projects and partners grounded in place.

The Program's theory of change also identifies five core outcomes: 1) equity and shared decision making, 2) enabling policies for environmental resilience, 3) sustainable livelihoods, 4) incentivizing markets, and 5) resilient natural environments. As is common for a new initiative, the Program did not strictly define or set specific targets for how much progress it expected to see on each outcome, so we cannot evaluate progress against a Program-wide expectation. However, we can note areas where the Program has made relatively more or less progress toward its intended outcomes.

Overall, the Program has made more progress in creating the core organizational structures and relationships needed for *equity and shared decision making* and community buy-in. These relationship- and capacity-building successes are already leading to governance improvements and *enabling policies for environmental resilience* in some cases, as well as broader attitudinal and cultural shifts in focus communities. Progress has been slower on creating *sustainable livelihoods* and *incentivizing markets* (e.g., market

development strategies, sustainable financing approaches), which will be crucial for long-term financial sustainability and scaling. As may have been expected given the Program's early stage, landscape-scale progress toward *resilient natural environments* is not yet evidenced.

Summary of progress toward Program outcomes, in descending order of progress

> **Equity and shared decision making** – There have been many relationship- and capacity-building successes evidenced in interviews, project reports, and external evaluations. These include grantees engaging communities, building trust and key relationships with community leaders, and scaling organizational capacity. As one interviewee reflected, "we're starting to see change in how communities view the opportunities to assert their rights." One midterm evaluation found strong evidence of community buy-in during the pilot deployment of a resource management framework, while another midterm evaluation found that interviewed First Nations representatives felt supported and empowered as decision makers through their relationships with the partner. Nonetheless, community leaders' and on-the-ground partners' involvement in problem definition and project goal-setting conversations was in the context of an environmental resilience program requesting environmental projects with environmental goals and outcomes; this is a different starting point than asking how the Foundation can foster broader community self-determination.

> **Enabling policies for environmental resilience** – The Program has catalyzed improvements in land and resource planning, new community governance agreements, and new or expanded resource management programs (e.g., expanded Ranger and Guardian programs, signed private conservation agreements). Policy changes to-date have been largely contained to specific project areas (i.e., at the community rather than country level), though the Program did contribute to Chile's recent creation of environmental charity tax incentives. The Program has also helped partners expand their organizational capacity needed to unlock additional enabling policies.

> **Sustainable livelihoods** – The Program has generated some resource management employment (e.g., from new Indigenous Ranger and Guardian programs) and alternative livelihood opportunities (e.g., sustainable crop farmer training) within its projects; these livelihoods are not yet self-sustaining.

> **Incentivizing markets** – The Program is moving slower on financial sustainability and market leverage strategies. One project has successfully attracted paying customers, a sign that there is market demand to pay for verifiable sustainability improvements. Project teams recognize the importance of markets for long-term sustainability. This work takes significant time, resources, and trial-and-error to design and execute though, and it is unclear if partner organizations have sufficient expertise or capacity to develop strategies and tactics that would result in new market development.

❯ **Resilient natural environments** – There is not yet evidence of systematic improvements in landscape-scale ecological resilience, though some projects report small-scale successes in improved resources management. For example: one project is reporting improved resource management in discrete areas of the landscape (e.g., invasive species management, prescribed burning), but not yet at the landscape scale. Another reports that ecosystem quality is being maintained (though not necessarily enhanced) within the protected area. Project teams and their evaluators emphasize that continued patience is required to convert the many foundational elements listed above into social and ecological resilience, as progress occurs at "the speed of trust."[10]

The Program's theory of change suggests a set of implied assumptions that the Program may want to further interrogate and update. We have drawn them out here based on our review of the strategy and interviews with Foundation staff. One way that we often see programs track and test assumptions like these is to develop, record, and try to answer a set of strategic learning questions. Table 1 shows potential Program assumptions and related learning questions.

Program learning questions sit a level above any individual project. That said, project-level learning questions and Program-level questions can inform each other given their inter-relationships.

TABLE 1: PROGRAM ASSUMPTIONS AND RELATED LEARNING QUESTIONS

	ASSUMPTION	LEARNING QUESTIONS
Timeline and path to impact	Measurable environmental outcomes are possible after 4-6 years of place-based investment. These outcomes are possible in higher-risk, novel contexts and without significant surrounding support for policy advocacy and market-making.	How do foundational successes in relationship- and capacity-building translate into resilient communities and environments? On what timelines? How does a project know when it has 'arrived'?
Scale	Projects will be able to scale to the global level because other public, private, and philanthropic funders will learn about and want to replicate and/or provide supplementary support for Program-supported pilots and networks that have generated a compelling, relevant proof point. Establishing supportive policy frameworks will result in replication of resilience-building activities.	How is "scale" defined and how does the Program reach it? How do other funders learn about successful pilots and decide to support scaling and replication efforts? As one partner asked at the Annual Partners Workshop, "*how do we translate proof points into talking points?*"
Sustainability	The Program's portfolio of projects can all attain sustainability, including financial sustainability. There are sufficient market incentives, policy supports, and/or interested funders in each project's context to eliminate or significantly reduce long-term need for the Foundation's support to sustain the project's outcomes.	What does full sustainability look like? What are realistic expectations regarding financial sustainability? What level of time, effort, and skillsets does it take to pursue financial sustainability? What would be required for outcomes to be sustainable, even in the absence of sustainably funded activities?
BHPF's role	A corporate philanthropy whose sole donor is a natural resources company can effectively support highly innovative and risk-seeking projects, including an emphasis on collaborative, Indigenous-led approaches to environmental resilience.	What sort of operating procedures would demonstrate the Foundation's commitment to innovation, risk-tolerance, and Indigenous-led conservation? How can the Foundation elicit and act upon its partners' goals, and would doing so still allow it to achieve its environmental goals?

10. Mid-term evaluations as well as project and external experts we interviewed.

C. How is the portfolio of projects performing against annual KPIs, project outcomes, and sustainability goals?

Each of the Program's partners has set two types of milestones to track progress over time:

> **Annual KPIs** that are set in partnership with Program staff each year. These annual metrics are expected to be achieved within one fiscal year and are designed to build toward achieving the overall project outcomes, ideally by the grant's original end date, through an adaptive management approach focused on outcomes rather than process.

> **Overall project outcomes** (or end-of-project outcomes) established during the initial project design phase. These outcomes were set with the expectation that they could be achieved by the end of the project's initial duration of 3-6 years, but in practice they may take many more years to fully realize.

In addition, the Program aims for projects to be sustainable over the long term. Financial sustainability is part of this, but the Foundation also calls out "agile governance" and "ongoing advocacy and influence" as important elements to achieve enduring outcomes.[11]

The following section summarizes our assessment of progress on *annual KPIs,* toward *overall project outcomes,* and toward *sustainability goals.* Section D further assesses what enabling condi-

tions are shaping projects' paths toward achieving overall project outcomes, including financial sustainability outcomes.

Progress on annual KPIs

Projects are largely on-target for annual KPIs related to community engagements, signed agreements, farmers or rangers engaged in training or employment, and number of outreach and communications events held.[12] For example, one project reported being on track to host 10 intergenerational trips on country, and another reported being on track on their KPI to support 2-5 First Nations to advance Guardian program development.

Annual KPIs related to financial sustainability and market-making activities are mixed.[13] Project teams reported that they faced setbacks on achieving these annual KPIs due to the longer duration of the pandemic that ultimately affected work throughout 2021. They had planned on 2021 being a faster-moving catchup year after the challenges of 2020.[14] Projects are nonetheless making strong progress on research and planning efforts.

Progress on overall project outcomes

Projects are still in earlier stages than planned for in project proposals. Partners are making progress on annual KPIs that are aptly mapped to projects' overall outcomes, but the scale of

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11. *BHP Foundation Introduction to the Risk and Resilience Process,* June 2021; *BHP Foundation FY2021 Report to Donor.*
12. KPI analysis
13. KPI analysis
14. Project team interviews

annual KPIs and the suite of underlying activities generally do not match the greater ambition of overall project outcomes.[15] These mismatches suggest that projects are working on the right priorities year-to-year, but that progress either needs to accelerate at much larger step-changes in each upcoming year or that the Program will require many more years of investment (perhaps an additional five to ten years) to realize desired overall project outcomes.

Unsurprisingly, COVID has further slowed progress: projects underspent by 10-50% in FY2021, and many report much less face to face or in-person community engagement than planned.[16] COVID was not the whole story though – partners report having adapted to COVID logistics and pivoted when needed while continuing to make progress on core goals. Delays and underspending also resulted in part from unexpected strategic challenges in executing novel conservation models and operational challenges (e.g., slower timelines to identify and hire the right staff).[17] To achieve their end-of-project outcomes, projects would need to convert their foundational successes in community engagement and planning into improved resource management, robust economic development, and sustainable financing schemes in 2-3 years. The midterm evaluations did not suggest this is likely. They found that partners outlined clear and plausible paths to outcomes but that achieving the outcomes would take many more years.

Based on our experience in environmental philanthropy, the final project outcomes outlined in project proposals would have been hard to achieve even without COVID. Funder-grantee power dynamics often lead to grantees overestimating what they will accomplish. Those dynamics can be exacerbated in 1) first projects, where a grantee is trying to make a good impression with a new funder, 2) longer projects (3+ years), where it is difficult to estimate what will happen in outer years, 3) projects that require innovation, as people's time estimates generally include additional time for the known unknowns but not for the unknown unknowns, 4) projects in complex contexts and/or with many stakeholders, as securing stakeholder buy-in critical to long-term success can take significant time to secure, 5) projects that require building new organizations or new organizational capacity, and 6) projects supported by a funder whose longevity at the time of the project design was uncertain. The Program's projects have most or all of these conditions, resulting in a strong likelihood of overestimating what could be achieved.

These projects are far from alone in facing this dynamic. For example, Conservation International's Global Conservation Fund (GCF)

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15. For example, one project team successfully attained a FY2021 community engagement KPI of reaching 50 farmers via training programs. However, it is not yet clear how they will achieve the project's overall economic development outcome to engage 11,000 producers without engaging substantially more farmers or other producers or conducting different activities that will support the larger set of producers. Similarly, another project is on track for a FY2021 KPI of training 10-15 people on invasive species management. The project's overall outcome is coordinated, landscape-level invasive species management across a full ecosystem, which would require far more training or other scaling mechanisms. Other examples include one project's project-end goal of "improved security of rights over lands, waters, or resources" versus an annual KPI of endorsing a community engagement plan, or another project's overall outcome of fully implementing resilience actions at all 5 sites versus annual KPIs of producing resilience strategies and Action Implementation Plans at just two furthest-along sites.

16. Non-public underspend analysis. On engagement: one interviewee reflected that, "*our biggest challenge has been that we didn't want the project to stall out while we couldn't have meetings in the landscape. We've kept things going with government and institutional partners, but it has had to move forward without more bottom-up engagement processes.*"

17. Project midterm evaluations; project annual and quarterly reporting; project interviews

launched in 2001 as a 10-year initiative "to stop species extinctions in biodiversity hotspots and to protect large areas of major tropical wilderness areas."[18] Now, 20 years in, GCF's work continues.[19]

The BHP Foundation's risk appetite statement recognizes that "truly transformational Projects are complex and carry risk to delivery of the intended outcomes."[20] It is nonetheless worth pursuing conversations with partners to understand contextual and practical considerations – both to develop realistic expectations and to understand how best to support partners in navigating those considerations.

Progress on sustainability

There are two ways to think about sustainability: *sustainability of outcomes* ("will the project's successes be maintained or expanded beyond the project's duration?") and *sustainability of activities* ("does the project have sufficient financial support to continue its day-to-day work?"). It would be valuable for the Foundation to sharpen what "sustainability" means for the Environmental Resilience Program and its portfolio of projects, and what progress is realistic in five years. Our understanding from document review and interviews is that Foundation leadership and staff conceive of "sustainability" in both senses depending on the context, but the Program's partners believe the Foundation more narrowly wants evidence of sustainable activities.

FIGURE 1: COMPONENTS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Put differently, **partners believe they are being asked to secure the financial sustainability of their project activities through other donors, government, and markets, while the Foundation expects this financial sustainability to ultimately result in sustainable outcomes.**

While sustained project activities are necessary for a time to achieve sustainable outcomes, they are not sufficient by themselves to secure long-term, durable change. For example, a project could secure financing from a new philanthropic funder to continue outreach to Indigenous groups (sustainable activities), and still fail to establish an Indigenous community's right to self-determination and sovereignty over their homelands and relations (sustainable outcomes).

As conceptualized in one framework and summarized in Figure 1,[21] sustainable outcomes require

18. Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, "Conservation International unveils solution to prevent global species extinctions", December 2001

19. As another example, the ClimateWorks Foundation launched in 2008 with commitments of over $1 billion from three foundations within its first five years "to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade." Global CO2 emissions continued to climb by about 14% over the following decade. Hewlett Foundation, " Going Global with the Fight against Climate Change", November 2010; Our World in Data, "CO2 emissions"

20. BHP Foundation risk appetite statement

21. Framework adapted from Linden et al 2012. This framework includes a fifth dimension, ecological sustainability, which was omitted from this report because site-specific ecological sustainability was considered in project design and is unique to each project. Linden et al, "A Big Deal for Conservation", Stanford Social Innovation Review, Summer 2012

four components: financial, social (including cultural), political, and organizational sustainability.

On the social and political dimensions of sustainability, projects have made early progress toward securing the "agile governance" and "ongoing advocacy and influence" that the Foundation sees as critical for durable project outcomes.[22] Multiple midterm evaluations report that partners are building relationships with and securing buy-in from community leaders, government officials, and locally-relevant business interests. Several evaluations also note that local stakeholders, including Indigenous leaders, are increasingly aware of and interested in the Program's partners' expertise and the projects' benefits, from private conservation tools to funding for Indigenous stewardship to resource management trainings. Expert interviews validated the Foundation staff's view that these improvements in community governance and decision-making authority ("voice and choice") are required for lasting conservation outcomes, long-term project success, and the Program's success.

Sustainable funding mechanisms, on the other hand, including mechanisms that will support organizational sustainability, have been harder than expected to develop. It is also unclear how much "sustainable funding" through a combination of markets, government, and other funders, is even possible in some cases. Market mechanisms are part of some projects' sustainability strategies, but they generally require ongoing resources and staff time to sustain. For example, the current carbon credits for one project are expiring and will require re-development for

funding to continue. Additionally, these revenue streams may only fulfill a fraction of the projects' sustainability needs, depending on the strength of broader market incentives: as one interviewee noted about Australia, "*there's not a lot of market opportunities in the desert, so you can try to diversify economy, but you can't let government off the hook.*" While government funding can be a value source of ongoing funding, it too requires ongoing attention. For example, Brazil, which is not one of the Program's focus geographies but is home to about 1.5 million square miles of Amazon rainforest and about 180 Indigenous groups, cut its environmental budget by about 25% in 2021,[23] reducing its ability to support conservation activities. Shifting to other funders can be another part of the strategy, but this too requires ongoing effort as foundation strategies shift and funders look to replace their own funds with other sources so they can support new partners. As a result, "sustainable funding" is not just set up during the initial project phase and then resolved, but rather requires ongoing attention and management.

D. What enabling conditions have shaped the projects' overall levels of success and the Program's prospects for unlocking *sustainable outcomes* over time?

Projects' levels of success to date and prospects for sustaining outcomes—not just activities— have been shaped by all four elements of sustainability (financial, political, social, and organizational) as discussed below:[24]

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22. *BHP Foundation Introduction to the Risk and Resilience Process*, June 2021; *BHP Foundation FY2021 Report to Donor*.

23. Reuters, "Bolsonaro slashes Brazil's environment budget, day after climate talks pledge", The Guardian, April 2021

24. Framework adapted from Linden et al 2012. See Section C for further discussion of this sustainability framework.

❯ **Financial dynamics:**

— **Magnitude of market incentives for sustainable investment.** Existing market interests often set the ceiling of possible

funding that conservation efforts could tap into (though the presence of strong market incentives does not inherently lead to funds flowing to specific conservation projects). Projects that can capitalize on corporations' Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) goals and sustainable sourcing pressures and the relatively deep pockets of development agencies are relatively better off. Conversely, projects dependent on carbon and tourism markets are more challenged, especially where tourism is low or the case for additionality of carbon sequestration is less clear given the absence of acute threats; financial sustainability in these scenarios will likely depend more on sustained public funding.

— **National and local public financial support.** For instance, the historical absence of national financial incentives in one country has stymied potential conservation funding, whereas robust public funding for Indigenous-led conservation in another provides a strong potential scaling pathway for philanthropically supported pilots.

— **Existing philanthropic funders with aligned priorities** who may support and scale Program components that require longer-term philanthropic support.

❯ **Political support:**

— **Level of support of national and regional laws, policies, and policymakers.** Preexisting supportive laws and policies have grown the ambition and possibilities for projects (e.g., strong financial support from national government for Indigenous-led land management). Conversely, less supportive legal backing at the national or regional level has inhibited progress (e.g., less buy-in from regional government and a need for more legal tenure documentation for Indigenous communities). Additionally, support from specific regional politicians and policymakers influences policy conditions and translates planning successes (e.g., a strategic plan) into resource management improvements (e.g., via funding for priority conservation actions).[25]

❯ **Social context:**

— **Relative ease of virtual engagement and site-specific COVID conditions.** Projects indicate that engagement has been easier for communities able to interact virtually and much more difficult to interact with remote Indigenous communities.[26]

— **Degree of alignment between local communities' priorities and project objectives.** Collaboratively-set project goals or at least a shared understanding of the project's near-term benefits for partner communities can accelerate pace, while a lack of these elements can slow progress.[27, 28] In the best

25. Midterm evaluations

26. Project interviews; recent annual and quarterly projects reports

27. Project interviews; project mid-term evaluations

28. One mid-term evaluation discusses the need for engagement with smaller landowners to build a base of support and interest in non-elite conservation. Another mid-term evaluation talks about trust in its lesson learned reflection.

cases, projects catalyze local agency and community leadership so that communities move toward project objectives out of their own sense of priorities and interests. During the pandemic, some communities' priorities shifted more dramatically than others, which affected the pace and milestones that project teams could respectfully set.

> **Organizational capacity:**

Alto Mayo, Conservation International, Marlondag

— **Grantee and subgrantee organizational capacity and ability to quickly hire staff with the right expertise.** Organizational capacities on sustainable financing strategies and business models, deep and respectful community engagement, strategic communications, and subgranting are cited by both project evaluators and partners themselves as particularly critical for progress.[29] Several midterm evaluations and partner interviews highlight that longer-than-expected lag times to hire for the many skills and expertise needed contributed to delays in progress.[30]

— **Partners' understanding of and relationships with community leaders, national and regional policymakers, and global influence networks.**[31] For example, projects have progressed relatively quickly in situations with preexisting BHPF staff engagement and relationship-building.[32] Partners' personal relationships and connections into broader networks have especially determined the scope and style of progress on the policy and markets pillars (e.g., staff called upon to provide reflections to national politicians; connecting with regional land management officials; growing connections with both global corporates and business planning experts).

29. Project interviews.

30. One mid-term evaluation noted staffing turnover as an issue. Another project team's staffing reflections in project interview and most recent annual report; One MTE suggested an area for improvement of bringing in staff with the right expertise earlier.

31. Midterm evaluations

32. External interviews

Reflections on the Program's strategy and operations

Alto Mayo, Conservation International, Marlondag

The following chapter looks beyond the results of the Program and its portfolio to date to offer broader reflections on the Program's strategy and execution. These reflections inform the forward-looking recommendations in Chapter 5.

The Program's strategy has been to establish and support a set of largely place-based projects. This reflects a common first phase for many new foundations as well as a typical long-term approach for many corporate foundations. The Program's tools to achieve global scale and influence have been largely contained within these projects. The Program also has developed a set of grantmaking and reporting processes designed to minimize key risks like corruption and human rights violations while supporting the current portfolio of projects.

As described in the following chapter, the Program's current grantmaking strategy is an effective starting point but may eventually limit its ability to be catalytic and influence global audiences as the Program's vision describes. The Program's grantmaking practices also have created some amount of strain and inefficiency for partners; there are opportunities to further

streamline and simplify these processes, building on the progress the Program has already made. The following chapter reflects on six topics highlighted by Program staff and partners as key to the Program's ongoing evolution:

A. How does the current portfolio reflect where the Program is in its evolution?

B. What is the Program's approach to scaling?

C. How has the Program supported Indigenous-led conservation?

D. What is the Foundation's strategic relevance to and influence on the global environmental resilience field?

E. How do the Foundation's grantmaking practices reflect its goal and vision?

F. How does measurement, reporting, and evaluation capture the Program's progress?

A. How does the current portfolio reflect where the Program is in its evolution?

As noted in the 2021 BHP Foundation Report to Donor, foundations take a range of approaches, from a "Traditional" to a "Catalytic" operating model (See Figure 2). Each approach offers strengths and risks, as described in Figure 2, and many foundations will apply different operating models across grantmaking areas and over time.

FIGURE 2: PHILANTHROPIC OPERATING SPECTRUM AND EVOLVING POSITION OF BHP FOUNDATION*

* Chart replicated from FY2021 BHP Foundation Report to Donor; descriptions of operating models are Redstone's synthesis of the Report's descriptions; Strengths and Risks are Redstone's assessment
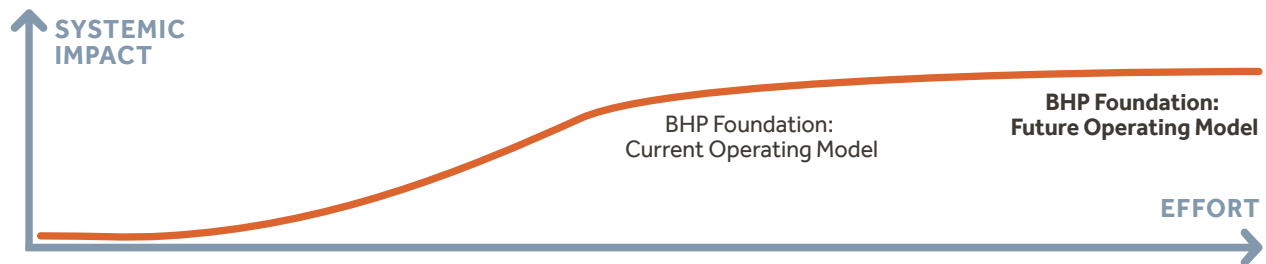
Traditional: Gives grants and observes outcomes

> One-time, often reactive grants on themes without long-term strategy

> Support of social causes while aiming to produce reputational benefits in focus geographies

> Minimal external communication of lessons learned and collaboration with other funders

STRENGTHS:

> Operationally efficient

> Reduces risk of backlash from taking stronger points of view on particular topics

RISKS:

> Limited potential for influence beyond projects

> Imposes funders' thematic priorities onto beneficiaries

Supporter: Supports partners to optimize and promote outcomes

> Medium-term (3-5 year) investments in projects aligned with broad programmatic strategies

> Support of partner-led sustainability, exit strategy, and advocacy with M&E focused on project outputs and outcomes

> Some independent public communications but limited collaboration with peer

STRENGTHS:

> Operationally efficient with more opportunity for sustainability and influence beyond the life of a project

RISKS:

> Hard to create a Program that is more than the sum of its parts

Catalytic: Proactive catalyzer of systemic change

> Long-term (5+ year) projects aligned with clear theory of change (TOC) to address root causes; KPIs linked to project outcomes enabling flexibility as project TOCs evolve

> Dedicated internal innovation, advocacy, and M&E capacity; active advocate in own right

> Intentional collaboration and communication with other funders and global influencers

STRENGTHS:

> Greatest potential for durable outcomes and larger-scale change

RISKS:

> Outcomes are less concrete or may take (much) longer to achieve

> Requires greater staff capacity and potentially higher operational complexity (number of grants, capacity of grantees, etc.)

In its grantmaking so far, the Program funded a portfolio of distinct on-the-ground projects and provided active cross-project support: we believe this approach places the Program in the "Supporter" operating model. In our experience, this approach is common early in a program's evolution, or with initiatives whose long-term funding is uncertain. A project-based approach allows the program to learn the practical realities of on-the-ground conservation, test its hypotheses and theory of change in different contexts, and build the credibility and on-the-ground expertise that it will need to leverage if and when the program begins using its voice and reputation to advocate for broader systems change. It also creates learning opportunities for a new program if paired with a Program-wide theory of change, consistent cross-project design and monitoring and evaluation processes, hands-on support for partners, an openminded learning posture, and multi-year funding commitments, all of which we see evidence that the Program has adopted.[33] From what we've observed, many corporate foundations never move past the "traditional" model, as they value the certainty of outcomes and the brand benefits those outcomes generate over the potential for more catalytic but less certain outcomes.

The initial projects were chosen based on their individual merits and deliberately spread across priority geographies. This has allowed the Program to support projects that it determined to be more likely to succeed and perhaps be replicated by others based on a project's individual success. However, while some of the resulting projects share common themes, they do not intrinsically feed off or reinforce each other beyond shar-

ing the knowledge gained from one project to another. Further, the Program does not currently support efforts outside the individual projects and knowledge sharing across projects to scale partners' innovations.

As the Foundation has achieved longer funding certainty from its donor, our understanding is that the Program and the Foundation seek to move further toward the "catalytic philanthropy" operating model to support systemic change.[34] In our experience, programs and foundations practicing catalytic philanthropy develop perspectives on the key challenges facing the field and testable solutions, the capacity of major actors and the gaps that need to be filled, the Foundation's unique priorities and constraints, and how their portfolio can work in an integrated way to advance their goals. They often shift from open grantmaking processes to closed ones where they solicit grant applications from organizations targeted to complete specific objectives or build the capacity of organizations if that capacity does not already exist in the field. Depending on the Program's ultimate goal, some potential strategies include:

> Establish enabling conditions for, and build the capacity of, regional Indigenous networks (e.g., the Indigenous Desert Alliance, Indigenous Leadership Initiative); strengthen Indigenous rights and land tenure policies so Indigenous peoples and local communities around the world can be and be seen as stewards of their own lands and enabled to envision and implement Indigenous and locally-relevant conservation paradigms.

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33. Examples of evidence include the standardized project selection and development process described in Chapter 3, common project design elements including multi-year funding and thematic criteria, consistent reporting structures for each project, and monthly to quarterly adaptive management check-ins with each project team.

34. *BHP Foundation FY2021 Report to Donor.*

> Support and accelerate shifts within inter-mediaries, and large environmental NGOs (e.g., Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund) in partic-ular, to serve as more effective intermediar-ies and partner more effectively with local communities, including by co-defining respon-sibilities and funding allocations via collabor-ative design.

> Support decisionmakers, including public agencies and businesses, across target geogra-phies to plan for climate resilience and adapta-tion, such as by funding management positions (as the Resilient Reefs Initiative does), demon-strating the value of such planning to public budgets, providing technical assistance to regional planning efforts, supporting pilot projects, or advancing resilience planning tools.

> Increase private land conservation globally by developing national easement frameworks, advocating for tax incentives, demonstrat-ing the value of conserved land, and building the capacity of and networks between land trusts and other private land conservation organizations.

Any one of these strategies would benefit from a portfolio of grants that work together towards the shared goal. For example, strengthening Indigenous rights and land tenure in a particu-lar country (part of the first bullet above) could include capacity building of community orga-nizations, legal support, amplifying Indigenous conservation models through storytelling and strategic communications, and building policy advocacy capacity of Indigenous groups.

As the Program moves toward the catalytic model, it will need to balance being outcome-oriented through making clear bets on systemic change and the risk of imposing its own objec-tives onto communities rather than allowing ecological management approaches and out-comes to be co-developed or collaboratively re-imagined over time.

B. What is the Program's approach to scaling?

Currently, the Program's scaling approaches have been largely contained within individual projects, as fits the Program's strategy of starting with a portfolio of distinct projects. The exception to the project-specific approach is the Knowl-edge Network, which aims to generate cross-project learnings. The Program's approaches to scaling include:

> **Work at significant scale within a single project.** For instance, one project has estab-lished an Indigenous-led governance network covering millions of hectares. Another's work could create conservation gains across a full country. One markets-focused project seeks to work at the landscape-level in geographies around the world. "Significant scale" can be defined beyond hectares, too: for instance, one midterm evaluation reported project participants' views that *"because this project is working with 10 Indigenous Nations, all at differ-ent stages, it has already been scaled."* [35]

> **Establish compelling and replicable proof points**. Pilots of inclusive land governance in

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the Boreal or Peruvian Amazon, private lands conservation in Chile, or CROs for resilience-based reef management could be replicated by follow-on funders if they succeed. As one interviewee noted, these proof points *"can blaze a trail for public spending and lead where the federal government is too unwieldy to do so. Where there have been effective conservation outcomes [in Canada], it's usually because philanthropy and NGOs set the stage and created the enabling conditions for effective federal follow-on support."*

> **Advocate for targeted policies.** Project interviewees highlighted ways that project staff educate policymakers on the importance of resilience and share successful models with them. For example, one project helped lay the groundwork for recent country-wide policy reforms. As one interviewee reflected, *"there's a growing awareness [from government officials] that we're on the radar, we're a partner to talk to."*

> **Incent global funders to pay for improved resource management.** One project is developing a framework to make landscape-scale sustainability improvements more visible and quantifiable so corporations and global development organizations can verify their sustainability claims.

> **Create knowledge-sharing networks** like Ampliseed. These networks facilitate knowledge sharing across geographies, disseminate successful ideas between projects, and support execution efficiencies through sharing lessons learned. These networks are designed

primarily to support Program-supported projects. They are not designed to scale learnings outside of Program-supported projects or attract outside funders to the projects.

As this list suggests, the Program seems to have loosely defined "scaling" as the activities that project teams pursue to expand knowledge of and support for their work. Looking forward, further defining what the Program means by "scale" and what the goals of scaling are will aid strategy development, evaluation, and ease of project execution for partners, who are seeking greater clarity from the Program on definitions of "scale." As one partner said, "*Does scale equal replication of place-based models or does it mean traction at a policy or influence level? Or does it mean learnings through the Knowledge Network?*" Distinguishing between replication and scale goals could help projects clarify what "success" means for their project and for the Program overall. In addition, projects are seeking increased clarity regarding the role of the project team and the role of the Program in scaling or replicating beyond the project outcomes, as well as what resources will be dedicated to that effort.

The Program's scaling strategies would benefit from testing as part of the Program's learning agenda to determine where complementary strategies are needed. In our experience, projects rarely scale easily, even when shown to be successful. Differences in context, lack of sufficient capacity, a bias in philanthropy towards funding innovation rather than repeating others' successes, and insufficient funding, all make scaling difficult.[36,37] As a result, scaling often requires a robust strategy that extends beyond the projects

36. Bradach, "Going to Scale", Stanford Social Innovation Review, Spring 2003.

37. Deiglmeier and Greco, "Why Proven Solutions Struggle to Scale Up", Stanford Social Innovation Review, August 10, 2018.

themselves to tackle broader factors that enable or impede scale.

Just like developing place-based pilots, successful scaling strategies often require initial strategy development, careful documentation and monitoring, and multi-year funding or staff time commitments. Pursuing scaling strategies also requires taking different kinds of risk: one interviewee noted, *"for scaling, we don't even know what works, you're going to have try experimenting, you're going to have to be full-on ok with the risk that it totally fails, that nothing happens. You'd have to fund totally differently than how they are now."*

Scaling strategies frequently tackle the three core factors that influence the relative diffusion of an innovation: the characteristics of the innovation itself, the characteristics of the adopter, and the broader political and social context in the replication target area.[38]

> **Characteristics of the innovation itself:** Is the relative advantage of the innovation significant and easily observable? Can the innovation be trialed and tweaked to a new context? Does it require significant behavior change from adopters? Steps that a project can take to facilitate scaling include to: *Define an innovation's "core components," identify necessary conditions for adoption, and document and communicate the evidence base.*[39]

> **Characteristics of the adopter or replicator:** How familiar are potential adopters with the innovation? What organizational or

Buffel Camp Planning, 10 Deserts Initiative

cultural incentives do they have to innovate? What financial ability do they have to adopt the innovation? Scaling strategies that build potential adopters' knowledge of and enthusiasm for the innovation include to: *Build deep relationships with philanthropic peers and conservation leaders and provide direct support for intermediaries and global influencers that could adopt or promote the core innovation.*

> **Broader political and social context:** What political enabling conditions exist to support the innovation? How aligned are prevailing economic incentives with this innovation? How voluntary or bottom-up is social and political change? Scaling strategies here include to: *Conduct advocacy and relationship-building with policymakers beyond individual projects, shift market incentives to grow the capital pool available to scale projects.*

For example, if the Program's scaling strategy is to have an environmental NGO spread an approach to other geographies, it requires: 1) a clear understanding of what that approach is (documentation), 2) evidence that the approach produces results better than alternative

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38. Mahajan et al, "A theory-based framework for understanding the establishment, persistence, and diffusion of community-based conservation", Conservation Science and Practice, 2021

39. "Core components" are the minimum elements of an innovation that must be implemented with fidelity to create the innovation's intended benefits. US Department of Health & Human Services, "Implementation Science at a Glance", July 2020

approaches and is likely to work in new contexts (evidence base), 3) generating the buy-in from organizational leadership, 4) ability to drive organizational culture, and 5) expertise to secure political influence and social license for the project to operate in a new context.

C. How has the Program supported Indigenous-led conservation?

The Program has been part of a broader shift in conservation philanthropy toward Indigenous-led conservation, but "Indigenous-led conservation" is not a binary designation. Philanthropic conservation approaches can range from historical Western-led approaches (sometimes called "fortress conservation") to more collaborative or co-created projects to a decolonized model of conservation—or draw from elements of all three paradigms. As described in Figure 3, each of these approaches has distinct goal-setting, governance, and measurement practices. Ultimately, these different approaches are about where power lies – who is in charge of setting goals, executing on plans and disbursing funds, and monitoring performance, and to whom are they accountable?

Western conservationists are increasingly shifting from the "fortress" model to community-led conservation. Experts interviewed emphasized that community-led conservation is not only the respectful and ethical choice but also a pragmatic one: buy-in from local communities is essential to secure conservation wins and ensure lasting enforcement and enduring outcomes. Indigenous-supported or -led conservation approaches recognize that these lands are critically important for both biodiversity and climate reasons (Indigenous and community-held territories are estimated to hold up to 80% of global biodiversity[40] and to store about 25% of the world's aboveground carbon[41]) and these approaches arguably offer up new (to Western conservationists) strategies and models.

Our understanding of the Program's current work is that it most closely matches "Collaborative Conservation." Expert interviewees described best practice in collaborative conservation as giving decision-making authority to Indigenous leaders; embodying a holistic or integrated set of strategies and tactics that support cultural revitalization and community health outcomes beyond ecological conservation; and building the power, voices, and capacity of Indigenous-led organizations. There are multiple indications that the Foundation's philosophy largely aligns with these best practices. As one interviewee appreciated, *"we gave the Foundation a proposal about leading Indigenous-led conservation, and we didn't have to frame it any other way."* Interviewees also recognized the Foundation's evolution over the last few years to further emphasize community health and economic opportunity outcomes alongside ecological conservation goals (e.g., *"the focus on strengthening agency, leadership, social capital of Indigenous peoples in their landscapes—this has become much better understood and much more explicit"*).[42]

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40. The World Bank, "Indigenous Peoples"

41. Peter Veit and Katie Reytar, "By the Numbers: Indigenous and Community Land Rights," World Resources Institute, March 2017

42. One project's midterm evaluation and external experts noted that social outcomes could be targeted directly, rather than assuming social outcomes will come naturally through conservation outcomes. It is possible that the Program's evolution here is a response to that feedback.

FIGURE 3: SPECTRUM OF CONSERVATION APPROACHES

	"FORTRESS" AND WESTERN-LED CONSERVATION	COLLABORATIVE AND CO-CREATED CONSERVATION	DECOLONIZED CONSERVATION
PROJECT GOALS AND TOOLS *What do we want to accomplish?* *What tools are at our disposal?* *Where are blind spots?*	› Biodiversity and wilderness goals › Tools used are largely protected areas, legal enforcement, and ecological science › Local people often considered a threat due to blind spots around benefits of managed use, traditional uses, & economic needs	› Biodiversity, climate, and community development goals › Tools include Indigenous protected and conserved areas (IPCAs), Guardian programs, markets, and policy incentives › Blind spots: People are a focus, but in service of conservation	› Community well-being and agency are goals in their own right › Tools include ceremony, song, traditional law (e.g., rahui in Aotearoa), policy, and Western and Indigenous science › Blind spots: can assume peoples' priorities overlap with conservation
EXECUTION AND GOVERNANCE *How are decisions made?* *Who has ultimate accountability?* *What risks do we accept?*	› Top-down decision-making starting with implementing organization's goals; communities consulted › Governance lies with Western government › Accountable to funder's Board › Risks creating paper parks, impermanent outcomes, and losing social license to operate	› Co-design process, with overarching goals set by implementing org/funder › Execution led by NGO with some funds flowing to community partners › Governance ultimately by government with community involvement › Accountable to funder's Board › Risks superficial community co-creation	› Direct partnership and design with Indigenous nations/intermediaries › Execution led by Indigenous peoples with control over funding › Ultimate governance relies on sacred, community, and Western law › Risks lower visibility and community priorities that lead away from specific conservation goals
MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION *Who is the audience?* *Who does the reporting?* *What measures do we prioritize?*	› Primary audience is funder's Board › Funder sets most metrics; project staff consulted on indicators › Focus on quantitative measures, biodiversity (e.g., acres, stocks), present conditions over future/past	› Audience is Program and project staff for adaptive management › Project staff tell story and set metrics w/ community co-design › Mixed-methods, incorporates livelihood and future sustainability	› Measurement serves community need › Community leaders share reporting and storytelling directly › Mixed-method metrics on community integrity (e.g., language, generational exchange), storytelling, learning from past and tradition or history

Conservation experts also noted that intermediaries between local Indigenous authorities and philanthropic funders can play a valuable role in managing funds and funder requirements, as well as supporting capacity-building in the "Collaborative Conservation" mode. There is some evidence to suggest that the Foundation's chosen intermediaries are playing this role effectively.[43] However, the Program should be attentive to how much money flows through intermediaries to Indigenous communities versus stopping with the NGO partner and whether the Indigenous partners' conservation vision is given sufficient weight and authority. As one non-Indigenous expert said, "*having big grants go to TNC or WWF perpetuates a colonial mindset in a problematic way that 10 years ago no one cared about, but now is a point of indignation or even pain for Indigenous Nations.*" As another interviewee put it, the large environmental organizations "*take care of number one first.*"[44]

The Program could continue a "Collaborative" model or shift further along the spectrum to a "Decolonized" model. In weighing this choice, the Program could be more explicit about end goals and thus which approach it is pursuing to ensure its actions match its vision. As one interviewee put it, "*What do they [the Program] want to become? Do they want to be directly leading conversations or just funding groups that are leading conversations?*"

If the Program wanted to move further into "Decolonized Conservation," there are ample opportunities to do so. However, many would require shifts in the Program's strategy development, project diligence, and monitoring and evaluation processes.[45] As interviewees note, "*the Foundation is an arms-length (or two) from the actual beneficiaries.*" The Program could consider putting more power and funding directly in the hands of Indigenous-led groups. As an example of what this might look like, the Bush Foundation recently created a $50M community trust fund managed by the NDN Collective, an Indigenous-led and Indigenous-staffed organization.[46]

Building direct relationships with Indigenous Nations likely would require shifting how the Program operates. The Program and Foundation would have to evaluate where it could soften diligence requirements and create more culturally relevant evaluation and learning mechanisms and make hard choices about where the Foundation is willing to relinquish control over purse and process. The Program team would likely need to be larger to invest in relationship building with Indigenous groups, and the grant making process would need to be less intense so smaller Indigenous groups could satisfy Foundation diligence requirements. If those shifts are impractical or undesired, the Program could seek to support Indigenous-led or more Indigenous-allied intermediaries, as it does with the IDA in 10 Deserts. It also could grant to Indigenous-led fiscal sponsors who take on administrative and financial oversight for smaller Indigenous organizations (e.g., Indigenous Leadership Initiative, Nia Tero, and the Indigenous Environmental Network). The Program could also

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43. For example, one evaluation notes that First Nations have had positive interactions with the project partner team, feel supported in advancing their priorities, and have appreciated grants, fundraising support, and access to legal professionals and land and resource management experts. The Indigenous Desert Alliance structure was also noted by one external expert to be field-leading.

44. Multiple external interviewees cited the "*trickle of funds to the First Nations*" in one project's region as a pain point.

45. See Appendix C on the theory and practice of "Decolonizing Philanthropy"

46. As one external expert phrased it, the question is, "*how to empower communities to choose who their partners are and flip the model on its head, rather than funding groups to take care of themselves first and then pass through some dollars.*"; Bush Foundation, "Announcing Our Community Trust Fund Steward Organizations," December 14, 2021

support Indigenous rights and land tenure policy through organizations such as the Rights and Resources Initiative or the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility.

D. What is the Foundation's strategic relevance to and influence on the global environmental resilience field?

Valdivia, The Nature Conservancy

The Foundation has been aligned with many key trends in global environmental resilience, including: supporting climate adaptation and resilience, centering environmental justice, and a broad movement toward greater co-creation.[47]

So far, the Program has pursued global thought leadership and influence through the Program's support of its grantees and their work. This approach focuses Program staff time on supporting partners to achieve their on-the-ground project goals and allows the relatively new Program and Foundation to demonstrate its approach on-the-ground before engaging in more active advocacy and communications efforts. This also helps the Program and Foundation establish credibility before engaging more actively in the field.

As a result of this approach, the Program and its project grantees have, intentionally, largely been absent from global conversations on resilience, co-creation, and Indigenous-led conservation. Going forward, the Program could consider how to advance its theory of change through its own voice and the voices of its grantees. The Foundation can participate

in forums like the COP, networking events like Environmental Grantmakers Association and Stockholm Resilience Centre meetings, and seek conversations with major climate resilience and Indigenous-led conservation donors like MacKenzie Scott and Laurene Powell Jobs, or organizations like the newly established and to be defined Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative (CLARIFI).

The BHP name can likely open some doors, although it may be a catalyst or a barrier depending on the forum. For example, in our experience, many family foundations can be reticent to engage with corporate foundations because the risk that the corporation suffers a reputational hit at some point may not be worth the additional dollars. However, BHP's size and breadth can be a considerable asset in more business-friendly forums, such as the World Economic Forum, Business for Social Responsibility, and Aspen Institute events. As one interviewee noted, "*we're constantly talking to companies ranging from tech companies to resource companies, about being net-negative for climate, net-positive for nature. The leadership opportunity there is on the CSR side.*"

47. Michael Kavate, "The State of Climate Philanthropy: Key Takeaways From a Deep Dive into a Growing Field", Inside Philanthropy, December 2021; Michael Kavate, "This New Global Conservation Fund Aims to Move Dollars Directly to Indigenous Groups", Inside Philanthropy, January 2022.

In addition, there may be opportunities for the Foundation to open the door for grantees to use their voices. Partners can speak to the success of their theories of change and the importance of Indigenous-led conservation. They also can engage in direct discussion with national governments and international institutions such as global development banks and aid agencies where BHPF is reticent to do so. Bringing grantee and Indigenous voices into these conversations can amplify the visibility of the work and build power for and among these organizations and their visions and strategic approaches.

That said, the Foundation will need to manage the risks of entering into global resilience conversations if it chooses to do so. A more active global presence and influencing role could bring additional scrutiny to both the Program's place-based projects and the broader relationship between the Foundation and BHP's business activity. Several interviewees noted the value of the current separation between the Foundation and BHP and the Foundation's relative anonymity in its project geographies. One reflected that *"the BHP name doesn't hurt or hinder work because the Foundation is unknown in this country."* Another noted *"the Foundation's brand hasn't played as big a role as we might have imagined. Either in the positive or the negative sense—we certainly haven't had a lot of pushback, and we've managed to fly under the radar as a BHP-funded project."*

If the Foundation chooses not to play a larger first-party advocacy and influence role, it could still lead from behind by expanding its support to grantees and other partners for their influence and advocacy work and investing in their capacities to do so from a place of authority and impact.

E. How do the Foundation's grantmaking practices reflect its goal and vision?

The Program has set an ambitious goal to "support new ways of conserving and sustainably managing large-scale, globally significant natural environments for the benefit of future generations."[48] Project teams highlight the many ways the Foundation's grantmaking practices reflect this goal: the Program provides multi-year funding commitments, enthusiastically supports projects with hands-on engagement, and facilitates access to broader professional networks.[49] One summarized it as *"we've always appreciated the Program's understanding that you can't support a project for a year and then expect totally transformative outcomes."*

Partners also valued the Program's adaptive management, its interest in taking strategic risk, and its support for untested ideas.[50] Some project teams emphasized that the Program differentiates itself through its flexibility about project tactics and year-to-year goals, which maximize a team's ability to pivot to meet evolving needs, capture unexpected opportunities, and ultimately achieve long-term project outcomes. One interviewee praised the Program staff for *"being brave by allowing us to redefine success."* Another

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48. *Environmental Resilience Program Snapshot memo*, July 2021.

49. Multiple project interviews addressed each of these strengths

50. Project interviews (e.g., *"They're a donor that was really willing to take a huge risk -- we were a couple of people with a huge idea and not much more."*). One project's mid-term evaluation also validates the value of supporting new ideas to prove themselves.

reflected, *"this flexibility is the biggest strength of them as a donor, as it allows us to spend our time and money where we think its most valuable."* Project interviewees also noted and appreciated the Program's evolution and increased flexibility over the last five years.

The Program's rigorous project design and reporting processes frigorous project design and reporting processes functioned as the Board intended and have successfully minimized prioritized categories of risk. Insurance, anti-corruption, and other diligence requirements keep the Foundation's exposure to political and legal liabilities low and well-documented. These diligence processes also have led to extremely thoroughly documented projects at their outset, giving Foundation leadership clarity into how project funds could be spent. They also helped some smaller partners build organizational capacities that will support them in future fundraising and programmatic work.

There are, however, tradeoffs in how the Program has operationalized its low risk tolerance along certain dimensions. For one, it restricts the kinds of grantees the Program can support: projects need the backing of large and well-established conservation organizations or commensurate experience, the ability to accept and report on multi-million-dollar grants, and familiarity with navigating traditional donor-grantee relationships and power dynamics. The length and intensity of the grant application and the frequency and depth of reporting requirements were described by a large NGO as more intensive than what is required by any other of their funders. The effect is larger than frustrating partners – as one interviewee said, *"even though the Program says they want to fund higher-risk nimble groups, their processes would only work for high-capacity organizations."* [51]

In addition, partners cite the subgrant due diligence process as constraining their ability to fund local organizations, which is essential to building the local capacity, leadership, and ownership the projects need to succeed.[52] Despite the popular saying that "those closest to the problem are closest to the solution," it can be hard for the Foundation to reach those closest to the problem, even when working through intermediaries, due to sub-granting requirements.

Lastly, the highly structured initial design processes may have miscommunicated the projects' certainty on what actions they would take and what they could achieve. Interviewees noted that the Program's emphasis on each project achieving its stated end-of-project outcomes (despite significant and appreciated flexibility around year-to-year KPIs) may hinder its ability to support Indigenous-led conservation and scaling experiments, as project priorities in these areas may shift dramatically and require much more intensive adaptive management and iterative goal-setting.[53] The Foundation risk appetite statement itself recognizes this, noting "transformational projects are complex and carry risk to delivery of the intended outcomes. Effective projects are those where the project design is agile and resilient."

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51. For instance, one project's annual report and another's evaluation emphasized a need to build greater buy-in amongst Indigenous communities and small/medium landowners respectively, which has been hampered by challenges with sub-granting.

52. As one person said, "*the governance and anti-corruption and diligence and insurance requirements make this high-impact, high-risk work [of supporting local organizations] really hard.*"

53. One midterm evaluation noted that "*while the evaluation shows technical delivery of project elements and the meeting of outcomes, it may be that the push to achieve these and demonstrate delivery to funders and supporters is putting at risk effective engagement and ownership.*"

Given this, the Foundation management might consider whether the risk appetite statement is a framework for considering tradeoffs or strict rules for programs to follow so it can communicate to the Program where flexibility is possible and where it is not.

F. How does measurement, reporting, and evaluation capture the Program's progress?

The Program has developed a Program-wide monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework that largely builds from project-level inputs.

On evaluation, the Program has empowered project partners to select midterm evaluators and co-design evaluation objectives, resulting in evaluations that can meet projects' specific learning goals in addition to advancing project accountability and visibility for Foundation staff. There may be opportunities for the Program to further increase the emphasis on learning through evaluation by supporting developmental or formative evaluation, wherein evaluators ride alongside or are embedded within core project teams to help integrate learnings more rapidly and in real-time. (See "Chapter 5: Recommendations" for more details).

On monitoring and reporting, the Program intentionally developed its framework after the projects launched so the framework could be built bottom-up as an aggregation of projects' outcomes and include feedback from project partners.[54] The resulting Program-wide outcomes and outputs largely reflect the priorities that individual projects have set for themselves. These include Program-wide indicators that align with project indicators on capacity-building, strengthening rights and equity, and improved policies and governance.[55]

The Program's monitoring and reporting requirements are more detailed and more frequent than what we often see.[56] The robustness of the Program's reporting requirements likely developed for two reasons. First, as the BHP Foundation launched, the Board and Program staff had little in-house experience in environmental resilience grantmaking. The Foundation therefore leaned on the expertise it did have, developed at BHP, which was designing rigorous planning and management processes to keep large, complicated projects on track. Second, the Program strategically made large multi-year grants to its partners. Many other foundations make smaller grants for one or two years at a time and then use the grant renewal decision as the primary moment of accountability (i.e., did the grantee accomplish what it said it would, and is it still a critical component of the strategy going forward?).[57] Given the length of the Foundation's grants (which grantees very much appreciate), it places increased emphasis on monitoring as the Foundation's primarily accountability lever.

54. Interviews; *EnvRes MEL Framework Indicators - Compiled Feedback 03-24-21 v2*, March 2021

55. All 7 projects have annual KPIs and overall outcomes related to capacity-building. Similarly, all 7 projects have overall outcomes related to strengthening rights and equity, largely stemming from efforts to "create community governance frameworks." Six projects also name overall project outcomes related to policies and governance strengthened.

56. One partner called out their multilateral funders as being especially rigid and burdensome in their M&E practices. This partner found the Foundation's M&E to be refreshingly streamlined.

57. The Program portfolio has one project that has followed this shorter grant and renewal model.

The result is a framework that gives high visibility on a frequent basis into *what* projects are doing, but considerably less visibility into *how* projects are doing, and even less into how the *Program* is doing overall, which results in less opportunity for project and Program-level learning. Specifically, the metrics place an emphasis on activity accountability but do not track outcomes equally. For example, the strength of relationships, local capacity, level of influence, and stakeholder support, which are critical prerequisites for a given project's ultimate outcomes and impact, are not typically tracked or captured. These metrics are understandably absent given that: 1) they were not part of projects' initial metrics and 2) they are difficult to measure. However, they will play an important role in determining overall project success. As one partner reflected, *"we are doing a lot of social and community development, relationship building, etc. We know it's foundational, but we don't really report on it or have the ability to learn from it."*

In addition, there are some stated Program priorities that projects are not measuring. For example, the Program-wide framework emphasizes outcomes related to "markets for natural capital and sustainability generated" and "key environmental functions maintained." It also includes nested indicators like tCO2e sequestered or the dollar value of carbon credits generated by a project. Very few projects currently include substantive KPIs on these topics. Similarly, the Program-wide framework seeks data on the participation of women and marginalized populations and the degree of representation in decision-making or project benefits. Projects are setting few to no metrics on these topics, though they may have data beyond what has been shared with the evaluation team, as projects have not been asked to report on the Program's new framework.[58]

The Program can shrink the gap between its Program-wide framework and project reporting in two ways. First, it can pare back and streamline the Program-wide metrics, excluding data partners are not prioritizing. The Program could consider eliminating some indicators (bringing the current 30 indicators down to a core of ~10-15), further differentiate and pare back the current outcomes and outputs, and reduce reporting and evaluation frequency and intensity. Second, the Program can support partners to enhance reporting in areas where richer data will be mission-critical. There are likely opportunities to strengthen both project-level and Program reporting on cultural integrity and measures of community buy-in and equitable decision-making. It would be particularly powerful for Indigenous-affiliated conservation projects to work with partners to determine how Indigenous partners define end goals and identify "metrics that matter" for measuring progress[59] The Program also could increase investment in qualitative storytelling about project impact to complement existing quantitative, activity-focused KPIs. See "Chapter 6: Recommendations" for further details.

58. Analysis of project outcomes and annual KPIs. Very few projects had meaningful KPIs related to markets for natural capital and sustainability generated nor key environmental functions maintained (e.g., no project is reporting on tCO2e sequestered). On equity and shared decision-making indicators: only one project had an indicator related to participation of women and marginalized populations, and none had indicators related to degree of representation in decision-making or project benefits.

59. Pastor et al, "Metrics That Matter for Building, Scaling, and Funding Social Movements", USC Dornsife, October 2011.

Recommendations

The Program has chosen to embrace an ambitious vision: to seek landscape-scale resilience and to catalyze global-scale improvements in how conservation is done. This chapter proposes the following recommendations to support the Program in pursuing that vision:[60]

A. Sharpen the Program's goal and theory of change

B. Let go

C. Develop scaling approaches consistent with the overall strategy

D. Streamline and strategically invest in measurement, evaluation, and learning

E. Align the Program's budget and ambition

A. Sharpen the Program's goal and theory of change

Much has changed since the Program first launched. It was initially funded for five years, but it is now expected to extend for at least five more years, opening up the timescale at which the Program can achieve impact. In addition, more conservation funders and organizations have recognized the role of Indigenous communities and leadership in sustainably stewarding their lands as well as the critical role that Indigenous-led conservation plays in effectively meeting the twin challenges presented by the growing biodiversity and climate crises. Funders pledged $1.7 billion

to Indigenous and local communities, founded new entities like Nia Tero and the NDN Collective and Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative, and strengthened the capacity of some Indigenous-led organizations.

The Program also learned a great deal from its initial grantmaking. The current theory of change (Appendix B) describes the full set of strategies (place-based investment, policy, and markets) and suite of activities within each strategy that the field as a whole must ultimately pursue to achieve the Program's ultimate outcomes. The Program is now well-positioned to revisit and sharpen its goal and theory of change, determining where within the set of possible strategies the Program is best suited to make a difference. We offer three questions for the Program to reflect on:

> **What ecosystem resilience ideas does the Program want to support?** The Program's current goal is "to support new ways of conserving and sustainably managing large-scale, globally significant natural environments for the benefit of future generations."[61] This goal serves as an effective umbrella for current grants but may be too broad or undefined to guide choices in grantmaking. It is also agnostic on what kinds of "new ways" matter to the Program. Does the Program want to advance Indigenous-led conservation or work to decolonize conservation altogether? Or narrow in on private land conservation? Or embed resilience or ecosystem planning in public environmental planning efforts? The Program could choose to remain broad and support a wide range of

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60. Alternatively, the Program could choose to pursue a "traditional" or "supporter" operating model by funding projects with a high likelihood of success, clear processes, and concrete outcomes. Choosing that path would lead us to some different recommendations.

61. *Environmental Resilience Program Snapshot memo*, July 2021

conservation strategies, but this would likely limit the Program's ability to globally scale "new ways of operating" within the current budget.

> **Does the Program want to support scaling, or just piloting?** Reaching a global audience and shifting long-time conservation approaches for any of the conservation ideas above is a major lift. Any one of them could easily require multiple pilots, a communications strategy, support for global organizations working on aligned policy changes, and extensive relationship-building with targeted global actors. Options here may depend on how the Program answers the previous question: if the Program chooses to support a broad range of conservation ideas and keeps the current level of overall resourcing, the Program may have to constrain itself to supporting pilots and not taking on broader scaling strategies.

> **Where on the spectrum of "Indigenous-led conservation" does the Program want to operate?** The Program's choice should incorporate the broader Foundation's values and its resulting ability to accommodate that direction regarding staff size, grantee requirements, measurement and evaluation tools, and other operational processes. This could also be an area that the Program experiments with over time, in consultation with Foundation management.

B. Let go

Quarterly reporting, monthly meetings, annual visits to project sites, and extensive due diligence processes take time for grantees at the expense of other core project activities, run the risk of encouraging projects to focus on short-term

outputs rather than long-term outcomes, and can signal a lack of trust in the partner. The Program put a remarkable investment of time and resources into helping partners develop detailed, sophisticated projects—a far more rigorous process than most funders support.

Now, the Program could let grantees carry out those plans and adapt them as needed, relying on annual reporting for accountability. Our sense is that while some partners see benefits from some of the Program's hands-on management strategies (e.g., monthly meetings), consistently taking on all of these processes adds up to a large managerial burden. The Program could evaluate which current management processes surface the most insights for both projects and Program staff relative to the effort required (e.g., quarterly reporting, monthly meetings, annual visits, Knowledge Network events), and then significantly pare back the lower-value requirements. Even if activities are helpful for projects, there may be opportunities for Program staff to participate less; for example, selecting among Knowledge Network activities to focus their own participation on the highest return activities. The Program recently eliminated quarterly reporting following a discussion with grantees of a draft of this evaluation, and could continue to streamline its processes.

This shift will both empower partners and free up Program staff time to pursue scaling strategies such as those described above in Table 2 to support the Program's vision of global-scale conservation improvements. That could include identifying opportunities to elevate partners' work, participating in global conversations on resilience philanthropy, and identifying and funding opportunities to scale the Program's impact through existing and new grantees.

C. Develop scaling approaches consistent with the overall strategy

If the Program wants to support scaling, it could consider incorporating additional strategies that go beyond any individual project. Table 2 provides example strategies and tactics.

TABLE 2: EXAMPLE SCALING STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

SCALING STRATEGIES	ASSOCIATED TACTICS
Influence how billions of dollars of funding for natural capital is spent over the coming decade	> Develop your network among public, corporate, and philanthropic donors and make your voice heard on the solutions you support. Consider who you choose to represent and elevate with this platform (e.g., Indigenous leaders). Potentially take advantage of the BHP name and the doors it opens, particularly with governments, international aid and development organizations, and in the business community. > Amplify project successes, possibly by expanding the Knowledge Network into a more outward facing entity, by including non-grantees, funding strategic external communications from it, and partnering with other funders interested in similar themes. > Support strategic and targeted communications that translate data gathered and lessons learned for specific audiences and influencers (e.g., participants in the $1.7 billion funding commitment; other corporate foundations).
Develop supportive policies to help existing projects scale their impact	> Directly fund education and technical assistance for policymakers. For example, expand conservation easements in other countries, encourage use of community-engaged landscape-scale planning, expand government recognition of and funding for Guardian programs and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), expand participation in Resilient Reefs Initiative and develop funding sources to implement resilience plans > Provide more support to current project partners to share early success stories with decision makers and institutions in order to expand long-term funding and embed lessons learned into new geographies.
Support a broader shift in the conservation movement toward "decolonized conservation," including by leading by example	> Build the capacity of Indigenous-led organizations (e.g., Indigenous Leadership Initiative), directly support Indigenous-led organizations and regional networks (e.g., Indigenous Environmental Network), support Indigenous land tenure rights, and help elevate these organizations' voices in global discussion. > Invest in defining, researching, and elevating the benefits of Indigenous led, decolonized conservation for ecological health, climate resiliency, cultural revitalization and integrity, and durable outcomes for target audiences.
Expand markets for ecosystem services (e.g., fire management in Australia, water funds in Latin America, carbon sequestration in the Canadian Boreal)	> Invest outside of place-based projects to catalyze these markets. For example, the Program could support financing mechanisms for Indigenous fire management to reduce wildfire risk, support water funds and utility fee financing, and encourage the development of regional carbon markets through a combination of policy and market investments. > Facilitate greater connections (perhaps through the Knowledge Network) with market-making practitioners and professional networks. Expand technical assistance for projects on carbon markets and ecosystem services and encourage supportive policies.
Support ENGOs to learn from and collaborate more effectively with Indigenous communities in their conservation approaches	> Work with ENGOs beyond projects to support organizational transformation. That could include: internal knowledge sharing of practices and cross-organization sharing; development of organizational partnerships; development of codes of conducts, practices and adoption frameworks (in the spirit of The Nature Conservancy's Voice, Choice and Action Framework or Conservation International's Center for Communities and Conservation); support organizational values, cultures, structures, and practices that deepen understanding of what Indigenous led conservation is, what it delivers, and how western conservation organizations can be Indigenized.

D. Streamline and strategically invest in measurement, evaluation, and learning

The current framework seeks, per the Foundation's goals, to aggregate metrics developed at the individual project level across diverse projects to try to tell a coherent story of what the Program has accomplished. This is a challenging—if not impossible—task that necessarily results in multiple layers of reporting and metrics. We suspect that the ratio of insight to effort could be improved, especially in light of the disconnect noted above between annual KPIs and end-of-project outcomes.

In addition, the learning agenda of the MEL (Monitoring Evaluation and Learning) framework could be better integrated into the Program's M&E framework. The learning agenda is currently implemented through Knowledge Network activities, including connecting communities of practice, working groups, amplifying learning through program promotion, and sharing information.[62] Table 1 lists additional learning questions at the Program level that could for a starting point for a future learning agenda.

Opportunities to streamline project and Program M&E and enhance learning include:

> **Distinguish project outputs from outcomes.** Currently, the MEL framework includes 20+ output-level indicators and 10+ outcome-level indicators, which correspond to dozens of related KPIs across the individual projects. **Outputs** tell the Program *what* the projects are doing day-to-day and could align closely with projects' annual activities like outreach, planning, and data collection. The Program may be able to take a flexible attitude toward what those outputs are, how they may evolve and change based on external circumstances, and what accountability is warranted when they are not reached. **Outcomes** give the Program team deeper insights into *how* the projects are doing as they make progress toward overall project goals. Outcomes may be more fixed, reflective of the Foundation leadership's interest in receiving value for its support, and appropriate for grantee accountability.

> **Prioritize 4-5 indicators that provide the most insight into *how* projects are doing.** The Program has the opportunity to consider what 4-5 indicators provide the most insight on project progress as it considers how to roll up project-level progress into a meaningful, digestible M&E dashboard. The Program may need to provide additional financial or in-kind support to project teams to collect this data to the extent that projects are not currently reporting on them. The Program also could reduce other reporting requirements to free up grantee staff time for these key monitoring activities. Indicators could be simplified if the Program shifts over time from a portfolio of distinct projects to one in which projects work together towards a shared objective. For example, multiple grantees working to build the technical capacity, voice, and legal authority of regional networks of Guardian programs could all report similarly on that cluster of activity, instead of grantees having, and therefore reporting on, distinct aims.

62. *Environmental Resilience MEL* presentation, May 2021

> **Identify indicators that represent how the *Program* is doing.** Program metrics are intended to be an aggregation of project metrics, but the metrics that projects currently collect cannot easily be added up or compared (e.g., "employment days" are collected by one project, while another collects "farmers reached"). The Program could increase standardization of project metrics to make for easier aggregation and comparison. Additionally, there may be Program-level metrics that are distinct from an aggregation of project metrics if the Program refines its theory of change to 1) fund clusters of grantees that work together towards shared goals, 2) conduct its own activities to complement grantee efforts, 3) articulate Program-level assumptions and learning questions, and 4) explicitly recognize its emphasis on piloting new conservation approaches. For example, the Program could develop metrics such as "$ of public and philanthropic funding crowded into proven co-developed conservation models," or "# of new conservation models developed" or "# of communities that adopt new conservation models supported by the Foundation".

> **Invest in developing "metrics that matter"[63] for both the Program and projects.** The Program might consider deprioritizing quantitative indicators (e.g., number of cultural activities supported) that serve as proxies for hard-to-measure topics such as beneficiary voice and agency, community sentiment, and cultural integrity in favor of more qualitative assessments. This would be especially valuable in situations where many project partners are not currently reporting on the Program's quantitative

Belize, Resilient Reefs Initiative

indicators. Qualitative measures may include interviews with community members, input from outside experts, direct co-design of measures of progress with community members, and greater investments in storytelling. When working on hard-to-measure topics in other contexts, such as advocacy progress,[64] we have sometimes developed a rubric for thinking about progress to avoid the risk of managing to the things that one can easily quantify and losing sight of the bigger picture. This is a challenge common to organizations pursuing biocultural conservation, cultural revitalization, and movement building; it is also an area on which BHPF could be a leader given BHP's expertise in performance management.

> **Increase the emphasis on the "L" in MEL.** Collectively, this set of recommendations aims to replace the high volume of project and Program metrics with a smaller number of "metrics that matter" to enhance both project and Program learning. The Program could align these pared-back metrics with a set of 3-4 strategic Program-wide learning questions, such as those discussed in Chapter 3. These metrics could also provide a foundation for group discussions, such as Knowledge Network events. This would be a good test of the questions' effectiveness for partner learning and not just accountability.

63. Pastor et al, "Metrics That Matter for Building, Scaling, and Funding Social Movements", USC Dornsife, October 2011.
64. Barkhorn et al, "Assessing Advocacy", Stanford Social Innovation Review, Spring 2013.

E. Align the Program's budget and ambition

Many of the current projects are long-term efforts that will require a next phase to build on the current progress. Conservation International has been working in Alto Mayo for well over a decade. Similarly, Nature United has been working on conservation in the Boreal since 2010. The Indigenous Desert Alliance has made great strides in building institutional capacity but is still a young organization. The Program has intentionally selected a challenging and complex set of efforts to support, consistent with its ambition of catalytic impact, and these efforts are unlikely to be completed within five years.

In a scenario where the budget or staff resources remain flat, the Program will face difficult tradeoffs:

› One option for the Program would be to continue to support the full set of existing projects, knowing that it likely will remain the dominant philanthropic funder of each for at least a few more years. This choice allows the Program to build on and leverage existing investments and maintain a broad ecosystem resilience goal. However, it would leave the Program without resources to expand market-making efforts and policy engagement or pursue standalone scaling strategies in the near term.

› Another option is to exit some projects as their initial term ends, even though they may not have created sustainable outcomes, to free up resources to expand scaling strategies outside of current projects. In this scenario, the Program would need to make difficult decisions about which projects to sunset, likely by considering questions like: Are there particular strategies the Foundation wants to prioritize to pilot and scale? Which projects are best set up to scale regionally or globally if supplemented with more resources and tailored scaling strategies? Which projects show the most promise of achieving durable outcomes? Which projects appear closest to attracting outside funds for replication or expansion, increasing the leverage the Program would unlock through additional funds?

In a scenario where the Foundation can allocate additional resources to the Program, the Program has more options. It can support all of its current efforts, and at the same time:

› Deepen investment in a few projects to support complementary strategies. For example, expand Guardian networks or build capacity of additional Indigenous communities in Manitoba through the Indigenous Leadership Initiative, expand conservation easements in Chile by adding an additional high-capacity partner like The Nature Conservancy, build capacity of Indigenous communities regarding carbon sequestration projects specifically, or provide funding to support the implementation of reef resilience plans.

› Fund efforts outside of projects to scale the Program's impact. For example, expand the global use of conservation easements through groups like the International Land Conservation Network, strengthen global networks of Indigenous communities through groups like the Rights and Resources Initiative or document and register Indigenous land rights through organizations like the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility.

Appendix A: Projects supported

Resilient Reefs

Enhancing the resilience of the world's most treasured coral reef sites and the communities that depend on them to adapt to climate change and local threats.

10 Deserts Project

To keep Australia's deserts healthy for the benefit of future generations this Project is building the largest Indigenous-led connected conservation network on Earth.

Alto Mayo

Working to turn the tide against deforestation in one of the world's biodiversity hotspots in the Peruvian Amazon, by empowering Awajun Indigenous communities and migrant farmers to become effective stewards of the Alto Mayo landscape's natural resources.

Valdivian Coastal Reserve

Conserving the biological and cultural diversity of this unique nature reserve on Chile's southern coastline, contributing to local and regional well-being and building a reference model for private conservation.

Forest Conservation in the Canadian Boreal

Working with First Nations to create a new model for land and water management and a resilient future for the people and nature of Canada's boreal forest.

El Boldo to Cantillana Conservation Corridor

Achieving transformative conservation of Chile's Mediterranean habitat through the Derecho Real de Conservación.
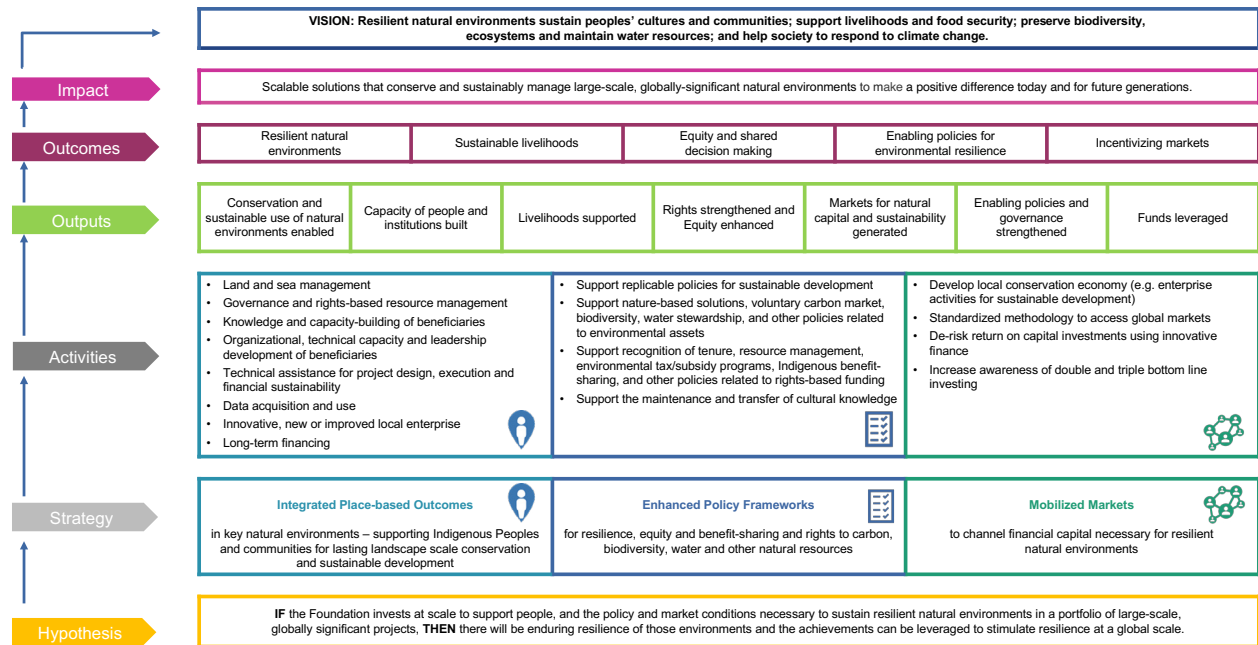
Driving improvements in sustainability at landscape scale

Providing a standardized approach for assessing and communicating the sustainability performance of landscapes where key commodities are produced.

Environmental Resilience Program Theory of Change

BHP | Foundation

Impact / Outcomes / Outputs / Activities / Strategy / Hypothesis

VISION: Resilient natural environments sustain peoples' cultures and communities; support livelihoods and food security; preserve biodiversity, ecosystems and maintain water resources; and help society to respond to climate change.

Impact: Scalable solutions that conserve and sustainably manage large-scale, globally-significant natural environments to make a positive difference today and for future generations.

Outcomes:

Resilient natural environments	Sustainable livelihoods	Equity and shared decision making	Enabling policies for environmental resilience	Incentivizing markets

Outputs:

Conservation and sustainable use of natural environments enabled	Capacity of people and institutions built	Livelihoods supported	Rights strengthened and Equity enhanced	Markets for natural capital and sustainability generated	Enabling policies and governance strengthened	Funds leveraged

Activities:

- Land and sea management
- Governance and rights-based resource management
- Knowledge and capacity-building of beneficiaries
- Organizational, technical capacity and leadership development of beneficiaries
- Technical assistance for project design, execution and financial sustainability
- Data acquisition and use
- Innovative, new or improved local enterprise
- Long-term financing

- Support replicable policies for sustainable development
- Support nature-based solutions, voluntary carbon market, biodiversity, water stewardship, and other policies related to environmental assets
- Support recognition of tenure, resource management, environmental tax/subsidy programs, Indigenous benefit-sharing, and other policies related to rights-based funding
- Support the maintenance and transfer of cultural knowledge

- Develop local conservation economy (e.g. enterprise activities for sustainable development)
- Standardized methodology to access global markets
- De-risk return on capital investments using innovative finance
- Increase awareness of double and triple bottom line investing

Strategy:

Integrated Place-based Outcomes in key natural environments – supporting Indigenous Peoples and communities for lasting landscape scale conservation and sustainable development

Enhanced Policy Frameworks for resilience, equity and benefit-sharing and rights to carbon, biodiversity, water and other natural resources

Mobilized Markets to channel financial capital necessary for resilient natural environments

Hypothesis: **IF** the Foundation invests at scale to support people, and the policy and market conditions necessary to sustain resilient natural environments in a portfolio of large-scale, globally significant projects, **THEN** there will be enduring resilience of those environments and the achievements can be leveraged to stimulate resilience at a global scale.

Appendix C: Decolonized philanthropy: why, what, and how

The last decade evidenced an exponential growth in calls to reframe conservation and conservation philanthropy through the lens of racial equity and justice. The 'why'—or reason for doing so—ranges from a pursuit of moral rightness to an understanding that Indigenous or community-driven conservation holds the power to deliver more enduring, systemic impact. Awareness of conservation philanthropy's history is growing, along with recognition of the impacts these legacies of oppression and dispossession, of stolen children and lands, have had and continue to have on people and the land. The call to "decolonize" philanthropy grows louder, and there is no doubt this reckoning must be embraced, but it is equally important to appreciate that decolonization is the work of generations and the 'how' and 'what' are by no means clearly defined, nor easy.

Investigation of just the bounded universe that is U.S. and Canadian philanthropy reveals an extraordinary number of affinity groups, collective learning circles, and new organizations that have sprung up in recent years (Building Equity and Alignment for Impact (BEA), D5 Coalition, Green 2.0, Green Leadership Trust, inDEEP, Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership, International Funders for Indigenous People) in response to the philanthropic community's realized need to grow cultural competency; increase the flow of dollars to BIPOC-led organizations and BIPOC communities; develop new investment strategies informed by equity and justice; and develop pathways that will result in the dismantling of systemic racism and white suprem-

acy at the heart of what some have described as the 'philanthropic industrial complex.'

In an effort to transform not just what they invest in but how, a significant number of philanthropic organizations have engaged in everything from listening sessions and comprehensive evaluation of giving practices, to the transformation of grant making priorities, strategies, and portfolios through the lens of justice and equity. A small but growing number of organizations in the philanthropic arena have been at the forefront of the decolonization conversation: (Libra Foundation, Cultural Survival, NDN Collective, Decolonize Wealth, Trust-Based Philanthropy Project, First Nations Development Institute.

These organizations make clear that decolonization is not the work of a years or decades, of identifying the boxes to tick. Rather, this is the work of lifetimes, of generations, because as Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang powerfully argue, "Decolonization is not a metaphor" and the work is about nothing short of dismantling white supremacy and conservation and philanthropic organizations centering their work in several fundamental transformations. These range from recognizing where power lives and how decision are made, and then transfiguring both; identifying and breaking down systems of oppression; supporting the rematriation of land; redistributing financial resources; and healing through reckoning and reconciliation. For most philanthropic and conservation organizations this means revolutionizing nothing short of who we are and how we go about doing business.

There are any number of studies, articles, books and reading lists dedicated to outlining the steps toward decolonization, best practice, and progress indicators. At its core, what all this scholarship and learning suggests is that taking on decolonization as an end goal, mandates no less than flipping the traditional philanthropic paradigm on its head. Decolonized philanthropy calls on us to align our work to a core set of values that emerge from a commitment to advancing equity, shifting power, and building mutually accountable relationships, and to do so in a spirit of humility, collaboration and co-creation. The process (beautifully described by the Trust-Based Philanthropy Project) then draws on these values to inform and fuel the decolonizing engine and most immediately guide what we do and how we show up in the most foundational or defining elements of our grantmaking paradigms: culture, structures, leadership, and practices.

There are any number of organizations that have outlined the steps that can be taken in the journey to decolonization. The NDN Collective and Libra Foundation recently collaborated on an article, _A Call-In to Grow Indigenous Power_, which powerfully outlines some of the most critical initial steps:

1. Disrupt Paternalistic Grantmaking Practices. NDN's grantmaking is grounded in the values and ethics of decolonization; grant making defined as a form of advocacy or activism where decisions about resource distribution are made through Indigenous or community eyes and the hierarchy of prioritized needs evidenced. The Libra Foundation "slashed administrative burdens and provides multi-year, general support grants, because [they]

believe that organizations know what to do with resources and don't need to check in about every move." The Trust-Based Philanthropy Project makes the case that the work of decolonized philanthropy begins by engaging in the hard work of addressing power imbalances between funders and grantees and highlights six practices core to initiating this journey.
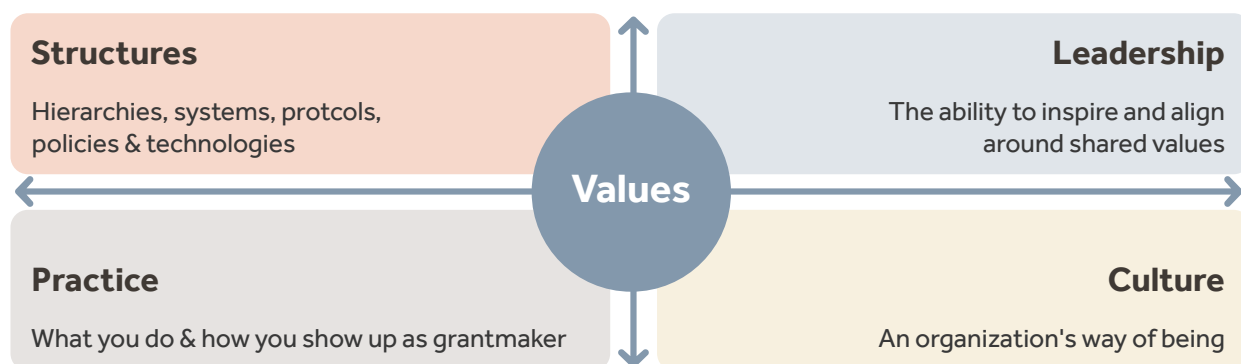
2. Move More Money. In addition to giving as much as possible, as opposed to the minimum payout required by law, funders can look to other investment strategies like impact or program-related investments to provide the patient, low-interest capital BIPOC communities urgently need to spark innovation, creativity, and break the death grip of colonization. A growing number of organizations like Seed Commons, The Grove Foundation, and Kataly Foundation have prioritized this enormous, but largely unmet need.

3. Go Beyond Land Acknowledgement. Land acknowledgement is a core decolonized practice, but the path to decolonization calls for more. As NDN & Libra Foundation remind us this is where the work starts: "... land acknowledgments should prompt larger conversations about our connection to the earth and resources. They ring hollow when they are not coupled with intention and action." Conservations about true relationship and reciprocity are at the heart of decolonized philanthropy.

4. Create Space to Recognize & Embody the Legacy of Conservation & Philanthropy. The past is crux to understanding the present

Structures

Hierarchies, systems, protcols, policies & technologies

Leadership

The ability to inspire and align around shared values

Values

Practice

What you do & how you show up as grantmaker

Culture

An organization's way of being

but it is also requisite to crafting an entirely different future. Conservation philanthropy's origin story explains both why we are where we are and what we need to do to undo colonization's ongoing trajectory of trauma. Not only is conservation and philanthropy predominantly white (see https://medium.com/nonprofit-chronicles/who-rules-philanthropy-2aa6b154569b), but the bulk of conservation dollars goes to white organizations.[65] As conservationists and philanthropists, need time to dig into this history and better understand the ongoing impact and trauma associated with this legacy, because:

"whether you are or are not a person of color in philanthropy, and whether or not your foundation is in a practice of trying to do better, the place you work is rooted in racial capitalism. Full stop. It can be painful to look at that for what it is, but the better we get at naming it and taking care of each other, the more possible it will be to dismantle and build new infrastructure that works for everyone. Funders and philanthropy professionals need to take time collectively to illuminate dark corners, hold each other close, and practice self-care so you can sustainably be a part of this fight. It is also important to fund this same work for the organizations you partner with."

5. Stop Siloing People; Think Systemically. Injustice and the systems of oppression are structural. Recognition that the problems we are solving for are also systemic or structural is important, as is the fact that integrated solutions and systems thinking are thus central to success. The tools or tactics associated with the modern conservation—science, protected areas, policy and financial incentives—may need to be complemented by investment in art, youth engagement, ceremony, sacred law, or language revitalization.

6. Put Relationships First: Move at the Speed of Trust. Trust takes time to build and is the asset realized through a commitment to relationships informed by respect, transparency, and reciprocity; relationships that are not extractive. Cultural Survival's *Indigenizing Philanthropy's* article & webinar series offers a deep exploration of this work, as does as does Adrienne Maree Brown's book, *Emergent Strategy*.

65. A 2019 study from Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) and Candid, Investing in Native Communities, found that, on average, just 0.4% of total annual funding by large U.S. foundations was given to Native American communities and causes from 2002 to 2016. See: https://nativephilanthropy.org/investing-in-native-communities/