

SCB Strategic Plan, 2006-2010
Enhancing the impact of conservation science



Society for Conservation Biology

A global community of conservation professionals | www.conbio.org

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Introduction

The Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) is a global community of professional conservation scientists and practitioners.

SCB has grown tremendously since it was founded in 1985. Implementation of the goals identified by the Board of Governors in 1999 led to remarkable success with three major strategic initiatives: the establishment of the executive office (EO) in Washington DC, the creation of a new journal focused on conservation practitioners (*Conservation in Practice*), and the evolution of SCB into an international society.

The SCB Board of Governor has now developed a new strategic plan to build on our recent success by creating a common vision of the kind of international organization we want to be, revising our goals to reflect current opportunities and constraints, and identifying the key objectives we need to pursue to reach our revised goals. The strategic context on which the plan was developed draws on the organization's past successes and challenges, particularly the result of its global expansion during the last five years. Our recent efforts to internationalize have greatly expanded our reach and taxed our limited staff capacity. The plan also reflects that SCB understands the needs of its current members and projections of future trends and needs in conservation science.

Enhancing the Impact of Conservation Science is an outline for building the next generation of publications, programs, and services that will deliver added value to a growing and diverse body of conservation scientists and practitioners around the world. The plan provides strategic direction and high-level parameters to guide SCB's work over the next five years. The EO, committees, and sections will develop specific implementation plans (work plans) that address the activities required to achieve our goals and objectives.

The following goals and objectives are parameters that will guide programmatic development and build the capacity necessary to maximize SCB's impact while maintaining financial stability and organizational growth in the coming five years. Appendix 1 provides a description of the factors affecting the strategic planning effort, such as strategic drivers and assumptions. Appendix 2 identifies the members of the SCB Strategic Planning Committee.

SCB now has over 9000 members in 120 countries around the world. Together this community of conservation professionals is working to advance the science and practice of conserving the Earth's biological diversity. By achieving the goals and objectives articulated in this plan we believe we will enhance the impact of conservation science in pursuit of our mission.

SCB Board of Governors
Approved July 15, 2005, Brasilia



Mission:

To advance the science and practice of conserving the Earth's biological diversity.

Vision:

Our vision for the future takes a global perspective both in how we want the world to be and how we, as a professional society, want to be. In this vision, we see a world where people understand, value, and conserve the diversity of life on Earth and SCB as an effective, internationally respected organization of conservation professionals that is the leading voice for the study and conservation of Earth's biodiversity.

Organizational Values:

The SCB and its members share the following common values.

1. The natural diversity of organisms, ecological complexity, and evolutionary processes have value and are necessary to support all species including our own.
2. Human-caused extinctions and the degradation, destruction, or loss of functionality of natural ecosystems are undesirable.
3. Maintaining and restoring biodiversity is the responsibility of all people and governments.
4. The sciences, especially conservation sciences, perform a critical role in understanding how the natural world operates and how human societies and actions can both positively and negatively affect the natural world.
5. Science should inform policy and management decisions that affect biodiversity.

Goals

The strategic goals of SCB encompass four program areas (conservation science, conservation management, conservation policy, and conservation education) and two organizational areas (impact & reputation and organizational capacity). These goals are guideposts for the success of this five-year plan and for the long-term success of the SCB. They will focus the SCB's efforts to improve the quantity and quality of conservation research and enhance the use of that science in management, education, and policy. To accomplish this, the SCB must also improve its organizational effectiveness, financial strength, and ability to effect change. SCB's six goals are:

Program goals

Conservation Science: The scientific research and knowledge needed to understand and conserve biological diversity is identified, funded, completed, disseminated and applied to research, management and policy.

Conservation Management: Conservation practitioners and managers are provided the scientific information and recommendations needed to conserve biological diversity at all scales.

Policy: Policy decisions of major international conventions, governments, organizations, and foundations, are effectively informed and improved by the highest quality scientific counsel, analysis, and recommendations so as to advance the conservation of biological diversity.

Education: Education, training, and capacity building programs are identified, strengthened, and developed to inform the public, education leaders, and support current and future generations of conservation scientists and practitioners.

Organizational goals

Impact and reputation: The SCB is recognized as the world's leading authority in conservation science and its membership, publications and conferences deliver high quality, integrated and effective products.

Organizational Capacity: The SCB builds and maintains the organizational capacity necessary to operate our programs, provide products and services and run an effective organization.

On the following pages, the accompanying objectives will guide the SCB's decision-making and activities through 2010. Included within are illustrative activities; these activities will be prioritized and modified by the SCB during the implementation phase. The initiation of new activities will be undertaken only when funding for those activities has been secured.

PROGRAM GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Conservation Science, Conservation Management, Policy, Education

I. CONSERVATION SCIENCE

Goal Statement

The scientific research and knowledge needed to understand and conserve biodiversity is identified, funded, completed, disseminated, and applied to research, management, and policy.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

The SCB's members form a global community of natural and social scientists and practitioners who believe that the application of science to management and policy is an essential part of effective conservation. More information and greater understanding are necessary if we are to halt the loss of biodiversity and sustain the complex evolutionary and ecological processes of our world. The SCB must ensure that the science needed to manage biodiversity effectively at the local, national, and global scales is conducted. Moreover the dissemination of its results must be clear, understandable, and widely available to conservation practitioners and policy decision makers. By translating and providing scientific results to policy makers the SCB strategically converts scientific information into tangible, effective policy decisions and management actions.

Objectives and Recommended Activities

1. Prepare a "publications strategy" based on a market analysis that identifies the needs and financial viability of the SCB's family of publications including existing publications (*Conservation Biology* and *Conservation in Practice*), affiliated publications, and any new publications.
2. Expand the SCB's dissemination of research results and findings at selected, high-visibility international and national scientific, policy, and management conferences, symposia, and meetings.

Illustrative Activities: support the use of the expertise database; hold annual meetings in every geographic region, hold sectional meetings in every region; work to increase dissemination of research results widely through highly visible scientific, policy, and management fora and the Internet

3. Identify and publish/post global research priorities periodically.
4. Increase communications and collaboration among researchers, managers and policy makers to ensure key policy and management institutions, governments, and legislative bodies have the scientific information needed to accomplish shared conservation goals.

Illustrative Activities: develop a research agenda linked to policy and conservation management priorities and disseminate to targeted international, national, and NGO bodies that affect conservation policies and management

5. Evaluate the mechanisms for review and dissemination of best available scientific evidence to inform practice and policy decisions, linking our goals in science, management and policy areas.

II. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

Goal Statement

Conservation practitioners and managers are provided the scientific information and recommendations needed to conserve biological diversity at all scales.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

The science needed to manage biological diversity effectively at the local, national, and global scales needs to be clear, understandable, and widely available to conservation practitioners, managers, and policy makers. Informed managers make better decisions that, in turn, result in a better understanding and more effective conservation of biological diversity. Toward this end, the SCB should play a greater role in translating scientific results to management, identifying or developing best management practices for key management actions, and providing responsive services to managers when they need science to inform their actions. By strategically converting scientific information into tangible, effective information that can be used for management actions, the SCB will strengthen conservation practices on the ground.

Objectives and Recommended Activities

1. Enhance the integration of research results into management decisions.

Illustrative Activities: a section in *Conservation Biology* that addresses management or policy implications of research results; consider the introduction of new journals; hold at least one management-oriented symposium at each annual meeting that brings the SCB, government agencies, NGOs, and research organizations together to discuss research and management priorities

2. Improve communications and interactions between researchers and managers.

Illustrative Activities: promote a conservation summit that brings SCB, government agencies, international organizations, legislative bodies, NGOs, and research organizations together to discuss key management-oriented research needs; sponsor at least one management-oriented symposium at each annual meeting that focuses on identifying or addressing key management needs; provide an SCB Expertise Database to key biodiversity management organizations

3. Develop and disseminate best-management practices or management guidebooks.

III. POLICY

Goal Statement

Policy decisions of major international conventions, governments, organizations, and foundations are effectively informed and improved by the highest quality scientific counsel, analysis, and recommendations so as to advance the conservation of biological diversity.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

Resolution of most conservation issues will benefit from the application of scientific expertise and firm support from the SCB. We must seek opportunities to apply science to global and national policies affecting biodiversity. Our mission and values require that the SCB engage actively in policy to ensure that the highest quality scientific information is applied to conservation/biodiversity issues. To ensure good science informs and influences policy toward the conservation of the Earth's biodiversity, the values and expertise of the SCB must be recognized and actively sought by the public, policy makers, and key conservation institutions as a result of our expertise on the most relevant national, regional, and international conservation issues. In the next five years, the SCB will enhance its credibility and ability to advance the conservation of biological diversity and use of sound science in conservation-related decision making and policy.

Objectives & Recommended Activities

1. Establish procedures and appropriate staffing for SCB and its section to address policy issues by 2006.

2. Fund a policy position in the executive office by 2007.
3. Produce and implement a plan for influencing priority policy issues by 2007. The plan should specify appropriate action and desired outcomes at both the global and regional levels.
4. Improve the dissemination of policy-related research findings and position statements.

Illustrative Activities: identify the SCB's priority policy issues; actively solicit opportunities to provide rigorous objective analyses; disseminate policy position statements to targeted international and national policy-making institutions; conduct at least one policy workshop at each annual meeting and invite key policy makers to attend

5. Develop and build partnerships with targeted organizations, governments, and legislative bodies to increase the use of science in policy decisions.
6. Coordinate, facilitate, and/or execute at least one SCB-initiated project that focuses SCB resources on providing a science-based solution to a selected, high-priority policy issue.

IV. EDUCATION

Goal Statement

Education, training, and capacity-building programs are identified, strengthened, and developed to inform the public, educate leaders, and support current and future generations of conservation scientists and practitioners.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

Education is at the core of the SCB mission. The SCB has always recognized the importance of education to conservation for inspiring future generations, creating a scientifically literate public, maintaining professional skills through advanced degrees and continuing education, and enriching both personal and professional lives through increased appreciation of nature. The priority for this strategic plan is to focus on university-level and continuing education.

Objectives and Recommended Activities

1. Develop an educational strategy in each section. Strategies should address that region's need for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education capacity in conservation science.
2. Develop and launch at least one sectional educational initiative that addresses that region's need for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education capacity.
3. Create continuing-education and professional-development opportunities for conservation scientists and practitioners at annual meetings.

Illustrative Activities: develop and conduct annual meeting minicourses or workshops on topics of key interest; encourage existing fellowship programs to include conservation science as part of their focus

4. Develop and build partnerships with selected organizations to enhance educational opportunities.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Impact and Reputation, Organizational Capacity

V. IMPACT AND REPUTATION

Goal Statement

The SCB is recognized as the world's leading authority in conservation science and its membership, publications, and conferences deliver high-quality, integrated, and effective products.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

To be effective, the SCB and its members must be recognized as important by key decision makers, potential partners, and the public. At the most basic level, powerful constituencies, interest groups, and institutions should look to us as a source of sound information that will help them solve problems in a way that serves our values. Effectiveness with important constituencies in part hinges on our ability to work well with the media and targeted constituencies. The extent to which the SCB's programs, products, and services contribute in an integrated fashion to shared goals and objectives will be key to building visibility in the media, attracting new members, and enhancing the organization's programmatic effectiveness over the next five years.

Objectives and Recommended Activities

1. Develop a strong identity, messaging, and promotional activities that will strengthen the SCB's visibility and reputation. Develop the means to maintain and reinforce the society's identity and messaging across global, regional, and local programs.

Illustrative Activities: clarify the SCB's identity and develop a compelling message; develop and maintain an attractive suite of membership benefits; create a consistent look for the SCB's identity and transmit our message across the SCB's entire product line and membership outreach efforts; identify and establish a presence at high-profile venues to increase the SCB's visibility with important constituencies; expand the SCB's awards program to outstanding achievement in conservation; develop a consistent and centrally managed media communications plan, with media communications, talking points, and other materials that ensure consistent messages

2. Strategically integrate section and chapter materials with the SCB's core identity, central messaging, and outreach efforts.

Illustrative Activities: develop unique, but compatible, image and messaging for sections; develop roles and responsibilities for SCB sections and chapters that guide their participation in policy, operations, and fundraising activities

3. Broaden and strategically integrate the SCB's publications, conferences, workshops, and meetings.

Illustrative Activities: diversify, coordinate, standardize, and market the annual and section meetings; grow and capture value-added revenue from sponsorships; strengthen the SCB's identity and outreach; improve the quality of conference presentations; delegate the selection of regional venues and annual meetings to the SCB's Conference Committee and Executive Office

4. Partner with selected organizations to improve the SCB's impact and visibility.

Illustrative Activities: identify a list of priority partnerships; develop a process for overseeing and coordinating partnership development

VI. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Goal Statement

The SCB builds and maintains the organizational capacity necessary to operate our programs, provide products and services, and run an effective organization.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

To realize its programmatic goals, the SCB must have adequate capacity and a strong infrastructure. This means an organization that has a clear sense of direction and purpose with solid and growing funding sources, an adequate operating reserve, committed and skilled staff, sound business practices, and an effective Board of Governors.

Objectives and Recommended Activities

1. Align staff, management, and governance with the SCB's priority research, management, policy, and education goals.

Illustrative Activities: increase the programmatic capacity of the executive office in fundraising, informing policy, marketing, and building revenue-generating programs; define roles and responsibilities for members of the Board of Governors, board committees, and executive office, including job descriptions, responsibility for committee service, development, and communications; realign the board's committees with priority goals and strategies in research, policy, management, and education

2. Strategically integrate section and chapter materials with the SCB's core identity, central messaging, and outreach efforts.

Illustrative Activities: develop unique but compatible image and messaging for sections; develop roles and responsibilities for SCB sections and chapters that guide their participation in policy, operations, and fundraising activities

3. Expand and diversify the SCB's sources of revenue and increase total annual revenue and expand and diversify the SCB's membership.

Illustrative Activities: prepare and implement a development/fundraising plan; diversify revenue from all programs (publications, conferences, and membership)

4. Expand and diversify membership.

Illustrative Activities: diversify membership from non-U.S. countries and students; identify membership benefits and support sections in increasing membership

5. Enhance the capacity and functioning of all sections.

Illustrative Activities: sections and the executive office work together to develop plans to help fund regional sections and support capacity building within the sections

6. Partner with selected organizations to leverage programmatic and administrative capacity.

Illustrative Activities: identify partner organizations with shared missions to leverage capacity to accomplish the SCB mission and develop processes to manage these partnerships

7. Initiate 2011-2015 strategic planning cycle.

IMPLEMENTATION

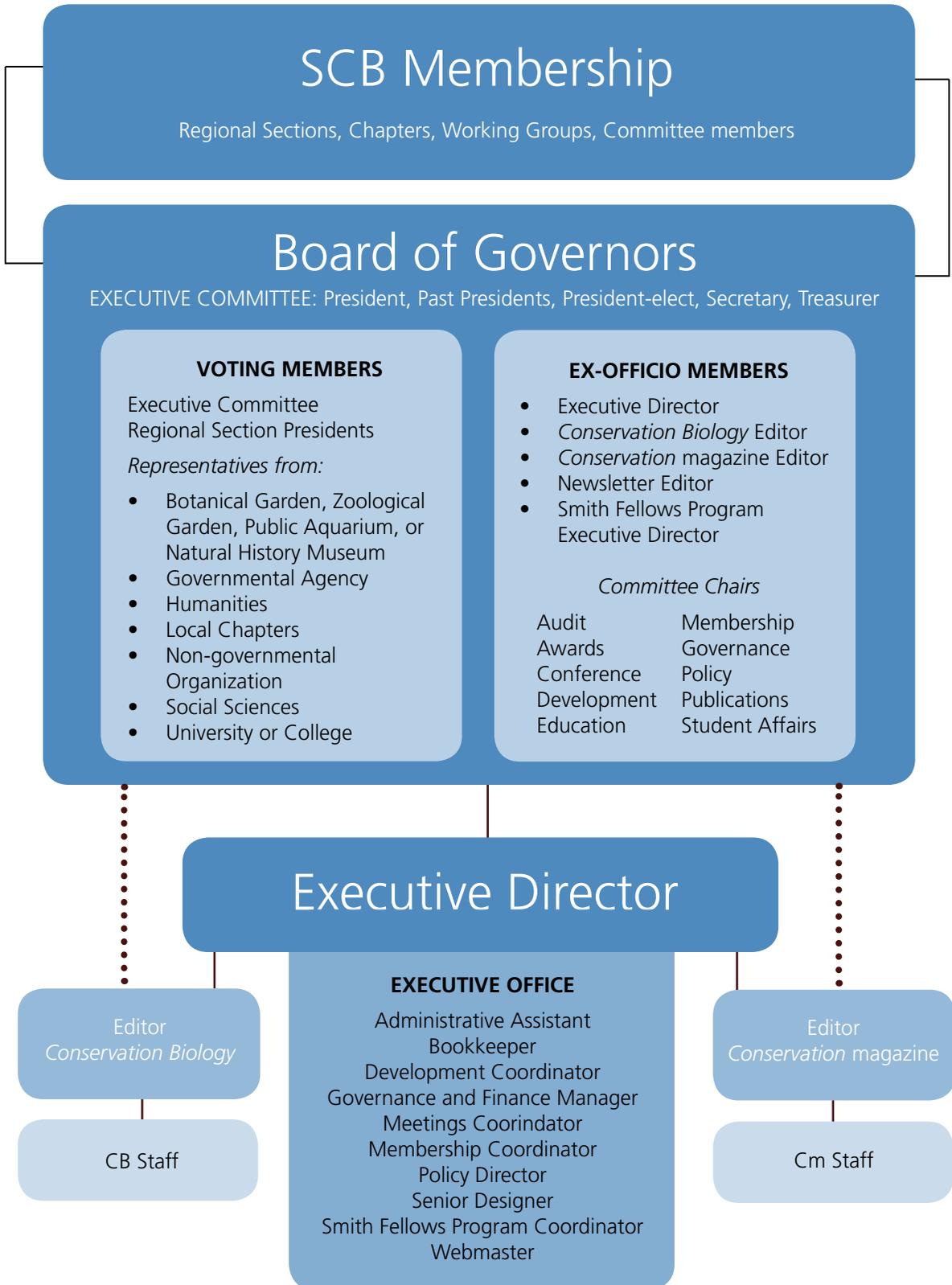
While this Strategic Plan outlines the broad steps that the Society will take over the next five years, it does not fully complete our planning efforts. Two key additional efforts need to be undertaken and completed. The first is to prepare a publications strategy and the second is to complete the appropriate “implementation” plans for key topical areas.

The publications strategy is needed in order to make informed decisions in the publications arena. Publications are among the most important activities undertaken by the Society. There are a large number of critical questions that could not be answered by this Strategic Plan that must be answered in order for the Society to utilize publications most effectively to disseminate research, generate revenue, and enhance our reputation and impact. The impact of the Society’s publications cuts across all of our strategic goals. Consequently, this strategy should be prepared by a broadly based, ad hoc group to ensure that the Society obtains the maximum benefit from these activities. A publications strategy should be prepared by 2006 and it should be based on a market analysis. It may also be appropriate for the Publications or Research Committee to take the Publications Strategy and develop a more detailed implementation plan.

Implementation plans are needed to translate this Strategic Plan into concrete activities that the Society can undertake. Specifically, implementation plans should be developed for the areas noted below. The Society will annually review progress toward goals, objectives, and activities

1. Marketing Plan for the Society’s Products & Services (prepared by Executive Office, with a contractor)
2. Membership Development Plan (prepared by Membership Committee)
3. Media Relations and Management Plan (prepared by Executive Office)
4. Global and Regional Conference Plan (prepared by Conference Committee)
5. Development and Fundraising Plan (prepared by Executive Office)
6. Implementation Monitoring Plan to track progress in implementing the Strategic Plan (prepared by Executive Office)
7. Executive Office Operational Plan (Business Plan) including revenue and expense targets for programs, a staffing timeline, and structural costs that will guide decision-making and implementation of the Strategic Plan. (Prepared by Executive Office)
8. Policy plan for influencing priority policy issues.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE





Society for Conservation Biology

A global community of conservation professionals

1017 O Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20001-4229, USA

www.ConservationBiology.org

(+1) 202-234-4133