

Assessing Pathways for Channeling Support to IPLC Tenure Rights and Forest Guardianship in the Global South

Case Study – Synchronicity Earth and its Congo Basin
Programme

Indufor North America



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1. Executive Summary

Synchronicity Earth (SE) is a UK-based non-profit with a focus on supporting long-term, bottom-up approaches to conservation of some of the world's most at-risk species and ecosystems, and the Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPs & LCs) that help enhance and sustain them, and vice versa. Since its inception in 2009, SE has served as both a re-grantor and a co-creation partner to local conservation and rights organizations, including IPs & LCs, in Africa, Asia, North and South America, Europe, and Oceania.

This case study highlights key lessons and best practices from SE as an overall organization, as well as those specific to the Congo Basin Programme, one of SE's six programs.

Key features and best practices

SE combines a nimble core staff with a versatile network of consultants to provide more localized relationship-building and expertise. SE has leveraged its position in the Global North to maintain flexibility to work across a diverse geographic portfolio. Acknowledging its distance from the geographies it supports, SE extends the reach of its light core team of full and part-time London-based staff by working with local consultants, called affiliates, who are from and/or based in target geographies in the Global South. Affiliates provide sectoral expertise, paired with an understanding of monitoring, evaluation, and learning and environmental and social issues and standards.

SE's theory of change extends across the gamut of work to strengthen communities, strengthen institutions, strengthen complex coordination for implementation of existing laws and regulations, and change in policies and norms. The core of its work is at the local level. However, SE has also made the connection with larger-scale changes at the policy level, including national and subnational policy advocacy, to ensure scalability and durability of strengthened rights and biodiversity conservation outcomes.

SE has built relationships with grantees as long-term partners who are free to define their own approaches, not merely as beneficiaries tied to the life cycle of an individual grant project. SE largely defers to partners' own approaches and priorities in determining scopes of work for funding. One partner shared that SE's model has allowed them to develop meaningful partnerships with local communities in ways that other unpredictable, shorter-term funding models have not, and that longer term engagement has increased the chances that their work would bear more sustainable outcomes within those communities.

SE has leveraged a pooled-fund approach to channel philanthropic donor funding more effectively and efficiently to grassroots, rights-based conservation programs on the ground, including those led by or with strong representation from IPs & LCs. SE's use of a pooled-fund approach for its Congo Basin Programme in particular has proven instrumental in the following ways:

- Enabling a handful of philanthropic donors to fund organizations aligned with donor interests, mitigating risk while supporting the self-determined priorities of partner

organizations, including frontline organizations that individual donors may otherwise not know about or be comfortable funding directly themselves.¹

- Providing a forum for cross-learning between and among donors, SE, and partners, including periodic webinars.

SE's core operational costs are largely covered by unrestricted funding from the Aurum Kaleidoscope Foundation (previously the Synchronicity Foundation). This means that donors do not incur any overhead costs for supporting SE programs. SE has also established an endowment fund, the SE Living Fund, which provides an additional buffer against changing economic circumstances, and potential increases in program, project or overhead costs.

SE has realized its mission of supporting the overlooked and underfunded, including smaller and more informal organizations, through a creative approach to iterative risk management and capacity-building. Funding smaller, emerging organizations working on overlooked and underfunded conservation can necessitate a higher tolerance for risk on the part of the funder. SE developed a due diligence process (spanning trust indicators and an organizational health assessment) that, while in-depth on SE's side, is low-burden on the partners' side. Paired with an iterative risk management process, SE's due diligence protocol makes funding accessible to high-impact local organizations at different levels of capacity that may not qualify for more conventional sources of funding, while still maintaining a responsible level of risk.

SE has co-created its approach to monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) with partners. SE staff and affiliates, particularly in the case of the Congo Basin Programme, have worked with partners to define and implement its MEL system, including co-creation of indicators and use of storytelling based on what stakeholders on the ground find most useful and not overly burdensome to measure and record. Doing so has been helpful in providing an opportunity to strengthen partners' ability to monitor progress and generate learnings in a way that supports CBP's Theory of Change without the need for complex funding proposals or use of more top-down indicators or logframe requirements. CBP also has brought its partners, affiliates, and donors together through webinars and other events to share learning and catalyze new collaborations. The cross-cutting nature of CBP's work with other programs such as the Biocultural Diversity, Amphibian, and Freshwater Programmes also enabled exchange of knowledge across thematic areas.

Outcomes

Across its global portfolio, SE has supported 600,000 marginalized or underrepresented people through the work of its partners, and contributed to the protection of 690 Mha of terrestrial, ocean and freshwater habitats. Its work has supported the identification of 170 Key Biodiversity Areas worldwide and contributed to IUCN Red List assessments for 14,000 species, with 1,200 species monitored and researched with SE support.¹

In 2021, SE supported 60 partners beyond funding, and helped 20 partners receive funding from others upon recommendation. Of total SE funding provided over the years, 64% has gone to local and national partners. SE has supported 52 organizations where women are represented in

¹ This case study refers to grantees as partners, reflecting the collaborative rather than hierarchal spirit of SE's relationships with organizations on the ground.

leadership roles. Through the Biocultural Diversity Programme, SE engaged 21 additional Indigenous communities in 2021 in reviving biocultural and biodiversity integrity.²

The Congo Basin Programme's support to partners including Mbou Mon Tour, Dignité Pygmée (DIPY), Dynamique des Groupes des Peuples Autochtones (DGPA), GRAIN, and others has led to a variety of key outcomes for biodiversity conservation and community development (covered more in depth in the case study). Across the CBP since 2016, 195,000 ha of forests were covered by participatory mapping programs, and 160,000 ha were secured across eleven community forests for IP & LCs. At least 24 IP & LC communities in the DRC and Cameroon have been supported by SE partners, and at least 8,600 IP & LC individuals have been trained in sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity management practices.³ Still in progress is work at the policy level through SE support to Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (SE), to inform the development of an inclusive African Food Policy to deliver just and sustainable food systems that draw upon traditional knowledge systems.

Challenges and opportunities

While SE's approach already encapsulates many aspects of effective and responsive funding to IPs and LCs, the organization seeks to deepen its IP & LC engagement and diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization and broader conservation sector in coming years.

The objectives laid out in SE's five-year strategic plan include supporting five locally-led and/or Indigenous-led funds.⁴ SE also aims to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization and participate in joint initiatives to enhance DEI within the wider sector. These are two elements of an organization-wide effort to help foster a more inclusive conservation sector with greater capacity at all scales. While SE already provides many of its partners with core and flexible funding and/or multi-year grants, by 2027 it aims to provide a minimum of 70% of its partners with core, unrestricted funding and at least 75% of its partners with multi-year grants.⁵ It also hopes to increase the opportunity for learning exchange between partners and donors, to promote mutual accountability. Partners would also ideally like longer-term commitments from donors.

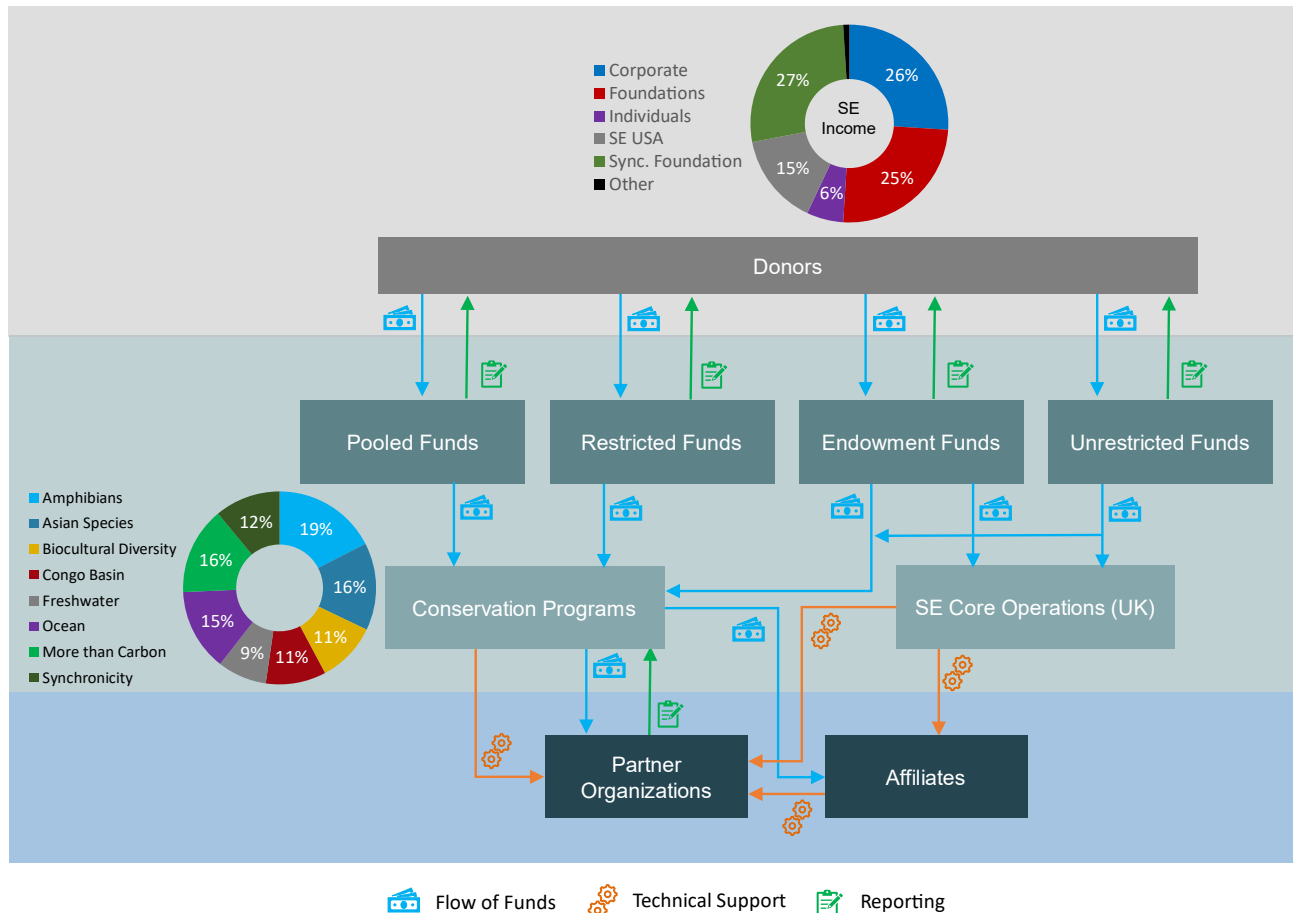
While SE and its associated funds and programs are well-suited for philanthropic donors, its model and approach limit its capacity to secure funding from larger bilateral or multilateral donors. SE has chosen not to apply for multilateral donor funding as the administrative requirements are unsuitable for the organizations they fund and do not align with SE's funding philosophy. Nevertheless, they have considerable capacity to work with like-minded funders to increase grant funding. This serves as a powerful indication of the difficulty of scaling up bilateral/multilateral funding for organizations closer to frontline communities. The requirements and processes of bilateral/multilateral donors are seldom aligned with the more participatory, relationship-based approaches described here, meaning that scaling up funding to smaller intermediaries and implementors in the global South will remain a considerable challenge.

There is still a gap in aligning IP and LCs' ways to assess conservation impacts with the evidence-based impact reporting that many donors expect to see. By designing an innovative and participatory MEL approach that integrates both quantitative (metrics) and qualitative data (storytelling), SE aims to bridge this gap with a more inclusive way to gather knowledge and assess its partners' impacts. Given the trust-based relationship with its pooled fund donors, SE is still able

to secure funding by reporting on simple metrics supported by qualitative outcomes. However, there are select donors who require more standardized metrics or a bigger picture on how their grants are contributing to impacts, and developing its MEL process to meet the diverse needs of donors is something SE continues to actively work on. As SE aims to increase the share of core and flexible support going to partners, a key question will be on how to help other donors to adopt a more inclusive approach to track impacts.

Growing its portfolio in line with its strategy will require SE to continue scaling up partnerships with IPs & LCs, and connect their partners with proven track records with allied organizations who can provide the sustained technical and financial support to scale up activities like efforts to secure IP & LC tenure. SE as a whole aims to increase its annual disbursements to 7-10M GBP by 2027 from around 2.8M GBP in 2022. while still ensuring that 75% or more of their partners are local or national organizations. Through CBP, SE looks to deepen its engagement in Cameroon and the DRC while also expanding its partnerships to other countries in the region. Building on the success of the pooled approach for the CBP and Amphibian Programmes, SE aims to develop further pooled funds over the next few years and is currently preparing to launch a new pooled fund focusing on supporting young leaders and youth groups in the ‘Global South’ working on initiatives at the intersection of climate, biodiversity and cross-cutting social and environmental movements.

The figure below provides a visual representation of financial flows, reporting lines, technical support, and decision-making organization-wide.



2. Overview [History, Current Status, Vision, Strategy]

2.1. Synchronicity Earth

2.1.1. History and Vision

The Synchronicity Foundation was founded in 2000, working across sectors including livelihoods, healthcare, disaster relief, environment, and children's wellbeing.⁶ The foundation soon noticed the cross-cutting nature of environmental issues across their practice areas, and realized that conservation requires political reform and buy-in from local people. Also clear was the significant lack of international conservation funding flowing towards some of the world's most biodiverse regions. In response, Synchronicity Earth was launched in 2009 to bridge the gap in funding for human rights-based conservation, with the aim to "scale up conservation action and attention for the world's most at-risk species and ecosystems, and the local communities and Indigenous Peoples that help to enhance and sustain them."⁷ SE's vision is to create "a world in which biological and cultural diversity are valued, celebrated, and flourishing."⁸

At its inception, SE conducted extensive research and mapping of philanthropic funding flows to identify underfunded regions and issues. Building on this foundation, SE has developed six programs over time, covering a variety of regions and themes facing their own unique challenges and funding gaps:⁹

- The **Congo Basin Programme**, active in Cameroon, the DRC, and broader region, funds forest protection by empowering IP & LC partners to defend their territories and rights, and associated approaches to stem biodiversity loss.
- The **Biocultural Diversity Programme** operates primarily in Brazil and Papua New Guinea, with some projects in India, Polynesia, and East Africa, and others spanning globally. The program provides direct funding to IP & LC organizations for conservation, sustainable land use and forest management, cultural defense, and knowledge sharing projects.
- The **Freshwater Programme**, active globally with a focus on Asia, Latin America, and Central Africa, supports local partners in regions with particularly biodiverse freshwater ecosystems.
- The **Amphibian Programme** is active globally and funds local and national partners in regions where amphibian populations are threatened by habitat loss and infectious disease.
- The **Asian Species Programme** is active in Southeast Asia, with a focus on Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines, a region that has suffered extensive ecosystem loss and continued pressure from hunting and wildlife harvest.
- The **Ocean Programme** funds policy-focused work in North America and Europe with the aim of increasing the area of the world's oceans with protected area status. It also funds community programs and species-focused conservation in Asia and Oceania.¹⁰

Each program supports 10-20 organizations and/or individuals working to safeguard and regenerate diverse species and ecosystems in SE's priority regions. SE has disbursed 10M GBP to conservation projects over the last 10 years in partnership with 180 organizations, 64 percent of which has gone to local or national grantees.¹¹ SE estimates it has provided support to at least 60 organizations beyond direct funding.¹²

2.1.2. Strategy

SE achieves its vision through work on three overarching strategic goals and associated priorities and objectives (further detailed in Annex 1):

- **Conservation:** Increased and more effective conservation action and funding for overlooked and underfunded species and ecosystems in regions of high biodiversity facing the greatest threats.
- **Capacity:** A collaborative, well-funded, fully equipped and resilient conservation sector which includes and amplifies the voices of those who are often marginalized from mainstream conservation.
- **Culture:** A stronger, broader, and more deeply connected movement to champion biological and cultural diversity and help to address systemic and cultural drivers of biodiversity loss and climate change within rich, industrialized nations.

While local partnerships are at the core of SE's work across its various programs, the Congo Basin and Biocultural Diversity Programmes include the most substantial engagement with IP and LC partners and organizations that work closely with IPs and LCs. The Biocultural Diversity Programme works to incorporate IP & LC knowledge into its work, and to facilitate networking and lesson-sharing between IP & LC organizations, intermediaries, and donors.¹³ The program supported 16 partners in 2021, involving 85 Indigenous communities. Its work supported the registration of 156 territories as community forests for Indigenous Peoples.¹⁴

2.2. Congo Basin Programme

2.2.1. Context and Background

The Congo Basin is home to the second largest contiguous tract of rainforest in the world, and is classified as a High Biodiversity Wilderness Area by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). In addition to housing vast tracts of biodiversity and carbon stores, the Congo Basin forests support the livelihoods of 40 million forest-dependent people, including an estimated 920,000 Indigenous Peoples.¹⁵ However, the region is highly threatened by industrial pressures from logging, agribusiness, hydropower, oil and gas, mining, and infrastructure, which have led to negative environmental and human impacts. As of 2021, over 60,000 km² of land concessions were requested for agro-industrial and forestry projects. Over the past decade, the DRC has lost over 6.6% of its tree cover, over 13 Mha.¹⁶

Despite the abundant biodiversity and critical carbon stores in the forests of the Congo Basin and need to protect them, conservation has been underfunded in the region due to perceived risks including political instability, corruption, and civil unrest. Local people face extremely high poverty rates, and extractive industrial activity has not come along with adequate benefit-sharing.¹⁷ There is a limited legal framework for rural land tenure, and historical lack of recognition for IP & LC rights to land. While the Congo Basin has an active and well-organized civil society advocating for forest defense and IP & LC rights, these organizations largely lack the capacity to secure funding from traditional international aid sources.¹⁸ These issues together reflect a need to direct greater long-term and flexible support and resources to local organizations and groups implementing conservation approaches that benefit both people and ecosystems.

2.2.2. History

SE launched CBP in 2017 to fill the gap in direct funding to local partners with intimate understanding of local conservation issues in the Congo Basin.¹⁹ Establishment of the program was based on eight years of research and engagement by SE in the region that revealed a need for collaboration between funders, local organizations, and communities. Through in-depth analysis and discussions with its advisers and networks, SE saw a strong potential to develop partnerships starting in Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where civil society organizations have gained influence over the past decade and are increasingly active in national reforms and decision-making processes. Now in its sixth year, the CBP has 18 active partnerships in the region, including two in Cameroon, 13 in the DRC, and three across the region.²⁰

2.2.3. Strategy

CBP operates on a three-pronged set of goals under its current strategy: Resist, Rights, Revive, outlined in Table 1. At the heart of CBP’s efforts to coordinate forest protection in the Congo Basin is a philosophy of empowering IPs and LCs to defend their territories and rights.

Table 1: CBP Strategic Goals

	Description	Relevant Activities
Resist	Empower civil society to resist and reduce threats to ecosystems and biodiversity from destructive development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support on legal challenges • Scoping and investigating threats to IP & LC lands and ways of life • Building networks and alliances between IPs & LCs
Rights	Secure the rights of forest peoples to remain on their territories and defend them from threats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory mapping • Advice and advocacy on defending land rights claims • Legal capacity building • National/subnational policy advocacy
Revive	Support communities and Indigenous Peoples to revive ecosystems and biodiversity through regenerative approaches to development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcing traditional means of production • Women’s empowerment • Access to healthcare and education • Improve relationships between REDD+ project implementors, national park staff, and IPs & LCs

A fourth overarching goal of the CBP is to build the capacity of local and grassroots organizations, strengthen civil society in the region, and empower organizations and networks to lead conservation efforts.²¹

In line with these four strategic goals, local engagement is at the core of the CBP’s work. Given the tapestry of solutions required to address habitat loss in the region, CBP partners with a mix of local, regional, national, and international organizations and networks. Local partners (CFLEDD, FESO, CORAP, among others) work closely with IPs & LCs to preserve and restore their natural resources, establish regenerative production systems and sustainable local bioeconomies, and

protect their rights to land. The directors or national coordinators, as well as most of the staff of these partner organizations, belong to IP or local communities. SE's network of local consultants and accessible due diligence/reporting procedures allow them to reach organizations that are less well-known and struggle to secure funding from other sources.

The international organizations the CBP chooses to partner with (GRAIN, RFUK, IRAP, and Well Grounded) take a grassroots approach to conservation, collaborating with small organizations to build local capacity.²²

While much of the focus of its work is at the local level, SE has made the connection with larger-scale changes at the policy level, including national and subnational policy advocacy, to ensure scalability and durability of strengthened rights and biodiversity conservation outcomes. SE's theory of change extends across the gamut of work to strengthen communities, strengthen institutions, strengthen complex coordination for implementation of existing laws and regulations, and change in policies and norms.

3. Governance and Transparency, Priorities, and Finance

3.1. Governance/Transparency

SE's core operations are based in the London office, spanning administration, due diligence, finance, communications, and fundraising. Associated pooled funds and endowment funds are also housed in the UK. London-based staff indicated that handling core operations from the UK allows partners to spend more time implementing projects on the ground and allows SE to remain impartial in its grant allocation across geographies and themes.

In the case of CBP, three local part-time affiliates in the Congo Basin provide oversight and support to partners, including on monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL), project management, integration of gender-inclusive approaches, and networking/relationship building. The affiliates consult with partners to inform goal setting and strategy, provide training and capacity building support, and communicate with the London office for networking and communications.

3.2. Priorities/Prioritization

SE's research team targets regions with high potential conservation impact that have historically received limited funding. This strategy results in a higher-risk portfolio than other funders might typically be comfortable with, but allows SE to make funding accessible to organizations that often lack connections with larger donors. In the case of CBP, the three local consultants are responsible for scoping partnerships in the Congo Basin. CBP does not host open calls for funding, but rather generates partnerships through relationship building and networking via local consultants.

CBP programming emphasises core support to strengthen organizations and empower partners to achieve their self-determined priorities. Funding is oriented around project-based outcomes, but is very flexible and can be used to address core needs like administration, staff salaries, and organizational infrastructure. The partner comes with a problem they would like to resolve,

generally within SE’s list of priority themes—often an issue they already have a proven record of working on—and develops an idea for funding using a participatory approach with communities. CBP also maintains an emergency pot to support partners in times of dire need.

Of CBP’s 18 current partners, 13 are local organizations or networks, while the remaining five are international organizations with grassroots conservation approaches. Since 2017, nearly 70 percent of the 1.2M GBP in partner funding was disbursed to local organizations.²³ While support of Indigenous Peoples falls within CBP’s mandate, none of its pooled funding is explicitly earmarked for work with IPs, so there is no formal distinction in prioritization between IPs and LCs. As SE staff noted, “Our partners work with both Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. We don’t make any difference in terms of the way we fund them. The way we fund partners is more based on capacity to absorb funds to do the work and to make sure they can operate efficiently.”

3.3. Financial Mechanisms

Partners receive direct grants from SE as a consistent modality regardless of whether the funding originates (through a pooled fund or endowment fund). Being able to tap into resources from a pooled fund and endowment fund has provided SE the ability to more effectively and efficiently direct CBP funding to partners on the ground while attending to its own overhead costs. More generally, SE buffers donors from its own overhead costs by covering its core operational expenses largely through unrestricted funding via the Aurum Kaleidoscope Foundation (previously the Synchronicity Foundation).

During the initial stages of its relationship with a new partner organization, SE works with the partner to network regionally, nationally, and/or with the international philanthropic sector to secure additional funding.

Pooled fund model

The CBP operates on a pooled fund model, which is currently funded by a consortium of five foundation donors including Good Energies and Packard Foundation. Pooled fund donations are restricted for use within the CBP, but are flexible to be spent at SE’s discretion through consultation with affiliates and partners. Each pooled fund donor has specific areas of interest, so SE staff work with them and the partners collaboratively to ensure alignment between the needs of the partners and the funding allocated towards specific themes.²⁴ All of the CBP pooled fund donations are disbursed directly to partners or to compensate affiliates.²⁵

SE’s pooled funds are marketed towards donors with pre-determined thematic or geographic goals, and provide donors an opportunity to co-fund and collaborate with one another. The pooled fund approach reduces the logistical burden on donors who want to identify and fund promising organizations in less well-known regions with limited capacity, and buffers partners from the administrative burden of securing funding.²⁶ CBP staff and donors interviewed both noted the strong trusted relationship that has been built between SE and its pooled fund donors over time.

CBP pooled fund donors currently provide funding commitments between two and three years. Donor funding is continuous, but funding discussions between SE and the pooled fund donors are re-opened every 1-2 years. Donors typically scale up their contributions over time. For example, Good Energies has given three grants so far to the CBP, including an initial contribution of 100k EUR in 2018, followed by larger contributions of 250k EUR and 500k EUR in 2019 and 2021, respectively. One donor interviewed noted that while they view the CBP's shift away from projectization as positive, their current risk tolerance only allows for two- or three-year grant cycles, pointing to the importance of regular reporting and upward accountability. In this way, the pooled fund model provides donors with an opportunity to provide longer-term funding to partners while keeping their own commitments in a comfortable two- to three-year timeframe.

The typical grant cycle for partners is 1-3 years, reflecting the timing of grant commitments from donors. But with renewed commitments from donors via the pooled model, SE has been able to offer renewals to several partners.²⁷ Many relationships with partners date back to the program's inception. Grants to partners range from 15k-90k GBP annually.²⁸ While SE does not expect partner proposals to be co-financed, CBP funding is often leveraged by partners as co-financing to secure further funding from other sources. Beyond playing the role of a funder or intermediary, SE's staff in the CBP see themselves as agents working to support partners' access to resources to fulfil their own visions. In several cases, SE has supported partners in accessing other donor funding to ensure financial sustainability of partners' work.

Endowment fund model

In addition to its program-specific pooled funds, SE maintains six endowment funds that as of December 2022 held over 6.9M GBP in assets. The endowment fund annuity enables SE to deliver long-term conservation funding. There are five funds with specific conservation focuses, the Ape Fund, Amphibian Fund, Asian Species Fund, Neptune (Ocean) Fund, and Durrell Fund (which supports the work of the Durrell Conservation Trust), while the SE Living Fund supports SE's core operations such as strategic work, partnership building, and staff salaries, as well as some funding for conservation programs.

The endowment funds receive donations primarily from corporate and high-net-worth individual donors who typically do not necessarily have knowledge about conservation but are interested in financial returns paired with investing in long-term conservation impact. Investment returns from the endowment funds provide a low-burden source of income for SE, as the donations come with limited reporting duties and do not require renewal. The endowment funds are invested in compliance with SE's Investment Policy, using an absolute return investment approach.

While the majority of endowment fund assets remain invested each year, the funds are expendable to fund programs and, in the case of the Living Fund, SE's core costs (although this is essentially set aside for a rainy-day scenario). On an annual basis, SE aims to disburse 10-15% of the total value from each endowment, with the goal of spending the funds down to sunset over the course of 15-20 years. While funds have specific focus areas, the program allocation is flexible and coordinated on an ad-hoc basis. The longest-term active programmatic grants from the endowment funds are currently three years, however, SE is experimenting with supporting longer-

term grants using endowment funding. For example, one partner has been granted a five-year funding arrangement with three years provided upfront, with two years conditional funding based on progress made.

3.4. Annual Turnover

As of December 2021, SE held 4.1M GBP in total assets. It turned over 3.3M GBP, with 2.13M disbursed directly as conservation funding. SE aims to maintain three months non-discretionary operating costs in its cash reserves, which serves a buffer against unexpected events or funding uncertainty.²⁹

The CBP disbursed 1.4M GBP to its partners between 2020 and 2022 (472k GBP per year in average). All CBP program expenses have been covered by the CBP pooled fund.

3.5. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

SE designed a new innovative MEL system in 2019 to address the shortcomings of traditional approaches commonly used in the conservation field. To accommodate a diverse audience and participants, SE blends participatory MEL with tools from traditional MEL systems.³⁰ SE has an organizational Theory of Change (ToC), which is linked to and informed by individual ToCs for each program. Each program ToC is associated with a set of indicators designed to:³¹

- Capture SE's impact across three focus areas: (1) conservation action, (2) engagement, and (3) funding
- Link and inform SE's impact across its programs through the monitoring and analysis of partners' conservation impacts
- Integrate various measures of conservation success through the monitoring of metrics (quantitative data) and the collection of success stories (qualitative data) from partners
- Improve partners' monitoring and learning capacity through participatory implementation of MEL at the partner level, and collaboration and knowledge exchange among partners

SE has developed a preliminary set of proposed indicators for each of its programs, which enables SE partners to select and refine their own indicators, including baselines with short-term and long-term targets. CBP has been a particularly successful example of MEL co-creation with partners, given SE's long-term relationships in the region and high partner interest. The CBP manager and affiliate in the DRC worked closely with partners to develop a MEL approach through a participatory process with partner organizations and communities, with partner and stakeholder experience on the ground informing which indicators will be most useful across stakeholders and least burdensome to measure and record. Example indicators agreed upon and tracked by DRC partners include:

- Area covered by participatory mapping and defining customary lands and land uses
- Area dedicated to wildlife protection
- Number of forest people trained in sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity management
- Number of forest people reporting improved wellbeing, food security, nutrition, and average household income

SE's Biocultural Diversity Programme has also developed a qualitative indicator relevant for IP and LC engagement: the level of biological and cultural information mapped or documented in a territory (e.g. number of sacred sites, amphibian species, etc.)

Partners complete a progress report each year, capturing indicators relevant to the program ToC, though there is flexibility in the way this can be done—verbally or written, and in various languages. SE gives their partners flexibility to measure impact in other ways, for example by complementing metrics-based data with anecdotal evidence and storytelling. The Biocultural Diversity Programme in particular has relied on success stories, which provide essential knowledge on effective conservation approaches.

SE has been updating the data on its CRM database, Salesforce, to better capture indicator data and learning over time through reports and dashboards. Implementation of the MEL system is adaptive, including regular reassessments of indicators and theories of change, triggering changes in approaches and strategies as needed.

SE's pooled funds provide efficiencies in terms of enabling more unified reporting to donors, rather than needing to submit a different report for every donor. CBP also has brought its partners, affiliates, and donors together through webinars and other events to share learning and catalyze new collaborations. The cross-cutting nature of CBP's work with other programs such as the Biocultural Diversity, Amphibian, and Freshwater Programmes also enabled exchange of knowledge across thematic areas.

3.6. Capacity Building

The mandate of CBP affiliates includes working with partner organizations to address their technical capacity needs. SE's commitment to capacity building of partners also reflects their higher tolerance for risk. They are willing to work with organizations who may have some technical or administrative weaknesses identified during due diligence. Rather than excluding such organizations from consideration for funding, as is often the case by other funders, SE views these cases as an opportunity to engage with organizations whose vision is compelling but may need some focused organizational support.

Affiliates begin engagements with partners with a needs assessment, and co-develop a workplan for how to address gaps. Where required, they provide support on design and development of a strategy, advise on how to effectively consult with communities, and train partners on MEL and related efforts such as gender mainstreaming. Affiliates also review partners' project reporting prior to submission to SE.

Staff in the SE UK office also provide support to partners on developing organizational policies. SE provides access to training on safeguarding by delivering its own training workshops, as well as using Kaya, a third-party platform that teaches partners through interactive case studies about how to recognize safeguarding concerns and how to act they observe harm, exploitation, or abuse

during project implementation. The safeguarding training is tailored to include examples of problems that SE partners might encounter in the field. SE has delivered this safeguarding training to over 80 partners across their program, and sees the training as a key step in addressing partners' lack of safeguarding policies, a common barrier for organizations to access funding from donors in the Global North. Other trainings for partners, delivered on a more ad hoc basis, have included:

- Preparation of financial statements, development of financial reporting systems
- Social media communications
- Assisting with board/management-level challenges and interactions
- Development of funding applications and fundraising strategies
- Identifying technical experts for training in technical aspects of conservation approaches

While CBP has generally supported partners who already have an organization in place, in one case it is supporting an individual expert on amphibians to establish her own organization in Cameroon (Herp Conservation Cameroon), covering her salary as part of this journey.

As part of its aim to empower civil society in the Congo Basin, SE is also committed to developing the strategy and leadership of partners. SE has partnered with the international NGO Well-Grounded on a program to develop leadership skills and advise on strategy with national and regional conservation leaders. It has also worked with Rainforest Foundation UK, which provide technical guidance to partners on approaches to strengthen and secure community land and forest tenure.

3.7. Accountability

3.7.1. Downward Accountability (SE to Partners)

SE is committed to maintaining accountability to its partners and the communities implementing its conservation projects.³² Its five-year strategy emphasizes the importance of championing local knowledge, maintaining open dialogue, and building a long-term relationship with partners. To establish ongoing communication with partners, SE has a designated conservation program team that monitors progress and communicates consistently with partners on the ground, as well as with third-party stakeholders where possible.³³ These open lines of communication allow SE to provide timely, flexible support to its partners, building a relationship beyond a simple transaction. As one affiliate from the CBP programme said,

“SE’s partnerships are enduring. That is to say that they know that when they start a partnership it is not to break it so quickly. And I think that is one of the great added values of SE compared to many other funders. Not only does their funding go directly to the field, but they are also flexible, and they are aware of the need for durability in the actions that they carry out.”

In the CBP, SE partners often work on projects that involve multiple IP and/or LC communities which may have differing and potentially competing interests. In these cases, SE partners ensure

that project steering committees are established that have an equitable balance of representatives from each community, with considerations given to ethnic composition, gender, and age.

3.7.2. Upward Accountability (Partners to SE, and SE to Donors)

SE's underlying mission to fund the underfunded and overlooked requires a certain embedded appetite for risk which is mutually understood by SE and its donors. In addition to providing upward accountability to donors through MEL efforts and associated reporting, SE has protocols in place to ensure that investments are made responsibly, and to determine what kind of support partners need to mitigate risks.

In the initial stages of a new partnership, SE staff conduct desk-based due diligence, drawing on document review and phone conversations to develop a risk rating and impact rating for the partner organization using a set of indicators on a 1-5 scale, shown in Table 2 below.³⁴ SE handles organizational health due diligence through its risk and finance team, so that CBP program staff and affiliates can build trust with partner organizations separately without having to ask potentially invasive due diligence questions. The program team is responsible for assessing "trust indicators," looking into the work the organization is doing, its people, and reputational risk. The finance team on the other hand conducts an organizational health assessment, including review of organizational governance issues and audited financial statements. The due diligence review, while in-depth on SE's side, is intentionally "light-touch" for partners to avoid burdening them, only asking for items that prospective partners already have or are straightforward to prepare.

Table 2: SE Risk and Impact Indicators

Indicator Type	Indicator Name	Description
Risk Indicator	Trust and Capacity Risk	Overall risk associated with the partner and its capacity to perform the work at-issue. Determined based on responses to questions and outreach with other SE contacts that have worked with the partner in the past (if any)
	Organizational Health Risk	Assessment of governance and leadership, decision making, risk management, financial management, quality of documentation
	Context Risk	Covers external factors presenting risk to organization's staff, including political stability, social prejudice against partners, corruption, civil society environment, poverty, conflict, or extreme environmental conditions.
	Risk of Not Achieving Short-term Goals	Risk of not achieving stated goals for the specific work that SE is supporting within the timeline specified in the grant. Based on SE's understanding of prior comparable work, and the organization's track record of completing comparable work.
	Risk of Not Achieving Long-term Goals	Extends beyond the timeline of the at-issue grant. Based on evaluation of partner's TOC, track record of achieving stated long-term goals, and assessment of whether the at-issue grant aligns with the long-term goals of the organization.
	Risk of Not Securing Funding Needed	Assesses likelihood that the organization will fail to secure sufficient funding to carry out proposed work. Considers organizational needs outside of the project at-issue and the partner's plan for securing additional funding.
Impact Indicator	Potential Direct/Short-term Impact	Conservation impact of stated goals, based on assumption that the project is successful (within timeline of the grant)
	Potential Wider/Long-term Impact	Conservation impact of long-term goals of the organization beyond the grant timeline, under assumption that long-term goals are reached.

Assessment of risk and impact indicators informs the funding decision, funding cycle, and level of SE involvement in supporting project implementation and capacity building. Risk indicators of levels 4-5 typically result in contingent funding arrangements, where SE makes recommendations and establishes a timeframe to remedy issues for the partner to receive funding. For higher-risk projects, SE schedules more frequent follow-ups, typically within three to six months.³⁵

In cases with exceptionally high risk, SE will pivot to increased involvement in organizational strengthening. Partners are required to obtain legal status before securing pooled fund resources. If the organization does not have legal status, or is otherwise unable to receive funds, SE's policy is to consider providing a consultancy contract of up to 5k GBP, or to grant directly to an individual with legal status.³⁶ Partners that lack legal status are provided an eight-point roadmap of milestones to achieve over two years, the funding decision reconsidered upon completion.³⁷

During the due diligence phase or project cycle, a review is triggered if red flags arise via ongoing communication with partners by the program team. Risks related to safeguarding, serious corruption, physical danger to partners, financial misconduct, and fraud are immediately escalated to the SE Head of Conservation Programmes for intervention, which may subsequently elevate to the wider Senior Leadership Team and then to the Board of Trustees if required.³⁸ Others are first run by the line manager to determine whether further escalation is needed.

Upon selecting and approving a partner for funding, SE typically begins funding an organization with a small seed grant. Initial grant amounts vary based on risk assessment, but generally start small and scale up over time as SE builds a trusted relationship with the partner. Once a programme or project is underway, SE's program team monitors progress and is in frequent dialogue with partners on the ground, along with other trusted sources about partners and their work.

On a half-yearly basis, SE plots its partner organizations based on risk and impact ratings in a bubble chart. The chart helps SE prioritize and determine the amount of money to give different partners, with an emphasis on maintaining a wide spectrum of risk across its portfolio and ensuring that high risk is justified based on high potential positive impact.

4. Outcomes

Across its global portfolio, SE has supported 600,000 marginalized or underrepresented people through the work of its partners, and protected 690 Mha of terrestrial, ocean and freshwater habitats. Its work has supported the identification of 170 Key Biodiversity Areas worldwide and contributed to IUCN Red List assessments for 14,000 species, with 1,200 species monitored and researched with SE support.³⁹

A key part of SE's success has been in its support to partners. In 2021, SE supported 60 partners beyond funding, and helped 20 partners receive funding from others upon recommendation. Of total funding provided over the years, 64 percent has gone to local and national partners. SE has supported 52 organizations where women are represented in leadership roles. Through the Biocultural Diversity Programme, SE engaged 21 additional Indigenous communities in 2021 in reviving biocultural and biodiversity integrity with its partners.⁴⁰ Relevant to its work in the Congo Basin is work supported through the Biocultural Diversity Programme to the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), to inform the development of an inclusive African Food Policy to deliver just and sustainable food systems that draw upon traditional knowledge systems.

Across CBP since 2016, 195,000 ha of forests were covered by participatory mapping programs, and 160,000 ha were secured across eleven community forests for IP & LCs. At least 24 IP & LC communities in the DRC and Cameroon have been supported by SE partners, and at least 8,600 IP & LC individuals have been trained in sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity management practices.⁴¹ Given the community-driven nature of projects and long-term conservation objectives, SE are reluctant to point to specific impacts of their work at this stage. However, SE understands that there may be a potential for these projects and lessons to be replicated on a

larger scale but are currently still in the stage of assessing the results of the existing projects and harvesting lessons.

Examples of SE’s partnerships and projects through the CBP are shown below in Table 3.

Table 3: CBP Project Examples

<p>Mbou Mon Tour</p> <p>In 2017, SE partnered with Mbou Mon Tour (MMT), a Congolese organization working on community-based conservation initiatives. CBP co-funded a project to establish community forests for Bateke communities in the Mai Ndombe province of DRC, with the aim of reconciling Bonobo conservation with sustainable development, food security, and income generation for the Bateke people. MMT used SE funds to prepare requests for community forests covering 43,000 ha, and official decrees were signed by the provincial government in 2019. Upon securing land rights, MMT began working with six Bateke communities to enable both wildlife conservation activities and sustainable agricultural practices. MMT supported the establishment of cooperatives in each community, enabling Bateke men and women to sell sustainably sourced vegetables. Incomes increased in 50% of households across the six community forests. Funds were also spent on two new buildings to promote ecotourism, and community members are employed as trackers to monitor and protect bonobos. In 2021, MMT won the ASHDEN prize, which they used on a new maternity clinic for the community. In 2022, they won the Equator Prize.</p> <p>Dignité Pygmée</p> <p>Since 2019, SE has funded Dignité Pygmée (DIPY), an organization in the DRC promoting Indigenous peoples’ rights and led by Pygmies. SE supports the “Economic Empowerment of Pygmy Women” project, which aims to set up systems of sustainable use and markets for non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in Indigenous communities. DIPY has established cooperatives to sell NTFPs, all of which are managed by women, and has developed literacy training programs in collaboration with REPALF, another Congolese Indigenous organization. Further, DIPY is working towards a formal community forest structure for the Inongo and Ikita sites, which has involved participatory mapping of 3,900 ha of proposed community forest.</p> <p>Dynamique des Groupes des Peuples Autochtones</p> <p>The Dynamique des Groupes et Peuples Autochtones (DGPA), has been one of SE’s longest-term partners in the CBP, with their relationship extending back to 2013. DGPA is a network of Indigenous groups from the DRC that coordinate collective advocacy to enact and implement national and provincial laws and policies to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The DGPA projects funded by SE reveal SE’s patient, community-driven approach to conservation that recognizes conservation as a long-term goal that exists within a more complex web of social and political relationships. One of the projects is to build the conditions for the eventual joint management of community forests by Indigenous Peoples and their non-Indigenous neighbors. However, understanding the long history of distrust between these communities and barriers to communication, and the deeply emotional and political nature of rights to lands and forests, this process began with video-dialogues, where the parties could begin to relay messages to each other in their own words, without the risks and pressures of in-person interaction.</p> <p>Eventually, the parties identified the need to collaborate on a project to build a much-needed health clinic, for which both communities were represented on the management board. This created a shared space for collaboration and dialogue, and to establish practices for resolving differences of opinion and disputes in a constructive manner. The communities provided the clinic with a land grant, which it rents to local farmers to sustain itself financially. Now that there is a foundation of trust between the communities, they are able to broach more sensitive topics of land and forest management. The parties have begun to do a joint ecological and cultural survey of the forest to identify areas of critical importance for protection and conservation, and to begin the process of obtaining legal recognition for the community forests and developing a joint management plan.</p> <p>GRAIN</p>

CBP supported GRAIN, an international organization that supports farmers and social movements, in developing the “Alliance against Industrial Plantations in West and Central Africa.” The alliance is a means for lesson sharing between communities aiming to strengthen their territories against industrial agriculture expansion. In the DRC, the alliance gathered information to demonstrate to regulators that a 100,000 ha land concession to Feronia Inc. was granted illegally, which enabled some communities to take back their land and set up traditional palm oil harvesting and production.

One of SE’s partners mentioned that they prefer SE’s sustained partnership model to those of other intermediaries/donors, even ones who provide larger amounts of money over shorter timelines. That SE’s model has allowed them to develop meaningful partnerships with local communities in ways that other unpredictable, shorter-term funding models have not. Longer term engagement has increased the chances that their work bears more sustainable outcomes within those communities.

5. Challenges

While SE’s model has proven highly effective at channelling flexible funding to partners and communities to undertake bottom-up conservation efforts, SE and the CBP still face some challenges. Pooled funds and endowment funds offer more stability and flexibility to partners than traditional project-based conservation funding, but the 2-3 year grant cycle of funding from SE’s donors still somewhat limits the grant cycle to partners. While some partners interviewed for this study indicated that they have been able to renew their funding in the past and have relative certainty in their ability to renew again in the future, the financial stability of partners could be higher if SE were able to extend longer term and larger grants. SE staff note that the demand for this kind of support also extends far beyond their current ability to meet the needs expressed by local and national NGOs.

In addition, the SE model, the size of its programs, and the participatory approach it takes with its partners means that SE is not in a position to secure larger bilateral and multilateral donor funding. Indeed, SE has never applied for funding from bilaterals or DFIs, and staff noted that they do not plan to pursue this type of funding given the lack of alignment with their own and their partners’ approaches, and the complexity of proposal submission and associated monitoring and reporting requirements. This constraint points to a larger, sector-wide barrier to scaling up funding for IP & LC tenure and forest governance. If bilateral and multilateral funding is seen as too restrictive for a relatively sophisticated, UK-based intermediary, it is even more inaccessible for small intermediaries and implementors in the Global South.

In terms of avenues for diversifying its access to funding, SE has considered becoming an accredited recipient of private wealth funds through the philanthropic arm of a UK or US-based bank. This is still in the discussion phase, with concerns about misalignment with SE’s mission and values, and the potential reputational risks of being associated with a bank that might be invested in fossil fuels, armaments, or other controversial areas.

As for upward accountability to donors, IPs’ and LCs’ ways to assess conservation impacts do not fully align with the evidence-based impact reporting that some donors expect to see in return for their investments. By designing an innovative and participatory MEL approach that integrates both

quantitative (metrics) and qualitative data (storytelling), SE aims to bridge this gap with a more inclusive way to gather knowledge and assess its partners' impacts. Given the trust-based relationship with its pooled fund donors, SE is still able to secure funding by reporting on simple metrics supported by qualitative outcomes. Nonetheless, select donors would like more standardized metrics and/or a bigger picture on how their grants are delivering impacts. Investors in SE's endowment funds representing corporations or high net worth individuals in particular have tended to want reporting using more traditional, metrics-based indicators. One of the aims of SE's engagement with donors, both through its pooled funds and more generally, is to increase transparency around the shortcomings of traditional MEL approaches and help develop a more nuanced understanding of impact, based on a blend of participatory and traditional tools, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative indicators.⁴²

Along with other organizations funding rights-based conservation work in the Congo Basin, SE faces significant contextual challenges in the region. Partners in the region face complex challenges, negotiating periods of unrest, working in regions with limited infrastructure and with communities that struggle to produce sustainable livelihoods. Risk management by the SE team involves regular dialogue with partners to understand their specific operational contexts and support mitigation.⁴³ For example, the work of CBP partner Réseau CREF has been impacted by a recent insurgence of M23 rebels, with resulting political tensions and violence forcing postponement of many activities. The Okapi Conservation Project has faced similar challenges in the Ituri province of DRC due to political instability and frequent conflict between local communities and national park authorities.

5.1. Innovations/approaches to overcome challenges

To address the desire for longer grant cycles, SE has been trialling longer-term grants, for example disbursing funding for three years in one go, and committing to funding for a fourth- and fifth-year conditional on certain milestones being achieved.

Regarding the challenge of translating participatory MEL into impacts, as SE continues to build out and implement its MEL framework, they plan to refine how they translate participatory indicators to impacts and start to set more concrete targets.⁴⁴ As time goes on, more partners will be completing SE's voluntary checklists and compiling indicators, which will provide a more solid basis on which to inform the program and organizational ToCs.⁴⁵

SE's pooled-fund model and CBP's local affiliates position them uniquely to provide consistent funding to long-term grassroots conservation programs in a challenging context. The pooled fund approach allows the CBP to provide timely funding to address emerging threats, and also allows SE to provide much-needed flexibility to accommodate changing project timelines. Many partners have been working in the region for years and have learned to mitigate risks to their staff, and CBP's in-country affiliates have the local knowledge required to respond appropriately to risks and provide support when needed.⁴⁶

To overcome some of the risk associated with distrust and conflict between communities and discrimination against Indigenous Peoples, CBP partners have used participatory videotaping to

collect community perspectives and lessons, and to link communities who may not be able to communicate directly due to logistical or cultural barriers. For example, video interviews with Pygmy communities allowed progress and lessons to be shared with non-Indigenous Bantu communities, two groups who otherwise would not be able to communicate due to cultural discrimination. Participatory video forms a basis for ensuring that community consultations are held and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) has been granted by relevant parties. These videos also enable conversations between communities and policy makers/government officials, who would otherwise not be able to meet due to high logistical costs.

5.2. What would “good” look like?

While SE’s approach already encapsulates many aspects of effective and responsive funding to IPs and LCs, the organization is looking to further deepen its IP & LC engagement in coming years. The objectives laid out in SE’s five-year strategic plan include supporting five locally-led and/or Indigenous-led funds.⁴⁷ This concrete goal is one element of an organization-wide effort to help foster a more inclusive conservation sector with greater capacity at all scales. To achieve this, SE aims to provide 70% of its partners with core and flexible funding by 2027 and provide 75% of partners with multi-year grants.⁴⁸ It also hopes to increase the opportunity for learning exchange between partners and donors, to promote mutual accountability in conservation.

6. Strategic Insights

6.1. Key Underlying Principles

Over time, CBP has established itself as an example of an innovative, effective, and efficient model for conservation finance that is inclusive of and relevant to the realities of IP & LC organizations.

The success of SE and the CBP can largely be attributed to trusted relationships with partners as well as donors. Mutual trust up and down the funding chain, from donor to intermediary to partner to community, has been key to effectively protecting the rights of forest-dependent people and in turn conserving forests and biodiversity. SE’s model reflects a paradigm shift from traditional top-down approaches to conservation. Partner organizations interviewed for this case study noted that SE is one of the best funders they work with when it comes to providing them with discretion to use funds as they see fit. Flexibility in funding arrangements, MEL systems, and ongoing capacity building and organizational strengthening is key to empowering civil society and IP & LCs to achieve their goals.

Another principle key to SE’s success is an appetite for risk, which has been necessary for SE to fund geographies, themes, and organizations that have been historically neglected by the philanthropic and development aid communities. This is particularly true in the Congo Basin, where biodiversity conservation has been largely underfunded due to political instability, corruption, and civil unrest. A tactful approach using a combination of due diligence, safeguarding, and organizational strengthening with a local presence has allowed SE to secure donor funding and undertake these efforts responsibly, fulfilling its mission to “fund the underfunded.”

6.2. Scalability and Replicability

SE as a whole aims to increase its annual disbursements to 7-10M GBP by 2027 (from around 2.8M GBP in 2022), while still ensuring that 75% or more of their partners are local or national organizations. Building on the success of its current funds, SE aims to develop further pooled funds over the next few years and is currently preparing to launch a new pooled fund focusing on supporting young leaders and youth groups in the Global South working on initiatives at the intersection of climate, biodiversity and cross-cutting social and environmental movements.⁴⁹

Through CBP, SE looks to deepen its engagement in Cameroon and the DRC while also expanding its partnerships to other countries in the region. Scaling up in the Congo Basin will come with challenges. SE staff noted the struggle to find adequate partners when trying to expand geographically, particularly in their efforts to scale up programming in Cameroon. Other intermediaries conducting rights-based conservation work in the Congo Basin include Well Grounded, Maliasili, Rights and Resources Initiative, the Tenure Facility, Rainforest Foundation Norway, and Global Green Grants, but the funding landscape remains relatively limited in terms of donors active in providing more direct support to IPs & LCs in the region.

SE's endowment fund structure provides a unique opportunity for growth. The SE Living Fund endowment has built-in flexibility to cover the organization's core costs as needed to support growth, as well as program spending to support the growth of their portfolio and partners' organizations. As the CBP scales up, the SE Living Fund could provide vital support to help buffer the program against increasing overhead costs that may outpace pooled fund financing cycles.

Growing its portfolio in line with its strategy will require SE to continue scaling up partnerships with IPs & LCs, and connect their partners with proven track records with allied organizations who can provide the sustained technical and financial support to scale up activities like efforts to secure IP & LC tenure. As SE scales up, it is firmly committed to ensuring empowerment of IPs and LCs.

7. Annexes

Annex 1: SE Goals, Priorities, and Objectives⁵⁰

	Goal	Priorities	Objectives
Conservation	Increased and more effective conservation action and funding for overlooked and underfunded species and ecosystems in regions of high biodiversity facing the greatest threats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow and amplify strategic conservation action and funding for high priority and neglected conservation issues • Support the development, integration, and use of the best available science including IP & LC knowledge to guide work • Champion and support locally-led and rights-focused organizations • Strengthen connections between local level activity and international recognition, frameworks, and policy change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 30-35M GBP of conservation funding over the next five years, including 7-10M GBP in 2027. • Ensure that local or national groups make up 75% of partners • Contribute to the provision of more and better knowledge to inform conservation action on threatened species and ecosystems • Increase support to and elevate the recognition of the importance of community-led protection of key ecosystems, species, and aligned values • Actively conserve at least 100 threatened species and/or ecosystems with community-led, holistic approaches • Support work that delivers changes in global, national, and local policy to better protect species, ecosystems and those that inhabit them
Capacity	A collaborative, well-funded, fully equipped and resilient conservation sector which includes and amplifies the voices of those who are often marginalized from mainstream conservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase/strengthen core, long-term, and flexible support to partners • Facilitate partner-led skills and expertise development to help further goals and ambitions of partners • Promote rights and voices of marginalized people(s) in conservation • Share learning with partners and philanthropists, alongside scaling up effective approaches • Grow, diversify, and coordinate philanthropy to enable it to reach organizations on the ground • Work to address power imbalances within environmental philanthropy and conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 70% of partners with core and flexible funding • Provide 75% of partners with multi-year grants • Support 60% of partners beyond funding • Establish three training programs for partners and/or donors • Create 30 opportunities for learning exchange between partners and/or donors • Create four additional pooled funds • Support five locally-led and/or Indigenous-led funds • Support to 80% of organizations with women in leadership

A stronger, broader, and more deeply connected movement to champion biological and cultural diversity and help to address systemic and cultural drivers of biodiversity loss and climate change within rich, industrialized nations.

- Increase/strengthen core, long-term, and flexible support to partners
- Facilitate partner-led skills and expertise development to help further goals and ambitions of partners
- Promote rights and voices of marginalized people(s) in conservation
- Share learning with partners and philanthropists, alongside scaling up effective approaches
- Grow, diversify, and coordinate philanthropy to enable it to reach organizations on the ground
- Work to address power imbalances within environmental philanthropy and conservation

- Raise 1M GBP and bring in five new partners from financial services sector over the next five years
- Support four organizations working to improve biodiversity and climate-related standards/practices in the finance sector
- Develop a more intentional set of policies and practices to improve Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion within SE and participate in joint initiatives within the wider sector
- Provide funding and support for five youth-led organizations focused on biodiversity/climate and/or biocultural diversity
- Collaborate on communications initiatives with at least five organizations that help profile the interconnectivity of biodiversity and cultural diversity and showcase the work of our partners
- Identify and research three new opportunities to support and fund strategic work in new sectors/spaces where SE can add value to approaches tackling drivers of biodiversity loss
- Develop a collaborative, committed, and impactful network of people, organizations, and initiatives embracing the concept of Flourishing Diversity, listening to, amplifying, and learning from Indigenous knowledge and lifeways as a response to the ecological crises we are facing
- Influence amounts, mechanisms, and manner of funding to local groups through production of reports, media outreach, convening forums and provision of pooled funds or re-granting through SE

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- ¹ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.
 - ² Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.
 - ³ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Report. Internal working document.
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 - ⁶ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.
 - ⁷ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.
 - ⁸ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.
 - ⁹ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.
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 - ¹¹ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.
 - ¹² Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.
 - ¹³ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.
 - ¹⁴ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2021.
 - ¹⁵ Synchronicity Earth. 2021. Congo Basin Programme. Internal working document.
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 - ²⁴ Synchronicity Earth. 2021. Congo Basin Programme. Internal working document.
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 - ³⁰ Synchronicity Earth. 2020. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Update. Internal working document.
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 - ³² Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.
 - ³³ Synchronicity Earth. 2020. Red Flag Policy. Internal working document.
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 - ³⁹ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.
 - ⁴⁰ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.
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 - ⁴³ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Congo Basin Program Update 2022. Internal working document.
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 - ⁵⁰ Synchronicity Earth. 2022. Five Year Strategy 2023-2027.