

Organizational Model

Structure

The Centre for Conservation Policy will be a ***not-for-profit organization*** (under the federal Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act) and a ***registered charity*** (under the Federal Income Tax Act). There are three broad reasons for this structure: pragmatics, perception, and ethics.

Pragmatically – A not-for-profit charity has access to additional funding sources which not-for-profits and for-profit organizations do not (though fewer than some think). Recent changes in federal legislation have removed barriers, and added encouragement, for charities to engage in and catalyze policy dialogues. Opportunities for charities in this sense are blossoming.

Perceptually – An organization seeking to play a facilitator, neutral third party, or bias-balanced researcher will be more readily understood at the outset as having a public-interest role if they formally take on the mantle of a group *required* to work on behalf of the public interest.

Ethically – Aristotle is quoted by professor Barry Schwartz as saying "Practical wisdom is the combination of moral will and moral skill." This is the purpose and the practice of a charity. Though sometimes frustrating, the heavy oversight on charities ensures adherence to their moral will. The operational requirement to constantly prove the connection between the organization's activities and the public interest hones the moral skill.

Operations

All work undertaken by the Centre for Conservation Policy will be mission-aligned. The operational model will strive for an approximate balance of "50% Proactive, 50% Reactive."

'Proactive' activities – Identified internally by the Centre as important and viable in terms of improving the design or implementation of conservation-related policy. This will take the form of internally-conceived projects or activities, where the funding sought will come from donors, grants, foundations or other philanthropic organizations.

'Reactive' activities – Identified externally, by project partners, or relevant organizations or agencies, and judged by the Centre to be likely to improve the design or implementation of conservation-related policy. This will take the form of externally-conceived projects or activities, where funding will come from fee-for-service contracts.

As most projects will have elements of both, assessment of this balance will be based on funding sources across the organization rather than a count of projects.

Being 'mission aligned' means that all projects and activities, regardless of which of the above categories they fall into, will follow the charitable objects and operational principles of the Centre.

Research

The Centre will constantly seek to underpin its work with credible research that can inform conservation decision making.

Science based – Because science is not a discipline but a process, being *science based* means seeking out the information within various disciplines that has been created and vetted using the scientific process (systematic study).

Evidence based – Because decision making moves faster than science, being *evidence based* means recognizing that dilemma, but still seeking a basis in expert knowledge and structured, well-supported information.

Issues based – Because it is not always clear what the barriers to ecological conservation are, *issues based* means actively identifying the most salient and relevant conservation questions and issues, as well as the most pertinent dynamics of those issues.

Applying research – Because truly-applied research requires adoption by the end user, an *applying research* approach means working to ensure research results help form the decision-making context and influence the ultimate decisions.

Partnership

Even if the Centre for Conservation Policy were to expand dramatically, the work envisioned cannot be undertaken by a single organization. As well, while the Centre's overall niche is unique, it is not the only entity working in each of its areas of focus.

For this reason, the Centre will always pursue projects and activities with an eye to who could be recruited to partner or assist (or who would recruit the Centre).

While the goal is to improve conservation-related policy in the public realm, project partners may come from a variety of directions including academia, industry, for-profit organizations, not-for-profit organizations, local governments, student programs, provincial governments, federal governments, community groups, or other sources.

The internal capacity of the Centre (staff, consultants, contractors, students, etc.) will therefore be kept small, with necessary capacity to be sought out primarily on a project-by-project basis.