

## 1     **The major barriers to evidence-informed conservation policy and possible solutions**

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## 71 **Abstract**

72 Conservation policy decisions can suffer from a lack of evidence, hindering effective decision-  
73 making. In nature conservation, studies investigating why policy is often not evidence-  
74 informed have tended to focus on Western democracies, with relatively small samples. To  
75 understand global variation and challenges better, we established a global survey aimed at  
76 identifying top barriers and solutions to the use of conservation science in policy. This obtained  
77 the views of 758 people in policy, practice, and research positions from 68 countries across six  
78 languages. Here we show that, contrary to popular belief, there is agreement about how to  
79 incorporate conservation science into policy, and there is thus room for optimism. Barriers  
80 related to the low priority of conservation were considered to be important, while  
81 mainstreaming conservation was proposed as a key solution. Therefore, priorities should  
82 include the elaboration of public policy pathways with education initiatives that promote the  
83 importance of long-term conservation-compatible policies.

## 84 **Challenges for evidence-informed conservation policy**

85 Loss of biodiversity is occurring at accelerated rates. Although there are uncertainties  
86 associated with the causes of biodiversity loss (Game *et al.*, 2014), there is evidence that a  
87 range of conservation interventions are effective (Sutherland *et al.*, 2017). Many papers,  
88 however, highlight a gap between scientific evidence and policy, suggesting disagreement  
89 between the priorities of research scientists and decision-makers (e.g. Arlettaz *et al.*, 2010),  
90 with one study even accusing decision-makers of ‘evidence complacency’ (Sutherland and  
91 Wordley, 2017). Various processes are underway to improve the link between science and  
92 policy, including IPBES, and also the EU EKLIPSE ‘mechanism’, where selected scientists  
93 and practitioners resolve questions posed by policy-makers. To enhance the likelihood of  
94 success of such science-policy initiatives, research on the key barriers and solutions to the  
95 uptake of conservation science in policy is important.

96 Various publications note that scientific knowledge is just one factor in policy-making  
97 (Marshall *et al.*, 2017; Rose *et al.*, 2016). In response, research has sought to increase the  
98 influence of science. These include techniques to link science and policy (e.g. Cvitanovic *et*  
99 *al.*, 2015; Neßhöver *et al.*, 2016), training scientists and policy-makers to understand mutual  
100 workflows (Bainbridge, 2014), encouraging collaborative inter-disciplinary research (Adams  
101 and Sandbrook, 2013; Young *et al.*, 2014), and telling policy-relevant stories (Cook *et al.*,  
102 2013; Rose, 2015; Sarkki *et al.*, 2014). Solutions, though, have often been studied with little  
103 attention to their context dependencies (Kovacs and Pataki, 2016) (i.e. whether the same  
104 solutions will work everywhere especially if the problems are different), nor indeed has the  
105 majority of social science work at the science-policy interfaces been solution-oriented (Watts,  
106 2017).

107 Furthermore, most studies on conservation science-policy interfaces have been based on a  
108 relatively small number of respondents from Western democracies. Since gaps between science  
109 and policy may arise from cultural and/or social barriers (Amano *et al.*, 2016), in addition to  
110 political and institutional factors (Owens, 2015), geographical bias can contribute to a  
111 misunderstanding of issues.

112 This research addresses the perceptions of different stakeholders about the relative importance  
113 of barriers to the consideration of evidence in decisions about conservation, placing the  
114 emphasis on identifying solutions to highly ranked barriers. Primary data was collected through  
115 multiple surveys in two phases across three groups of global respondents: people in policy  
116 positions, practitioners, and research scientists<sup>1</sup>. The aims of the surveys were to understand

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<sup>1</sup> See supplementary material (Table S1) for information on how we categorised respondents. Briefly, people in policy positions were generally either politicians, civil servants (including scientists and economists working for government or a statutory agency), or NGO staff who had a specific remit for policy work, and hence for interacting with policy communities. Practitioners were comprised of roles that implemented conservation on the ground, whereas research scientists were post-docs or academics in university or research institutions, or those with a specific research remit in an NGO. We acknowledge that some people had dual roles which could have overlapped, but we asked respondents to pick the role that best suited their primary job.

117 the key barriers preventing the use of conservation science in policy, and to highlight potential  
118 solutions to overcome them.

## 119 **Survey**

120 The survey consisted of two phases (scoping survey followed by a global online survey  
121 translated into six languages). We briefly explain the stages involved in each of the two phases  
122 below. For more detailed information about methodology, including categorisation, coding,  
123 survey dissemination, and sensitivity analyses, please see the supplementary material (S1 and  
124 Figure S1).

### 125 ***Phase 1: Scoping***

126 This survey (S2) had two iterations.

#### 127 *Scoping survey 1*

128 The first survey was distributed at a conference on conservation decision-making. Respondents  
129 were asked to i) select a role, ii) name three barriers preventing the use of conservation science  
130 in policy-making, and iii) suggest solutions for the proposed barriers. The barriers and solutions  
131 sections were left open-ended such that respondents were not constrained by our beliefs.

#### 132 *Scoping survey 2*

133 This was followed by a second survey that asked the same questions, but added questions  
134 relating to country of work, and their number of years of experience in a conservation role.  
135 This was distributed throughout other networks globally. In total, 134 responses were gained<sup>2</sup>  
136 from 30 countries and open-ended answers to both the barriers and solutions question were  
137 pooled and coded into categories (S3). The categories were ranked according to the number of

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<sup>2</sup> This total figure included 53 academics/research scientists, 33 people in policy positions, and 21 practitioners. 24 students also responded, but responses from this group were lower for the second online survey, and thus their responses are not included in the final analyses (see Table S2).

138 times it was mentioned in both of the scoping surveys. This led to a top ten list for barriers and  
139 solutions. A list of the most highly ranked solutions was also developed (Table S3).

#### 140 ***Phase 2: Online survey***

141 A second online survey was created based on the answers provided in Phase 1 and translated  
142 into five other languages. In the second phase, the survey was mostly close-ended (S4). The  
143 respondents were asked to score each of the top ten barriers and corresponding solutions from  
144 Phase 1 on a Likert scale of 1 (not important) to 8 (very important). The list of solutions for  
145 each barrier was based on the responses to the Phase 1 survey, but did not include every solution  
146 mentioned for each barrier (see S1). A range of approaches were used to disseminate the survey  
147 (e.g. known networks, social media, email lists).

#### 148 **Models**

149 Cumulative link models were applied to test the relationship between the score of each  
150 barrier/solution (as ordinal response variables) and two explanatory variables: barrier/solution  
151 identity (see Table 1) and the role of respondents (policy position/practitioners/academics), as  
152 well as their interaction. The significance level of each term was derived from likelihood ratio  
153 tests and deviance for each term was also calculated, following Christensen (2015a). To rank  
154 the overall importance among distinct barriers and solutions, we calculated the mean of the  
155 median scores across the three roles for each barrier/solution. The aim of using the mean of  
156 medians, instead of the overall median per barrier/solutions was to control for the difference in  
157 the sample size across the different roles. We used the Kendall's rank correlation coefficient  
158 ( $\tau$ ) to test – in each of the three studied roles – for positive relationships between the percentage  
159 of respondents that experienced each barrier and the median barrier score. We thus performed  
160 one-tailed tests because we expected these relationships to be positive. Sensitivity analyses  
161 were also performed to test whether scoring was affected by other covariates. The analysis was

162 conducted in R (R Core Team 2016) and cumulative link models were implemented with the  
163 R package ordinal (Christensen 2015b).

## 164 **Results**

### 165 *Phase 1 survey – compilation of top ten barriers and associated solutions*

166 In the phase 1 survey, 32 barriers were proposed by 133 respondents (Table S4). From these  
167 responses, the top ten barriers and associated solutions (Table 1) were identified and used in  
168 phase 2.

### 169 *Phase 2 – Online survey ranking barriers and solutions*

170 The phase 2 quantitative survey was filled in by 758 people from 68 countries, comprising  
171 those in policy positions (238), practitioners (237), and research scientists (283) [Fig. 1].

172 Based on the mean of median scores across the three roles, two barriers (2. Conservation not a  
173 political priority and 7. Priority of the private sector’s agenda over conservation<sup>3</sup>) were given  
174 the highest importance (mean of medians = 7.0), followed by three barriers (mean of medians  
175 = 6.0–6.3; 3. Mismatch of timescales, 6. Lack of funding for conservation science and 10. Bad  
176 communication between scientists and policy-makers). The other five barriers showed mean  
177 scores smaller than six (mean of medians = 4.7–5.7) [see Fig. 2].

### 178 *Understanding what explains barriers and solutions between science and policy*

179 Scores provided by the 758 respondents varied significantly among both barriers and the three  
180 groups’ roles (Table 2). Though the interaction between barriers and role was significant; the  
181 majority of model deviance (79.2%) was accounted for by barrier identity (95.1% of the  
182 explained deviance), with role identity or the interaction term (role x barrier) giving negligible

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<sup>3</sup> We acknowledge that these barriers are interlinked, in the same way for example, as lack of funding for conservation science is linked to lack of political priority. However, we argue that they were sufficiently different to include as separate barriers, particularly since barrier 7 specifically identified the power of the private sector to override environmental arguments.

183 contributions (3.8%, Table 2). This suggests that patterns in scoring barriers were similar  
184 amongst roles. Patterns for barriers were reasonably consistent amongst countries with  
185 different Human Development Index levels, although there were variations (Figure S2).

186 Scores of solutions to the top five barriers (barrier mean of medians  $\geq 6$ ) varied significantly  
187 and accounted for over 70% of the deviance explained by the models (Table 2). Scores for  
188 solutions varied significantly among roles in four out of the five barriers, and the interaction  
189 ‘solution  $\times$  role’ was significant in three out of the top five barriers. Yet, both role identity and  
190 the interaction term explained a much smaller proportion of deviance compared to the effect of  
191 solution identities (Table 2). This again shows that patterns in scoring solutions were similar  
192 among the three roles.

193 Top-ranked solutions for four of the barriers (2, 3, 6, 7) referred to the need to mainstream  
194 conservation, and to change the attitudes of policy-makers in favour of pro-environmental,  
195 long-term decision-making; these included the need to develop ‘different measures of  
196 prosperity than GDP’ (Barrier 2), the importance of ‘demonstrating the benefits of  
197 conservation’ (Barriers 2, 7), and a dedication to ‘encouraging the strategic use of science for  
198 long-term policy-making’ (Barrier 3) with associated ‘long-term government advisory groups’  
199 (Barrier 3) and a ‘permanent environmental budget’ (Barrier 6). In response to Barrier 10 (‘bad  
200 communication between scientists and policy-makers’), the solutions ‘more knowledge  
201 brokers’ and ‘collaboration between scientists and policy-makers’ were ranked highly [Fig. 3].

202 Participants were also asked whether they had experienced any of the ten barriers. Overall, we  
203 found a consistent positive correlation across roles between experiencing a barrier and ranking  
204 it more highly (Kendall’s  $\tau = 0.49\text{--}0.77$ , all  $P < 0.033$  - see Fig. 4). The top five most  
205 experienced barriers were the top five ranked barriers, although the order varied (Table S5 and  
206 Figure S3).

## 207 **Discussion**

208 *A surprising amount of agreement?*

209 A logical conclusion from previous research (e.g. Arlettaz *et al.*, 2010) would be that policy-  
210 makers, practitioners, and scientists disagree on the barriers and solutions to the use of  
211 conservation science in policy. In reading the exchange between Sutherland *et al.* (2013) and  
212 Tyler (2013), for example, we may have expected scientists to place the emphasis on training  
213 policy-makers to comprehend science, in other words blaming policy-makers for lack of  
214 understanding, rather than criticising themselves for communicating evidence badly (see  
215 Kenny *et al.* 2017). Contrastingly, one may have expected policy-makers to focus on  
216 encouraging scientists to present their evidence in a user-friendly manner, instead of blaming  
217 themselves for lack of understanding. Yet, our results suggest that there is, in fact, widespread  
218 agreement, and thus, at the very least, that disagreement between groups would not be the  
219 limiting factor preventing the successful uptake of highly-ranked solutions. Our results also  
220 suggest that Sutherland and Wordley's (2017) notion of 'evidence complacency' is not caused  
221 by a lack of awareness of science on the part of decision-makers; rather, their use of evidence  
222 may be constrained by other drivers, such as political barriers.

223 Our results suggest that there is little difference between rankings of barriers and solutions  
224 amongst different genders, and individuals with greater or less experience in conservation  
225 (Figures S4, S5, S6). In addition, there is little difference between rankings provided by  
226 individuals in different countries ranked in order of Human Development Index (Figure S2),  
227 although poorer countries did prioritise 'lack of funding for conservation science' more highly<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> There were subtle variations in ranking of barriers and solutions by HDI (Figure S2). A 'lack of funding for conservation science' was ranked more highly in groups of countries with low HDI, mainly across Africa and South America. This would suggest that adequate funding for conservation science is a particularly acute problem in countries where financial resources are low. The barrier of not 'including or valuing stakeholders' in conservation science also tended to be scored more highly in countries with low HDI. This might perhaps be linked to the low resources for outreach.

228 It is interesting to note that the two top-ranked barriers (2 and 7) relating to the low priority of  
229 conservation were not the most experienced (although they were in the top-five for  
230 ‘experienced’ too). This suggests that they are perceived to be *the* major barriers, even by those  
231 not directly experiencing them. Other highly-ranked barriers were the most experienced, which  
232 suggests that respondents were ranking them based on real-life exposure rather than merely  
233 perception.

#### 234 *Barriers*

235 Here, we examine the top five barriers, offering a selection of quotations written by online  
236 survey respondents in the ‘other’ category (S5 for discussion of barriers 6-10).

237 Three of the five top-ranked barriers relate in some way to the low priority of conservation on  
238 the policy agenda – ‘conservation not a political priority’, ‘priority of the private sector’s  
239 agenda over conservation’, and the ‘lack of funding for conservation science’. While opinion  
240 polls have suggested that the environment is an important issue (EU Barometer, 2014), it is  
241 rarely selected as the top priority (Marshall *et al.*, 2017), which in turn influences the agenda  
242 of policy-makers. An extract from one survey highlights this (see Q1-2 S6 for more): ‘If you  
243 do not have public support for conservation, you will rarely gain political support’ (Policy  
244 position, Ireland).

245 Research suggests that anti-environmental lobbying of some private sector groups convinces  
246 policy-makers to put industry needs ahead of conservation (Guerrette, 1986). As one  
247 practitioner from Brazil noted, ‘conservation is effective when there are no economic interests’.

248 Where the private sector has attempted to embrace an environmentalist agenda, there have been  
249 claims that nature is exploited (Rodriguez-de-Francisco and Budds, 2015).

250 ‘Lack of funding for conservation science’ was also ranked in the top five barriers. Gill *et al.*  
251 (2017) found that the effectiveness of MPAs was influenced most by staffing and resources,  
252 yet there are finite resources for experimentation, implementation, and monitoring (Sutherland

253 *et al.*, 2017). Our study noted that this was a particular problem in poorer countries (Figure  
254 S2).

255 A contributory factor to conservation not being a political priority is the ‘mismatch of  
256 timescales’. Policy-makers usually focus on short-term issues (Lawton, 2007), and demand  
257 evidence quickly. Conservation science often takes a longer-term view with slower reporting  
258 timescales. Since conservation is a long-term issue, relevant policies are easily ‘kicked into the  
259 long grass’ when other short-term needs arise. Furthermore, scientists rarely seize upon policy  
260 windows for the uptake of knowledge (Rose *et al.*, 2017).

261 The final barrier in the top five related to ‘bad communication between scientists and policy-  
262 makers’. Poor communication, and lack of interaction between these groups, manifests itself  
263 in a variety of ways, including lack of access to scientific papers, inadequately communicated  
264 policy/management demands, and conservation science being presented in unusable formats  
265 (Marshall *et al.*, 2017; Walsh *et al.*, 2015). Although there is some overlap between science  
266 and policy/practice spheres (Rose, 2014b; Vadrot, 2014), they are distinct. Fundamental  
267 differences in workflows, background, and objectives create challenges for successful  
268 communication (Farwig *et al.*, 2017). A survey respondent suggested that it was an ‘illusion’  
269 to think that effective joint meetings and seminars could be held with scientists and policy-  
270 makers because of different workflows (Policy position, Germany).

### 271 *Solutions*

272 Increasing the priority of conservation in public policy would seem to be the key issue as agreed  
273 by all groups [Fig. 3]. A staff member in a policy position (Germany) stated that ‘compiling  
274 more scientific facts does not help’ (also Q3-4 S6). Instead, several comments wanted a  
275 ‘revolution’ in societal attitudes (Q5-7 S6). Establishing a long-term mind set to environmental  
276 policy, including setting up advisory bodies that span political timescales, was considered  
277 necessary. Given the short-term nature of politics (Lawton, 2007), it is challenging to consider

278 that adopting different measures of prosperity can occur without a step-change in voting. As  
279 one survey respondent noted, ‘if the electorate are not interested in long-term solutions, policy-  
280 makers will not be’ (Policy position, UK).

281 To foster a long-term positive view of the environment, ‘raising awareness among the public  
282 and decision-makers regarding the long-term consequences of inaction’ (Policy position,  
283 Switzerland) was considered important. Two highly ranked solutions for ‘conservation not a  
284 political priority’ and ‘priority of the private sector’s agenda over conservation’ suggested  
285 better public outreach to show the benefits of conservation. The ‘paradox of timescales’  
286 (Lawton, 2007) could be overcome if policy-makers were elected on the strength of their long-  
287 term environmental commitment. As one respondent in a UK policy position stated, ‘shifting  
288 policy means shifting the politics, which is only possible if one shifts public opinion’ (also Q8  
289 S6).

290 The overwhelming message for overcoming the top-ranked barriers, therefore, is to convince  
291 policy-makers to adopt pro-environmental long-term policies, and to measure prosperity in  
292 other ways than just GDP. This requires larger numbers of people to join the conservation  
293 community and demand convincing, inclusive messages (Begon, 2017). We stress the need for  
294 several messages to be told since each person responds differently to different messages  
295 (Blicharska and Grandin, 2015). Telling good news stories might help (Balmford and  
296 Knowlton, 2017), as people need to be inspired, rather than served with doomful scenarios  
297 (<https://conservationoptimism.com>). It is also vital to know how to change behaviour  
298 (Tannenbaum *et al.* 2017). Also it is worth remembering that policy-makers are people too and  
299 they can be influenced by relevant, human-based stories (Begon, 2017); a fact noted by a  
300 practitioner from Brazil who urged conservationists to make the problem ‘more real’ by  
301 developing closer relationships with policy-makers. Conservationists could frame carefully for

302 nature conservation (Mace, 2014), as varied arguments may be more convincing to different  
303 people at different times (Tinch *et al.*, 2016).

304 Our results suggest that recent calls for science to become more inclusive of society may be  
305 warranted (Collof *et al.*, 2017; Keeler *et al.*, 2017; Nature Human Behaviour, 2017; Redford  
306 *et al.*, 2015). A practitioner from Uganda argued that ‘it is necessary to win the hearts and  
307 minds of people’, recruiting them to the conservation cause, in order to convince policy-makers  
308 that it is a priority issue. The same practitioner thought that this had been ‘downplayed’ in  
309 previous conservation efforts, and a respondent from Italy (policy position) argued that  
310 conservationists have wrongly focused on ‘addressing already acquired audiences’. Our work  
311 also suggests that there may be a need to involve the private sector more as allies of  
312 conservation.

313 To improve communication between scientists and policy-makers, two solutions related to  
314 better collaboration and the use of knowledge brokers scored ‘7’. Research scientists could be  
315 encouraged to collaborate with policy-makers through better reward systems, and to respond  
316 quickly to evidence demands (Neßhöver *et al.*, 2016). Policy-makers could likewise be  
317 encouraged to work closely with the research community and make demands for evidence  
318 available to researchers. Where collaboration is not possible, knowledge brokers are vital. They  
319 speak the language of both science and policy and are important entrepreneurs linking the two  
320 worlds (Cvitanovic *et al.*, 2015; Nguyen *et al.*, 2017). Scientists could make more use of key  
321 intermediaries, for example policy think-tanks and NGOs, who may have direct lines into  
322 public, business, or policy-makers, links that are difficult for universities and academics to  
323 develop. More support is required to create, and appreciate, knowledge brokers and this  
324 requires a shift towards value cross-disciplinarity.

325 *Evaluation*

326 The major positive of this study is that the survey was translated into multiple languages and  
327 responded to by different types of respondents globally. There were, of course, some flaws to  
328 the methodology. These included respondents providing information on their perceptions of  
329 the barriers and solutions. However, we counteracted this by asking respondents if they had  
330 experienced the barriers; the fact that the highly ranked barriers were also the most experienced  
331 suggests that responses were based on real-life exposure. Also, although we may have expected  
332 individual groups to blame failings on the part of others, the fact that we found widespread  
333 agreement seems to suggest that this was not a major problem.

334

### 335 **Concluding remarks**

336 Contrary to previous research that highlights disagreement between scientists and decision-  
337 makers, we found that people in policy positions, practitioners, and research scientists across  
338 countries tended to agree on the barriers and solutions to incorporating conservation science in  
339 policy. In order to overcome highly-ranked barriers related to the low priority of conservation  
340 in public policy, top solutions focused on the need to mainstream conservation. The ranking of  
341 solutions suggests that harnessing public (and policy) support for a pro-environmental, long-  
342 term approach to decision-making can improve the prospects for evidence-informed  
343 conservation policy. Our study thus suggests we need to appreciate the importance of winning  
344 the hearts and minds of people to help us achieve evidence-informed conservation policy. The  
345 study also suggested that there might be small variations in the priority of barriers and solutions  
346 in different contexts, for example poorer countries considered 'lack of funding for conservation  
347 science' to be a particular concern (although the differences were small). This illustrates the  
348 importance of understanding national and regional contexts for science-policy interactions.

349 The optimistic message from this study relates to the apparent agreement between research  
350 scientists, policy-makers, and practitioners about the key barriers and solutions to the use of

351 conservation science in policy. We argue, therefore, that it should be possible to implement  
352 solutions to win the hearts and minds of people.

353

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## 479 **Figure legends**

480 Figure 1: Heat map of responses by role (Red: Policy position, Yellow: Practitioners, Blue: Research Scientists)

481 Figure 2: Boxplot (median, quartiles, and 5th/95th percentiles) showing the scoring for ten barriers restricting the  
482 use of conservation science in policy by three groups of conservation professionals. Numbers denote mean of  
483 medians across professionals. Bold numbers denote the top five ranked barriers.

484 Figure 3: Boxplot (median, quartiles, and 5th/95th percentiles) showing the scoring for the solutions to the top  
485 five ranked barriers by three groups of conservation professionals. Numbers denote mean of medians across  
486 professionals. Bold numbers denote the highest ranked solution(s) for each barrier.

487 Figure 4: Relationship between the percentage of respondents that experienced a barrier and the median barrier  
488 score for each of the three professional groups. For illustrative purposes only, regression lines are shown.

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496 **Table 1 – top ten barriers and selected solutions from phase one**

497 **(not in quantitative order of phase one ranking here, see S3 for this)**

<b>Barrier number/name</b>	<b>Proposed solutions to each barrier</b>
<p>1. LACK OF POLICY RELEVANT SCIENCE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask policy relevant questions from start of project, including policy-makers</li> <li>2. Better incentives for academics to focus on policy/practice relevant research</li> <li>3. Embed young scientists in the field and train them on importance of real world science application</li> <li>4. Improve policy education of young scientists/scientists (e.g. through job shadowing, graduate training)</li> <li>5. More collaboration between scientists and policy-makers (e.g. meetings, seminars, projects)</li> </ol>
<p>2. CONSERVATION NOT A POLITICAL PRIORITY</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate benefits of conservation (including economic value)</li> <li>2. Develop different measures of prosperity other than just GDP/economy</li> <li>3. Improve policy education of young scientists/scientists (e.g. through job shadowing, graduate training)</li> <li>4. More scientists working in/with media to engage policy-makers and public</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Train policy-makers in conservation science to help them see the importance of conservation</li> </ol>
<p>3. MISMATCH OF TIMESCALES</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better science advocacy from scientists</li> <li>2. Dedicated office at research institutions to help researchers communicate key information</li> <li>3. Encourage government departments to share reading of scientific outputs</li> <li>4. Encourage the strategic use of science for long-term policy-making</li> <li>5. Set up government advisory body that spans political timescales</li> </ol>
<p>4. COMPLEX, UNCERTAIN PROBLEMS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better communication of uncertainty</li> <li>2. More transparency about uncertainty</li> <li>3. Standardise methods and indicators for conservation to improve communication</li> <li>4. Train scientists in a variety of communication skills</li> <li>5. Transdisciplinary research to be encouraged</li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better science education in schools and universities to improve science literacy of population</li> </ol>

<p>5. POLICY-MAKERS DO NOT UNDERSTAND SCIENCE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. More knowledge brokers (individuals to bridge the gap between science and policy) and system for it</li> <li>3. More scientists working in media to engage policy-makers and public</li> <li>4. Tailor evidence to audience - e.g. blogs, summaries, simple language, open access, policy briefs, infographics</li> <li>5. Train policy-makers in science</li> </ol>
<p>6. LACK OF FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION SCIENCE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better incentives for academics to focus on policy/practice relevant research</li> <li>2. Demonstrate benefits of conservation (including economic value)</li> <li>3. More collaboration between scientists and policy-makers (e.g. meetings, seminars, projects)</li> <li>4. Permanent budget for environmental policy-making</li> </ol>
<p>7. PRIORITY OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR'S AGENDA OVER CONSERVATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better science advocacy</li> <li>2. Demonstrate benefits of conservation (including economic value)</li> <li>3. Include industry and private sector in research</li> <li>4. Provide evidence-based argument to counter private sector lobbyists</li> <li>5. Science outreach to public</li> </ol>

<p>8. STAKEHOLDERS ARE NOT VALUED, CONSIDERED, OR OPPOSED BY INTERVENTIONS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better incentives for academics to focus on policy/practice relevant research</li> <li>2. Better stakeholder outreach in projects and inclusion of stakeholders in project design</li> <li>3. Include industry and private sector in research</li> <li>4. More integrated projects to move beyond just conservation outcomes</li> <li>5. Work with stakeholders from start of project</li> </ol>
<p>9. SCIENTISTS DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW POLICY IS MADE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better incentives for academics to focus on policy/practice relevant research</li> <li>2. Improve policy education of young scientists/scientists (e.g. through job shadowing, graduate training)</li> <li>3. More collaboration between scientists and policy-makers (e.g. meetings, seminars, projects)</li> <li>4. Tailor evidence to audience - e.g. blogs, summaries, simple language, open access, policy briefs, infographics</li> </ol>
<p>10. BAD COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCIENTISTS AND POLICY-MAKERS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better incentives for academics to focus on policy/practice relevant research</li> <li>2. Journals to translate key results into different languages</li> </ol>

	<p>3. More collaboration between scientists and policy-makers (e.g. meetings, seminars, projects)</p> <p>4. More knowledge brokers (individuals to bridge the gap between science and policy) and system for it</p> <p>5. Tailor evidence to audience - e.g. blogs, summaries, simple language, open access, policy briefs, infographics</p>
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**Table 2. Total deviance (%) explained by the cumulative link models (rows) and percentage of the explained deviance accounted by factors ‘Barriers’/’Solutions’, ‘Role’ and their interactive effect. The significance of the effects shown in parentheses (ns: non-significant; \*:  $P < 0.05$ ; \*\*:  $P < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*:  $P < 0.001$ ).**

Models	Explained deviance (%)	Percentage of the explained deviance		
		Barrier/Solution	Role	Barrier/Solution × Role
Barriers	79.2	95.1 (***)	1.2 (**)	3.8 (*)
Solutions for B2	74.9	73.7 (***)	16.3 (***)	10.1 (**)
Solutions for B3	76.5	91.1 (***)	6.7 (***)	2.2 (ns)
Solutions for B6	53.5	91.3 (***)	2.4 (ns)	6.4 (ns)
Solutions for B7	64.4	80.8 (***)	8.6 (***)	10.5 (*)
Solutions for B10	82.7	95.3 (***)	1.4 (*)	3.3 (*)

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