

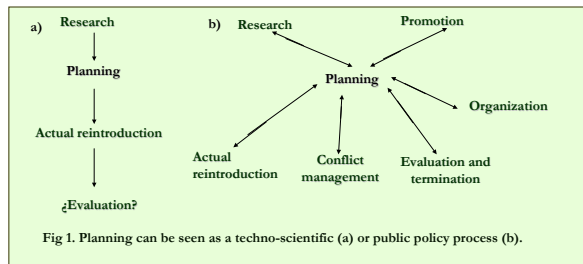


INFORMAL AND FORMAL PLANNING FOR REINTRODUCTION: EXAMPLES AND LESSONS FROM A PROGRAM IN ARGENTINA

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Planning as a technical and political process

Planning is often seen as a key technical phase for any reintroduction program, where scientific information is gathered and analysed to identify and propose relevant conservation actions (Fig 1a). However, in this poster planning is understood as a public decision process where both scientific and policy purposes are met (Fig 1b). To extend on this view I use examples gathered from a program aimed to restore four locally extinct mammals in the Iberá Nature Reserve (INR), Argentina



Informal and formal planning: why do we need both?

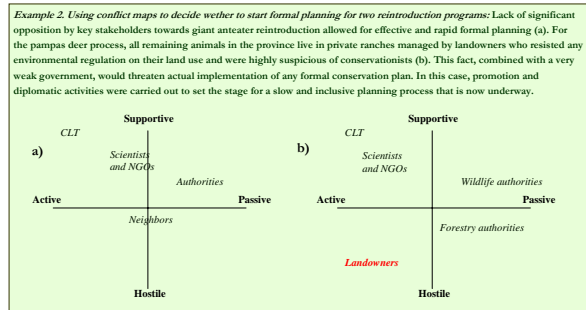
In *formal planning* one or several institutions produce official or semi-official documents describing main goals, actions, roles, locations and time-frames for a reintroduction program. These documents serve as explicit guides for both program implementation and evaluation. *Informal planning* includes all management decisions affecting the program that are not included in institutional strategic documents. Much emphasis has been placed on formal planning because it is highly visible and most easy to evaluate. In spite of its lower visibility, informal planning plays a major role on any adaptive reintroduction project and always precedes the former.

Example 1. Informal planning to identify a long-term strategy for large mammal reintroduction in the INR: the use of exploratory meetings.

The Conservation Land Trust (CLT) team had the institutional mandate to reintroduce four large mammals in the INR: pampas deer, giant otter, jaguar and giant anteater. An exploratory meeting was arranged to decide an overall strategy to fulfill such mandate, and seven professionals representing diverse professional, institutional and geographical origins attended. The combination of different perspectives and a highly informal working environment helped to identify some general strategic decisions that would shape the whole program until today. One key realization was that the symbolic power of the jaguar could overshadow any other reintroduction project that we tried to carry out. Thus it was agreed that the giant anteater and pampas deer projects should be well-established as a precondition to launch any jaguar reintroduction initiative in order to use experience and prestige from the former into the latest, and prepare local society for such unprecedented restoration projects.

Timing is key: when should we start planning?

Formal planning should not be started until a reintroduction project can summon enough internal and external knowledge and political support. Thus, building conflict maps, as those shown in Figure 2, can help identify the right moment to start formal planning. Meanwhile, informal planning must be used and promoted to advance management actions and prepare more formal planning instances.



Getting the right people: who should we include?

While informal planning can be carried out almost exclusively by the project leading institutions, formal planning should be prepared to include all stakeholders with enough power to halt or support key reintroduction actions. Leading planners should be chosen for their interdisciplinary strategic --both scientific and people oriented-- skills and their ultimate commitment to the species recovery. While it is good to bring external expertise and knowledge to the planning process, it is key that plans are basically designed by those who will be in charge of reintroduction implementation.

Example 3. Participants and tools to design a collaborative Reintroduction Plan for Giant Anteater (RPGA) at INR: keeping it technical.

A formal planning process was carried out to design and negotiate the RPGA with scientific experts and government authorities. The first planning stage involved a two-day workshop with the participation of nine national and international experts on ecological, veterinary and genetic aspects of giant anteaters. In this case the meeting approach was highly structured and a scientifically trained facilitator was hired to provide an initial list of questions and moderate all group discussions. In this planning stage, the facilitator used relatively sophisticated analysis like GIS overlay analysis, and population viability analysis through VORTEX software. The second planning phase involved national and provincial government authorities. In this case a draft recovery plan was distributed to government officials before they attended a regularly scheduled meeting for interagency coordination. Here the draft plan was presented and discussed to obtain public support by the local provincial authority and the Argentinean Wildlife Service. In this particular case local communities and landowners were intentionally excluded from the planning process because the giant anteater does not elicit conflicting feelings, and enough land was secured by CLT for future reintroductions without further private properties being needed.

Using the right

Efficient informal planning requires a combination of strategic self-reflective leadership, organizational learning and an open

Example 4. Preparing the transition from informal to formal planning for Pampas As it shown in Fig. 2(b), initial opposition by powerful landowners precluded a formal planning exercise as the one described on Example 2. In order to start a collaborative planning process, CLT spent several months visiting landowners and managers at their ranches to explain our conservation purposes, while acknowledging their economic interests. In parallel, we collaborated with the central and provincial governments on developing a National Conservation Plan for the species that would serve as a "national legal umbrella" for any local plan. Nowadays, we feel that we have built enough credibility with key local, provincial and national stakeholders to start a formal local planning process that would contemplate deer reintroduction inside the INR. Due to expected differences in language and interests among participants, this planning exercise will avoid using

Conclusions

more emphasis on hiring a facilitator that is respected by all parties and is well trained

Informal planning allows to build agreements among groups with conflicting interests

- It is key for team building and improvement
- It allows for day-to-day adaptation that uses new information and opportunities
- It leaves room for discussions that should not be started on a formal open setting, and policy decisions that should not be included within public documents

Formal planning

- A public plan promotes transparency and external input and support
- A formal participatory planning process helps to build a broad coalition

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