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Powerbiodiv

Navigating Power in Participatory Processes for Biodiversity Conservation

Tool for Thought

NEXT

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About

This is not a manual, nor a guide with fixed solutions.

It is an invitation to slow down, to look differently at power, and to pay attention to how it shapes participation, knowledge, and the outcomes of conservation work.

Born from the collective work of researchers, facilitators, and practitioners involved in the PowerBiodiv project, this tool draws on scientific understanding to open space for deeper questioning, shared learning, and more conscious practice.

It doesn't offer a single method or path. Instead, it proposes a framework to support reflection, a set of questions to encourage curiosity and awareness, and a series of stories that show what navigating power can look like in real-world settings. For fuller, story-driven accounts, see the companion Narrative Booklet, which expands each case with context, voices, and lessons learned.

If you work with participatory processes in biodiversity conservation or anywhere people, power, and nature meet, this tool is for you.

Use it to prepare.

Use it to pause and reflect.

Use it to challenge assumptions, including your own.

Use it to imagine more just, inclusive, and transformative ways forward.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Why This Tool?

2. For Whom is This Tool Intended?

3. Embedding Power into Reflective Practices

4. How This Tool Was Created?

5. How to Use This Tool?

Participatory approaches are increasingly used in biodiversity conservation to build trust, reduce conflict, and create more lasting decisions. By bringing together diverse voices (local communities, scientists, policymakers, NGOs) they aim to shape strategies that protect both people and nature.

But more participation does not automatically mean better outcomes.

Power matters.

When power dynamics are overlooked, participation can become superficial, reinforcing old inequalities and even deepening tensions. Power shapes who is heard, whose knowledge counts, and who is left outside decision-making. If we don't name and reflect on these dynamics, we risk failing the very goals of fairness and impact that participatory processes aim for.

This Tool for Thought invites conservation practitioners, researchers, and facilitators to reflect more consciously on how power operates in participatory settings and how we might respond with greater care and imagination. It introduces a shared vocabulary to talk about power clearly and constructively. It proposes key concepts, and reflective questions to help make power more visible, more easy to talk about openly, and more actionable. By embedding power awareness into reflection and practice, we can make conservation processes more inclusive, more just, and ultimately, more effective.

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This resource is for anyone who works, or aspires to work, at the intersection between **biodiversity, participation, and social change.**

It speaks to:

- **Conservation practitioners** managing biodiversity and natural resources in collaboration with communities
- **Researchers** exploring biodiversity, social-ecological systems, and participatory approaches
- **Facilitators** designing and leading participatory processes across diverse settings

But it also offers insights to those **shaping the conditions** for participation:

- **Policy makers** who commission participatory processes and seek to design them more inclusively
- **Advocacy leaders, project designers,** and **funders** thinking about how power affects whose voices are heard and whose knowledge is valued
- **Institutional actors** committed to shifting practices toward more equity, justice, and shared stewardship

Rather than offering strict categories, this Tool for Thought invites a more fluid perspective: wherever you sit on the ground, in research, at policy levels, or inbetween, you are part of shaping how power flows through conservation efforts.

It provides ways of seeing, questioning, and thinking critically about power: how it shows up, how it shifts, and how we might engage with it more consciously and creatively.

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Power is always present, shaping decisions, interactions, and outcomes.

Reflecting on power means asking:

- Who has influence?
- Whose voices are missing?
- What systems define what seems possible or impossible?

This tool encourages you to explore how power influences your own role, relationships, and institutions. Reflective practice when paired with a clear framework, helps uncover hidden assumptions and opens new paths for action.

Power isn't only about domination. It can be oppressive, but also creative and transformative — the power to change systems and challenge injustice.

Through reflection, we can:

- Recognize the different **arenas of power** (visible, hidden, invisible, systemic)
- Notice the various **expressions of power** (power within, to, with, for)
- Identify the **spaces and levels** where power is at play (closed, invited, claimed; local to global)

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This Tool for Thought emerged from **PowerBiodiv**, a collaborative project supported by the French Foundation for Biodiversity Research (FRB) and its CESAB research center.

PowerBiodiv was created to explore a vital but often overlooked question: **how do power dynamics shape participatory processes in biodiversity conservation?**

The project brought together a **diverse international collective**—researchers, facilitators, and institutional actors—each working at the intersection of conservation and participation. Over the course of **three years and five workshops**, we shared experiences, tested ideas, and engaged with real-world case studies.

Together, we explored how **social and political theories of power** could help us better understand the messy, beautiful, and often unequal realities of participatory processes. We developed and tested a shared framework through **literature reviews, interviews, and reflective practice**, drawing from both academic research and lived experience.

This resource is the result of that journey. It offers a shared language, a space for reflection, and an invitationto think more deeply —and act more consciously — about how power moves through conservation work.

We also hope this tool contributes to a broader shift in how power is acknowledged in biodiversity research and practice. We encourage practitioners, researchers, and institutions to adopt this shared language in their work—not just to name power, but to engage with it more consistently and critically, across projects and publications.

We thank the FRB and CESAB for supporting this work—not only financially, but by providing the space and time to reflect, challenge each other, and imagine new ways of working.

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This resource has four parts:

Part One: Theoretical Framework and Reflective Questions

Introduces core power concepts with prompts to reflect on your role and process, plus concise definitions under each framework dimension.

Part Two: Audio Stories from the Field

Presents real-world audio cases, each highlighting one or two power dimensions and practical strategies for navigating them.

Part Three: Case Study Details

Provides background and key characteristics for the audio cases, situating each in its institutional, geographic, and participatory context—useful for comparison, adaptation, or deeper study.

What Now? Turning Insights into Action

Offers suggestions and curated resources to move from reflection to practice, including guiding questions for strategy and links to tools for facilitation, power analysis, and participatory design.

You are invited to use this tool to:

- Prepare for an upcoming participatory process
- Reflect on your role in past or current projects
- Support critical conversations within your teams or organizations
- Stay open to learning, adaptation, and deeper engagement with power

Wherever you are on your journey, this Tool for Thought is here to support reflection, dialogue and action toward more power-aware conservation practice.

PART ONE

Theoretical Framework and Reflective Questions

This framework is offered as a starting point, not a fixed model.

We invite you to adapt the terms, dimensions, and visual representations to reflect your context, your language, and the kinds of questions that help you and others explore power more meaningfully.

What matters most is that the framework supports reflection and dialogue, not that it is applied as-is.

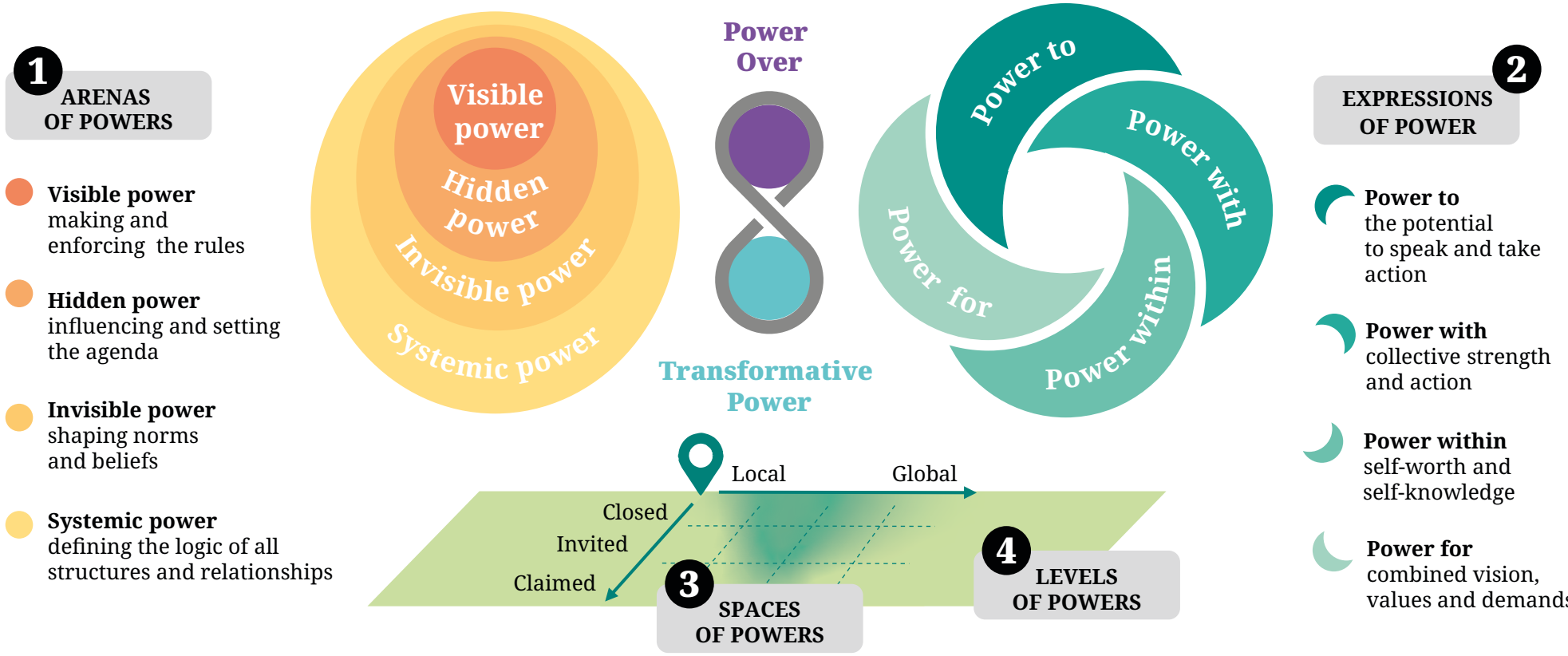

FIGURE 1 *Multiple dimensions of power framework adapted from JASS (2024) and from the Institute of Development Studies (Gaventa, 2006) and the Power Cube (https://www.powercube.net). See original in Lecuyer et al. (2024)*

PART ONE: Theoretical Framework and Reflective Questions

Power shapes all relationships—between individuals, groups, institutions, and nature. It is dynamic and context-dependent, neither inherently good nor bad.

Power over is the ability to influence or limit others' choices. It can be used to enforce rules, protect interests, or maintain order. It is sometimes viewed as necessary, sometimes as problematic.

Transformative power is the capacity to question or reshape existing power dynamics. It can emerge through individual or collective action that opens space for change.

These two forms of power often interact. Recognizing both helps us better understand how participatory processes unfold, succeed, or struggle.

Power Over

Transformative Power

To what extent are some people/entities able to influence other people's actions, consciously or unconsciously, whether against their interest or for their benefit ? To what extent are powerful people/entities able to maintain a power status quo?

To what extent are some people able to change existing power structures, and/or to resist and contest existing forms of domination, oppression or subjugation, individually or collectively?

PART ONE: Theoretical Framework and Reflective Questions

1.1. Arenas of power

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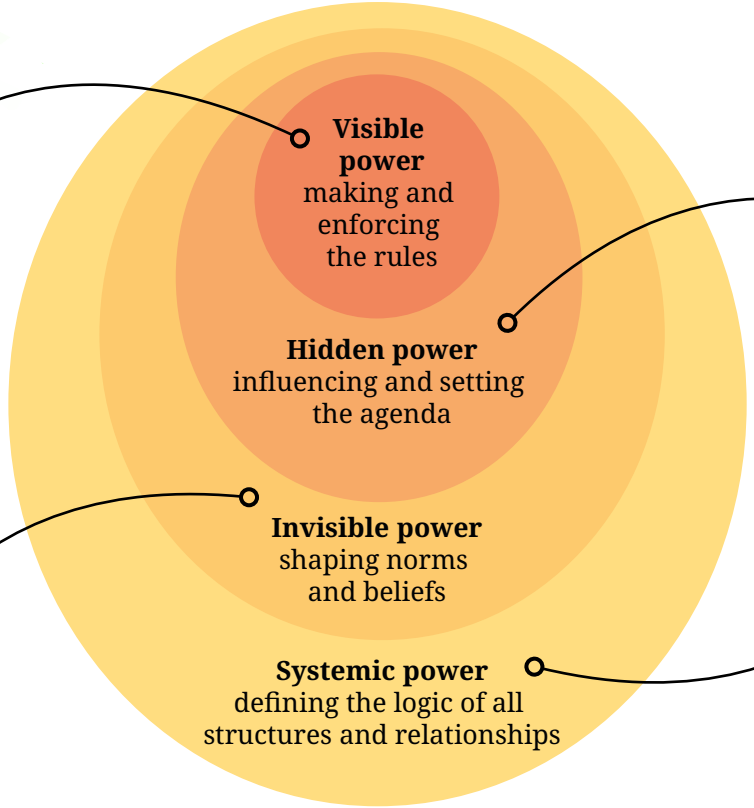
Arenas help us understand **how** power is operating—formally, informally, culturally, or structurally—and how these layers overlap and constrain each other.

The arenas of power are represented as **nested layers** highlighting how visible, hidden, invisible, and systemic power are deeply interconnected. Because they shape and constrain each other, strategies for change must engage with all of them, not just the most visible.

How and how far is power exerted through formal and observable means, such as official authority and decision-making, formal rule making and enforcement?

To what extent do existing beliefs, social norms and culture generate, consciously or not, bias against or in favor of some people, creating prejudices and preventing some people from being heard, seen and valued?



To what extent are some people exerting power by strategically acting behind the scene to assert their interests and influence public agendas, for example by exerting pressure, excluding some actors and their concerns, or creating alliances, whether visible or hidden ?

How far do deeply embedded social and economic arrangements, such as patriarchy, structural racism or capitalism, play a role in maintaining existing forms of domination, oppression and subjugation? To what extent are they made conscious, contested and potentially altered ?

PART ONE: Theoretical Framework and Reflective Questions

1.2. Expression of power

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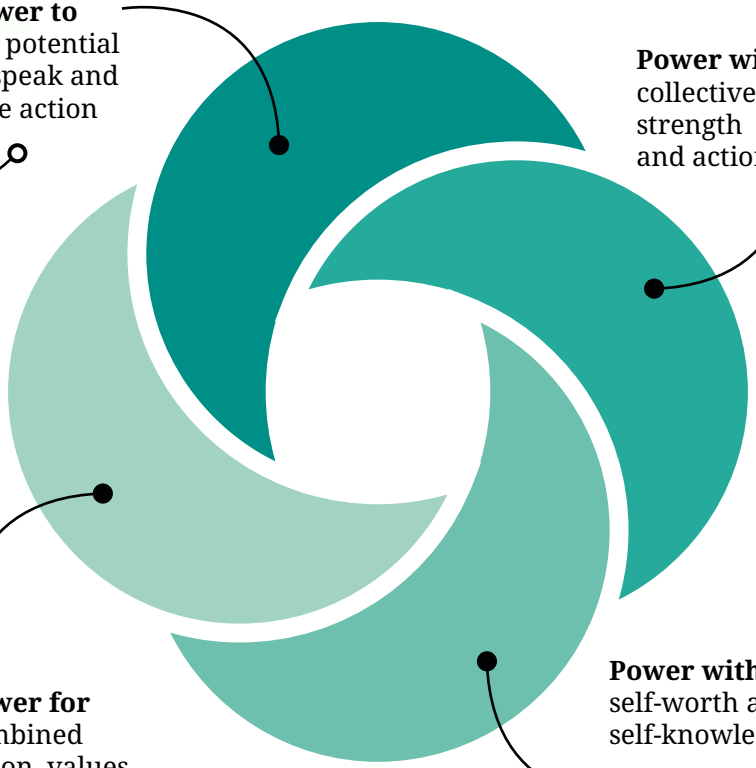
Expressions describe the « **exercice** » of power - how it is enacted, practiced, and cultivated—from inner confidence to collective action.

These dimensions are illustrated as a **spiral**, highlighting the dynamic and iterative nature of how power is built, combined, and sustained.

How far do individuals have the capacity to pursue and reach their own ends? What reinforces or jeopardizes this capacity, such as material resources, skills, knowledge or social networks ?

Power to
the potential to speak and take action



Power with
collective strength and action

To what extent are people able to join forces, find common ground and act collectively to attain shared ends?

To what extent do visions and values inspire action that move people towards the changes they desire?

Power for
combined vision, values and demands

Power within
self-worth and self-knowledge

To what extent does individual dignity, self-worth and self-knowledge enable people to pursue their objectives while respecting others ?

PART ONE: Theoretical Framework and Reflective Questions

1.3. Spaces and levels of power

Spaces and levels refer to **where and at what scale** power is experienced, negotiated, or contested—from local meetings to global arenas. Reflecting on these dimensions can help identify where and when to engage or step back and how to strategically combine action across different spaces and levels in complementary ways.

The spaces and levels are typically visualized as layered maps, to show how power over and transformative power can move and shift across different times and scales during a participatory process.

Were people invited by an official convener to participate in a collective setting?

Were some decisions made within confined spaces among a few decisions makers, without involving or consulting other people?

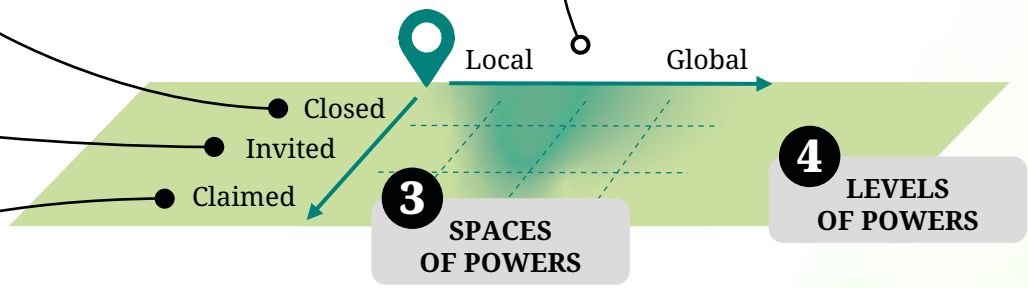
At what scale and/or levels or organization do people act and interact?

Closed spaces: decisions made by a few without broad consultation

Invited spaces: formally invited by authorities to participate in discussions or decision-making

Claimed spaces: self-organized by marginalized or excluded groups to foster dialogue and collective action

Did people create their own setting to foster collective discussions outside existing arenas, or in arenas in which they were not invited ?



PART TWO

Audio Stories from the Field

These stories bring the framework to life through real-world experience.

Each audio clip shares a personal perspective on how power was perceived and navigated in conservation contexts, spanning the arenas of power (visible, hidden, invisible, systemic), expressions of power (within, to, with, for), and the spaces and levels where power operates.

Please note: these reflections represent the viewpoints of the individuals who contributed each case. They offer valuable insights into their own experiences, but do not speak for all actors involved.

We invite you to listen with curiosity, to notice the tensions, strategies, and subtle shifts that make change possible. These are not templates, but windows into practice.

FULL SCREEN ON/OFF

Visible power
Hidden power
Invisible power
Systemic power
Power to
Power with
Power within
Power for
Spaces of power
Levels of power

Visible Power: Making and enforcing the rules

1 - Rethinking Foxes in the Jura Mountains: A long-term ecological experiment brought farmers, hunters, and environmentalists to the same table to rethink fox management and foster collaboration in the French Jura.

MORE ABOUT THIS CASE

How it affected the participatory process : AUDIO CLIP

What strategies can be used to navigate or transform it ? AUDIO CLIP

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2 - Wolves and Conflict in the Lüneburg Heath: In the wolf-affected Lüneburg Heath, a year-long EU-supported dialogue platform brought together diverse stakeholders to build mutual understanding and explore collaborative solutions, laying the groundwork for future coexistence efforts.

MORE ABOUT THIS CASE

How it affected the participatory process : AUDIO CLIP

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Hidden Power: Making and enforcing the rules

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3 - Land-Use Change and Livestock in the Pyrenees: In the French Pyrenees, a collaborative research process brought together diverse local voices to co-create just and climate-conscious land-use proposals, fostering new relationships and collective action.

MORE ABOUT THIS CASE

How it affected the participatory process : AUDIO CLIP

What strategies can be used to navigate or transform it ? AUDIO CLIP

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4 - Wolves and Livestock in Grosseto: In Grosseto, Italy, a multi-stakeholder dialogue transformed mistrust into collaboration, enabling livestock breeders, hunters, and conservationists to co-develop solutions for living with wolves.

MORE ABOUT THIS CASE

How it affected the participatory process : AUDIO CLIP

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Visible power
Hidden power
Invisible power
Systemic power
Power to
Power with
Power within
Power for
Spaces of power
Levels of power

Invisible power : Shaping norms and beliefs

5 - Jaguar Agreements in Calakmul : In Calakmul, Mexico, livestock breeders and conservationists co-developed agreements linking veterinary care with jaguar protection, building trust and reducing retaliatory killings.

MORE ABOUT THIS CASE

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6 - Ground-Nesting Birds and Knowledge in Scotland: In Scotland, gamekeepers, scientists, and conservationists co-produced knowledge on ground-nesting birds, leading to new collaborations and shared conservation actions.

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Hidden power
Invisible power
Systemic power
Power to
Power with
Power within
Power for
Spaces of power
Levels of power

Systemic power : Defining the logic of all structures and relationships

7 - Zambia's Voice in Predator Planning: A rigid, top-down conservation process was reshaped from within, allowing Zambian actors to take ownership of their national plan for cheetahs and wild dogs.

MORE ABOUT THIS CASE

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8 - Seals and Salmon in the Moray Firth: In the Moray Firth, long-standing conflict between seal conservation and salmon fisheries led to a negotiated, science-based co-management plan that influenced national policy.

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9 - Ecosystem services and Water Justice in the Mariño Valley: In Peru's Mariño watershed, a payment for hydrological services scheme sparked new forms of dialogue and tension around land use, equity, and compensation across upstream and downstream communities.

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Power to : The potential to speak and take action

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Power with : Collective strength and action

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Power within : Self-worth and Self-knowledge

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10 - Livestock Guard Dogs in the Vercors: In the Vercors mountains of France, a participatory process on livestock guarding dogs opened new space for dialogue and trust in a multi-use landscape shared by wolves, farmers, and tourists.

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Power for : Combined vision, values, and demands

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PREVIOUS NEXT

Visible power
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Power within
Power for
Spaces of power
Levels of power

Space of Power

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PREVIOUS NEXT

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PART THREE

Case Study Details

This section provides the background and key features of each case shared in the audio stories.

It offers factual context, including who was involved, how the process unfolded, and what outcomes emerged.

Use it to situate each example, compare experiences, or identify patterns that resonate with your own work.

Want to go deeper? Explore the Narrative Booklet, a storytelling companion with richer case narratives, power dynamics made explicit, and the key moments, voices, and lessons behind each process.

1 - Voles, Foxes, Hares • Jura, France
2 - Wolves • Lower Saxony, Germany
3 - Just Landscapes • Pyrenees, France
4 - Wolves • Grosseto, Italy
5 - Jaguar • Calakmul, Mexico
6 - Ground-nesting birds • Scotland
7 - Cheetah / Wild Dog • Zambia
8 - Seals/Salmon • Moray Firth, Scotland
9 - Watershed • Apurimac, Peru
10 - Wolves • Vercors, French Alps

Pick a point to select a Case

Voles, Foxes, Hares: Building Dialogue Through Scientific Experimentation in the Jura Mountains

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Location: Jura Mountains, France

Role of Contributor: Lead social scientist on the project

Initiating Entity: While the process stems from a multi-decade dynamic, the most direct initiator is an ecologist who has worked with farmers, hunters, and environmentalists for over 30 years.

Objective of the Process: To carry out a scientific experiment to assess the effects of the fox's classification as a pest species (ESOD) and to lay the foundation for long-term dialogue among stakeholders managing wildlife in the Jura.

TIMEFRAME

Experiment conceived in 2018, implemented in 2021, and expected to last at least 10 years to observe meaningful impacts.

HISTORY OF THE PROCESS

Since the 1970s, farmers in the Jura have grappled with destructive vole outbreaks. While early chemical control caused ecological damage, non-chemical alternatives—particularly the role of foxes—gained attention in the 2000s. However, as foxes were officially labeled pests, controversy erupted. Farmers and hunters viewed foxes as disease vectors and threats to livestock, while environmentalists advocated for their ecological role.

The experiment was designed to generate scientific knowledge to help mediate this conflict and explore the potential for dialogue-based collaboration.

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Pick a point to select a Case

Voles, Foxes, Hares: Building Dialogue Through Scientific Experimentation in the Jura Mountains

PARTICIPATION

Participants: 9 stakeholder representatives (farmers, hunters, environmentalists, academics) in project governance, plus ~50 people contributing to data collection.

Participant Identification: Stakeholders were selected based on existing scientific networks, relevant expertise, and active roles in the fox-status debate. Environmentalist involvement was seen as essential for legitimacy beyond traditional farmer-hunter cooperation.

Compensation: No compensation provided.

Facilitation: No third-party or professional facilitation was used.

Mood and Engagement: Initially tense and marked by mistrust—especially between environmentalists and farmers/hunters—but relations improved over time through frequent meetings and collaborative moments. Recently, tensions have re-emerged around a new wildlife issue unrelated to foxes.

Location and Venue: Data collection in the Jura Mountains; coordination meetings held at a university lab in a formal academic setting.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

- Co-authored scientific article on fox impact, written by academic, hunter, and environmentalist representatives
- Joint design of a new form for reporting wildlife-related damages (used in pest classification decisions)
- Experiment gaining attention from other regions—indicating potential for future replication

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Pick a point to select a Case

Collaborative Wolf Management in Lower Saxony, Germany

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Location:
Lüneburg Heath, Lower Saxony, Germany

Role of Contributor: Fact finder, process designer, and main facilitator

Initiating Entity:
- EU-funded project for establishing local dialogue platforms
- Lower Saxony's Ministry of the Environment

Objective of the Process: To create a platform for dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders affected by the return of wolves. The goal was to foster trust, clarify differing perspectives, co-develop solutions, and prepare and support implementation plans. The platform also sought to build enough collective ownership to either make policy recommendations or act directly on agreed-upon measures.

TIMEFRAME

Spring 2019 to Summer 2020

HISTORY OF THE PROCESS

Prompted by the return and growing population of wolves in Lower Saxony, this initiative began in 2019 to address rising tensions. Conflicts emerged across technical, value-based, and interpersonal levels—such as protective measures, compensation systems, inclusion of wolves in hunting laws, and broader questions of trust between rural and urban stakeholders.

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Pick a point to select a Case

Collaborative Wolf Management in Lower Saxony, Germany

PARTICIPATION

Participants: Roughly 35 stakeholders were consulted ahead of the process; about 30 participated in the platform meetings (with some overlap between the two groups).

Participant Identification: Selected based on relevance to the issue and through peer recommendations.

Compensation: Only one participant—upon request—received compensation.

Facilitation: Yes, by an external professional facilitator.

Mood and Engagement: Ranged from tense to upset and frustrated, reflecting the contentious nature of the topic.

Location and Venue: Workshops took place at a neutral, off-site seminar center in the heart of the wolf-affected region—Alfred Toepfer Akademie für Naturschutz, Schneverdingen.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

- 6 platform meetings with consistently strong stakeholder participation
- Deeper mutual understanding and exchanges across diverse perspectives
- No major concrete decisions, but creation of a model for future dialogue platforms

1 - Voles, Foxes, Hares • Jura, France
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4 - Wolves • Grosseto, Italy
5 - Jaguar • Calakmul, Mexico
6 - Ground-nesting birds • Scotland
7 - Cheetah / Wild Dog • Zambia
8 - Seals/Salmon • Moray Firth, Scotland
9 - Watershed • Apurimac, Peru
10 - Wolves • Vercors, French Alps

Pick a point to select a Case

Co-Constructing Just Landscape Transformations in the Pyrenees, France

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Location: Regional Natural Park of the Pyrenees Ariégeoises, France

Role of Contributor: Lead social scientist on the French case

Initiating Entity: Researchers from INRAE in partnership with the Regional Natural Park of the Pyrenees Ariégeoisest

Objective of the Process: To co-construct proposals for land-use changes that local stakeholders consider just in the context of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

TIMEFRAME

4-year project

- Year 1: Individual interviews
- Years 2–3: Participatory workshops
- Year 4: Communication and dissemination

HISTORY OF THE PROCESS

Rural and mountainous regions in France are increasingly expected to contribute to climate mitigation through land-use changes such as afforestation or reduced livestock farming. In areas where extensive grazing prevents forest encroachment and supports cultural identity, such measures may be seen as unfair or threatening. This process aimed to amplify the voices of those who live and work in these landscapes, to better understand what fair transitions would look like from their perspective.

1 - Voles, Foxes, Hares • Jura, France
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9 - Watershed • Apurimac, Peru
10 - Wolves • Vercors, French Alps

Pick a point to select a Case

Co-Constructing Just Landscape Transformations in the Pyrenees, France

PARTICIPATION

Participants:

- 60 participants in individual interviews
- 40 participants in participatory workshops

Participant Identification: Stakeholders were selected through two initial diagnostic interview series—one on farming diversity and one on landscape perception. The aim was to reflect a range of roles, interests, and visions. A snowball sampling method was used to ensure diversity.

Compensation: No compensation provided.

Facilitation: Facilitated by the research team trained in facilitation methods. No professional facilitators involved.

Mood and Engagement: Overall very positive. Participants appreciated the process, regularly returned, and contributed actively. Some tensions arose between individuals with opposing values but were generally resolved through dialogue and improved mutual understanding.

Location and Venue: Workshops were mainly held in public village halls. A creative writing session was held in a more intimate community venue known for cultural events.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

- A manifesto and 43 co-constructed proposals for just land-use transformations
- A documentary film: Demain, la vallée, screened over 300 times with 10,000 viewers
- Strengthening of local food systems, including a new association, a producer directory, and a shop bringing together diverse farmers—including traditional livestock farmers, who are often excluded from such initiatives
- Strengthened mutual respect improved relationships among divergent stakeholders, and a renewed willingness to act collectively

FULL SCREEN ON/OFF

1 - Voles, Foxes, Hares • Jura, France
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Pick a point to select a Case

Local Stakeholder Dialogue on Wolf and Livestock in Grosseto, Italy

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Location: Grosseto Province, Italy

Role of Contributor: Coordinator of the process

Initiating Entity: LIFE MEDWOLF project (2012–2017), in collaboration with local institutions

Objective of the Process: To create a space for dialogue between diverse stakeholders in order to collaboratively develop and implement proposals to improve the local situation regarding wolf-livestock interactions.

TIMEFRAME

2-year process

- 8 stakeholder meetings within the first year
- Followed by an implementation phase to apply agreed actions and advocate for regional adoption

HISTORY OF THE PROCESS

Grosseto's economy is strongly based on agriculture and extensive livestock breeding. Wolves had historically been present at low densities, but by the late 1990s, depredation events increased significantly. Existing damage management policies from regional and provincial governments were perceived as insufficient, and retaliatory killings—including illegal wolf poaching—became common.

Building on trust developed during the LIFE MEDWOLF project, a new dialogue platform was launched in 2018. For the first time, stakeholders such as animal welfare associations, hunters, livestock breeders, and environmentalists sat together to understand each other's perspectives.

1 - Voles, Foxes, Hares • Jura, France
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10 - Wolves • Vercors, French Alps

Pick a point to select a Case

Local Stakeholder Dialogue on Wolf and Livestock in Grosseto, Italy

PARTICIPATION

Participants: 15 to 35 individuals across different meetings

Participant Identification: Preliminary mapping by local partners, followed by a snowball approach

Compensation: Travel costs covered for participants from outside the province

Facilitation: Process facilitated by a hired professional facilitator

Mood and Engagement: Initial skepticism gave way to strong interest and passion. Participants engaged deeply and respectfully, with many reporting major learning and perspective shifts.

Location and Venue: Meetings held at the local Natural History Museum—neutral, accessible, well-known, and adaptable, though lacking tables

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

- A jointly agreed plan for improving wolf-livestock coexistence
- Workshop reports documenting shared decisions
- Enhanced technical knowledge and confidence among livestock breeders
- Shift in understanding among diverse stakeholders, fostering collaboration
- Grosseto now considered a model for similar efforts in other regions, with local breeders sharing their experience nationally

FULL SCREEN ON/OFF

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Pick a point to select a Case

Designing Shared Agreements for Jaguar Conservation in Calakmul, Mexico

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Location: Calakmul, Mexico

Role of Contributor:
Project coordinator – Workshop facilitator

Initiating Entity:
NGO (developed through PhD work)

Objective of the Process: To co-develop mutual responsibilities between livestock breeders and a mobile veterinary unit for jaguar conservation through a participatory workshop series.

TIMEFRAME

2-year project, with initiation workshops conducted over 1 month.

HISTORY OF THE PROCESS

Calakmul has the largest jaguar population in Mexico. This has led to occasional jaguar attacks on livestock, creating local conflict around conservation. However, the primary cause of cattle losses in the region is disease.

To address these overlapping issues, the mobile veterinary unit was developed under a One Health approach—supporting cattle production, community health, and jaguar protection simultaneously.

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Pick a point to select a Case

Designing Shared Agreements for Jaguar Conservation in Calakmul, Mexico

PARTICIPATION

Participants: 6 workshops involving approximately 94 people.

Participant Identification: Voluntary participation. Each community was visited twice beforehand to inform and invite participants.

Compensation: No compensation provided.

Facilitation: Facilitated by the project coordinator. No external or professional facilitator involved.

Mood and Engagement: Generally friendly, though in some workshops, participants were more passive—often acting more as observers than active contributors.

Location and Venue: Community rooms were used—some were spacious, while others had limited flexibility for group work.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

- 10 participatory agreements signed with 67 ranchers across 11 communities
- Training workshops delivered on animal health, husbandry, and coexistence practices
- Improved trust in the process and increased local commitment to jaguar conservation
- No retaliatory jaguar killings reported during the project
- Ongoing engagement via WhatsApp, follow-up visits, and strengthened community leadership

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Pick a point to select a Case

Co-Producing Knowledge for Ground-Nesting Bird Conservation in Scotland

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Location: Scotland

Role of Contributor:
Lead social scientist on the project

Initiating Entity: National statutory body responsible for biodiversity conservation

Objective of the Process: To integrate local knowledge from gamekeepers with scientific data in order to build a more comprehensive understanding of the status and trends of ground-nesting birds—laying the groundwork for improved relationships between scientists, conservationists, and land practitioners.

TIMEFRAME

2 years

HISTORY OF THE PROCESS

There has been a long-standing conflict between game shooting stakeholders and raptor conservation advocates in Scotland. A previous scientific review failed to gain traction, partly due to the exclusion of local land users such as gamekeepers. This participatory process was designed to bring these voices into the conversation and foster a more holistic approach to conservation knowledge and decision-making.

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Pick a point to select a Case

Co-Producing Knowledge for Ground-Nesting Bird Conservation in Scotland

PARTICIPATION

Participants: 400 questionnaire respondents; 62 participants in focus groups; 50 stakeholder organizations engaged across 4 seminars.

Participant Identification: Voluntary participation via open invitations and snowball sampling methods.

Compensation: No compensation provided.

Facilitation: Facilitated by members of the research team. No external professional facilitators involved.

Mood and Engagement: Generally very positive. Gamekeepers were open and enthusiastic about contributing their knowledge. Some conservationists were initially hesitant regarding the inclusion of non-scientific perspectives.

Location and Venue: Workshops and seminars were held in public venues across Scotland to minimize travel burden for participants. Venues were large and flexible, with seating designed to mix participants from different backgrounds.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

- Joint development of 29 proposed actions for ground-nesting bird conservation
- Creation of the Working for Waders programme to implement and monitor these collaborative actions.

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Pick a point to select a Case

Conservation Planning for Cheetah and Wild Dog in Zambia

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Location: Zambia

Role of Contributor:
Workshop coordinator and facilitator

Initiating Entity: Two NGOs (UK and USA), under the auspices of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group

Objective of the Process: To develop a national action plan for cheetah and wild dog conservation aligned with the existing regional (SADC-level) strategy.

TIMEFRAME

1-year timeline from the start of planning to the actual workshop.

HISTORY OF THE PROCESS

Participatory conservation planning had been used in the region since the 1990s, especially for species like elephants. However, by the time this workshop took place, the process had become somewhat stagnant.

Cheetah and wild dog presented a unique challenge: their habitat largely exists outside protected areas, requiring a broader and more diverse stakeholder group. Because of this, the workshop brought together a more complex mix of actors—many less familiar with participatory methods—than in previous efforts.

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Pick a point to select a Case

Conservation Planning for Cheetah and Wild Dog in Zambia

PARTICIPATION

Participants: 25 individuals participated in the workshop.

Participant Identification: Participants were identified based on the coordinator's network, government authority recommendations, and suggestions from research groups. Wider outreach was limited, though word-of-mouth helped broaden participation.

Compensation: Yes—participants received "Travel and Subsistence" compensation, which had become a common (and somewhat distorted) practice in such workshops.

Facilitation: Co-facilitated by the contributor and the lead of the broader Africa programme. No professional third-party facilitator was involved.

Mood and Engagement: Initial mood was cautious and somewhat jaded, but momentum and enthusiasm grew as the workshop progressed.

Location and Venue: Held in a hotel conference room in Lusaka, the capital. The space was initially formal but was adapted to foster more informal interaction.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

- Solid and realistic national action plan aligned with regional goals
- Increased local ownership of the process
- Stronger leadership by in-country participants
- Reduced interpersonal barriers between stakeholder groups
- Follow-up initiatives sparked by workshop collaboration

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Pick a point to select a Case

Balancing Seals and Salmon: Adaptive Co-management in the Moray Firth

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Location: Moray Firth, Scotland

Role of Contributor:
Coordinator and facilitator of the process; scientific evaluator

Initiating Entity: River Spey Fishery Board

Objective of the Process: To develop a compromise between seal conservation interests and salmon fishery stakeholders through a negotiated and adaptive management plan.

TIMEFRAME

Initial planning: 2004–2005

Implementation and evaluation: 2005–2022

HISTORY OF THE PROCESS

The process emerged in response to the EU Habitats Directive, an outbreak of phocine distemper, and a marked decline in salmon stocks. These issues intensified an already long-standing conflict between conservation and fishery interests.

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Pick a point to select a Case

Balancing Seals and Salmon: Adaptive Co-management in the Moray Firth

PARTICIPATION

Participants: Fishery stakeholders (11 fishery boards and members, 40 ghillies, 4 salmon netting stations and crews), government agency staff, wildlife tourism operators, and members of the public.

Participant Identification: Participants were selected based on statutory roles and commercial interest

Compensation: No compensation provided.

Facilitation: Facilitated by the process coordinator. No external or professional facilitator involved.

Mood and Engagement: The process began in an adversarial climate but gradually moved toward mutual acceptance and collaboration.

Location and Venue: Various sites around the Moray Firth, hosted in standard meeting rooms.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

- Agreement on sustainable limits for seal removals to protect salmon
- Delineation of "management areas" with stakeholder consensus
- Creation of accredited training for designated marksmen
- Funded research program on seal-salmon dynamics
- Development of an adaptive co-management model later reflected in national legislation (2010)
- Responsive management system that reduced impact on seal populations while addressing fishery concerns

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Pick a point to select a Case

Managing Watersheds and Hydrological Services in Apurimac, Peru

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Location: Mariño watershed, Apurimac, Peru

Role of Contributor: Researcher

Initiating Entity: National government agency (Superintendence of Sanitation Service) and the local drinking water company, with support from NGOs

Objective of the Process: To implement nature-based solutions in the upper watershed to improve water regulation for downstream users, involving upstream communities and designing a financial mechanism for hydrological service payments.

TIMEFRAME

More than 10 years

HISTORY OF THE PROCESS

Following Peru's 2014 Ecosystem Services Law, the Mariño watershed became a pilot site for implementing payments for hydrological services. Multi-sectoral dialogue was initiated early to bring together stakeholders across the watershed and test new governance and financial mechanisms.

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Pick a point to select a Case

Managing Watersheds and Hydrological Services in Apurimac, Peru

PARTICIPATION

Participants: Several hundred participants across meetings and consultations

Participant Identification: Communities located near water sources for the city, as well as other relevant water stakeholders such as water companies, government authorities, and NGOs.

Compensation: Small compensations (e.g., per diems or meals) for participation in discussions.

Facilitation: Facilitated by representatives from involved institutions (authorities, NGOs). No professional or community-based facilitators were engaged.

Mood and Engagement: Fluctuated depending on the topic—from friendly exchanges to tense debates, particularly around compensation.

Location and Venue: Meetings were held mostly in the downstream city, with some field visits in upstream communities. Venues were familiar to participants and large enough for group work.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

- Agreement on intervention strategies, including fencing and reducing productive activities to protect native forests and wetlands
- Ongoing discussions regarding the compensation mechanism for upstream communities
- New spaces for dialogue created among diverse water stakeholders
- Broader engagement that brought to light underlying tensions

FULL SCREEN ON/OFF

1 - Voles, Foxes, Hares • Jura, France
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Pick a point to select a Case

Livestock Guarding Dogs and Coexistence with Wolves in the Vercors, France

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Location:
Vercors Regional Natural Park, French Alps

Role of Contributor: Facilitator, conflict mediator, and process designer

Initiating Entity: EU project on Regional platforms for coexistence - Parc Naturel Régional du Vercors

Objective of the Process: To implement participatory processes that improve conditions for coexistence between humans and large carnivores, with a specific focus on the multi-use landscape and the role of livestock guarding dogs (LGDs).

HISTORY OF THE PROCESS

In 2017, the park launched initial stakeholder consultations. Later, under the EU-funded Regional Platforms for Coexistence project, and following discussions with the French Ministry of Environment, a joint effort was initiated. After initial scoping, the team decided to focus on the contentious topic of LGDs in a multi-use landscape increasingly shared by wolves, hikers, farmers, and other users.

TIMEFRAME

3 year process:

- Year 1: Interviews and first multi-stakeholder workshop
- Year 2: Thematic group workshops, second multi-stakeholder workshop, and initial follow-up with “référents”
- Year 3: Co-construction workshops with a communications team and final restitution event

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8 - Seals/Salmon • Moray Firth, Scotland
9 - Watershed • Apurimac, Peru
10 - Wolves • Vercors, French Alps

Pick a point to select a Case

Livestock Guarding Dogs and Coexistence with Wolves in the Vercors, France

PARTICIPATION

Participants: Approx. 30–35 individuals over the course of the process

Participant Identification: Stakeholders were first identified through a mapping exercise with the park, followed by snowball sampling. Invitations were issued to ensure balanced representation at both multi-stakeholder and thematic workshops.

Compensation: Travel costs

Facilitation: Facilitated by a professional team, including a conflict mediator and process designer.

Mood and Engagement: The mood evolved over time—from tense beginnings, shaped by past conflicts, to increasingly focused, safe, and collaborative thematic workshops and a highly productive "référent" group. The final restitution workshop was broadly positive, with a brief disruption attempt by unions countered by strong support from participating breeders.

Location and Venue: Held in neutral locations such as village halls and council rooms. One workshop hosted at a breeder's home. Spaces were comfortable, with natural light and flexible layouts for collaborative activities.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

• A common narrative on the use and presence of LGDs in the context of wolf return, co-developed with a professional communication agency

• A charter of use, signed by a majority of participants, articulating diverse perspectives in a shared agreement

• Dissemination of the narrative through:
- Press campaigns and public communication
- Integration into the training for park staff, guides, and mountain professionals
- Adoption by local tourist offices

WHAT NOW

Turning Insights into Action

This final section invites you to move from reflection toward practice. It proposes questions, strategies, and resources to help you act with greater awareness of power. Whether you adjust how you facilitate, open new spaces for dialogue, or rethink institutional norms, these materials are here to guide—not prescribe—your next steps toward more equitable and transformative conservation.

PART FOUR: WHAT NOW: Turning Insights into Action

This Tool for Thought does not offer solutions or a roadmap—but reflection often opens space for action.

You may find yourself asking:

What can I do now? What could change? How might I help shift the way power moves through a process, an institution, or a community?

Your next step might be internal or interpersonal. It might involve a change in facilitation, a new question posed in a meeting, or a different way of showing up in your role. There is no one way forward—but becoming more aware, intentional, and open to shifting practice is already a meaningful beginning.

Strategy as a Collaborative Compass

We draw inspiration from the work of **JASS (Just Associates)**, who remind us that **strategy is not a fixed plan** but a dynamic, collaborative process that guides groups and movements toward systemic, structural, and material change for justice and equity. Strategy flows from power analysis. It is rooted in where we are, who we are with, and what needs to change. It involves aligning short- and medium-term actions with long-term goals, considering the broader movement ecosystem, and building capacity over time.

Exploring Strategic Pathways

Consider the following questions to guide your strategic planning:

- What kind of power am I working with—or up against?
- What needs to shift: beliefs, relationships, systems, access, visibility?
- Who needs to be involved, and how?
- What space or opportunity might exist—however small—for something to move?

Explore more in JASS: Power and Strategy, especially Theme 1: What is Strategy? and Theme 2: Connecting Analysis to Strategy.

As you reflect, you might consider:

- Shifting how you facilitate or participate in a process
- Inviting new voices or centering those often unheard
- Naming power dynamics where they are normally left implicit
- Adjusting institutional routines that exclude or constrain
- Seeking allies or creating space for informal organizing

These are not answers—but **entry points.** The work of power-aware practice is always situated, imperfect, and evolving.

Explore Further: Tools, Frameworks, and Practices

To support your reflection and possible next steps, we've compiled a curated list of practical resources, guides, and toolkits. They offer methods, stories, and questions—not prescriptions—for navigating power, supporting participation, and deepening facilitation.

You'll find:

- Tools for facilitation and multi-stakeholder processes
- Guides to understanding and working with power
- Practices for reflection and learning

DOWNLOAD THE RESOURCE APPENDIX HERE.

FULL SCREEN ON/OFF

Acknowledgements & Credits

Project & Funding

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With Gratitude To

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