DELPHI SURVEY QUESTIONS: ROUND 2

(‘Desirability question’ form first round- now with different options/choices based on feedback)

1. In **theory**, what is(are) the preferred evaluation method(s), or 'Best Practice,' that should ideally be used to draw reliable inferences about the causal effects of conservation interventions? Please select **ONE or TWO answers**, OR select the last option to opt out.

N.B. The word 'evidence' can be read as qualitative or quantitative. Baseline data refers to data on outcomes before the intervention for treatment groups and at an earlier point in time for control groups. BACI stands for 'Before-After-Control-Impact.'

- **Experimental design:** Evidence from a large-scale randomised field experiment (i.e., fully randomised with-without comparison).

- **Quasi-experimental design:** Evidence from a large sample of statistically matched treatment and control groups (i.e., matched with-without comparison).

- **BACI experimental design:** Evidence from a large sample of randomised treatment and control groups compared before and after the conservation intervention (i.e., randomised with-without comparison with baseline data).

- **BACI quasi-experimental design:** Evidence from a large sample of statistically matched treatment and control groups compared before and after the conservation intervention (i.e., matched with-without comparison with baseline data).

- **Standard BACI design:** Evidence from a large sample of similar but NOT statistically matched treatment and control groups compared before and after the conservation intervention (unmatched with-without comparison with baseline data).

- **Simple with-without design:** Evidence from a comparison of outcomes for a large sample of unmatched treatment and control groups (no baseline).

- **Simple before-after design:** Evidence from a comparison of outcomes before and after the intervention (treatment) for a large sample of treatment groups (no comparison group).

- I reject the idea of 'Best Practice;' there is no ideal way of evaluating conservation interventions.
(Next- a completely new question based on comments)

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements (please select on answer for each row):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental (randomised evaluations) and quasi-experimental (statistical matching) methods are not suitable for evaluating all conservation interventions and should only be used in certain circumstances.</td>
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<td>Experimental and quasi-experimental methods are best suited for testing the effectiveness of new, unproven but promising conservation interventions where the impacts are very uncertain.</td>
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<td>For conservation interventions that are familiar or low risk, less robust designs such as simple before-after or with-without comparisons could be considered adequate to meet decision-makers’ needs.</td>
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(Next- ‘feasibility question’ from first round – rephrased plus different options based on feedback)

3. Based on your own experience, which of the following designs best describes the evaluation method(s) that is(are) most commonly used in practice to evaluate the effectiveness of conservation interventions? Please select ONE or TWO answers.

N.B. The word 'evidence' can be read as qualitative or quantitative; baseline data refers to data on outcomes before the intervention for treatment groups and at an earlier point in time for control groups; BACI stands for 'Before-After-Control-Impact.'

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- **Other (please specify):**
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(Next- a completely new question based on comments in R1)

4. Irrespective of the evaluation design, what kind of evidence/data is required to be able to draw both reliable and robust conclusions about the causal effects of conservation interventions? Please select one answer.

- Quantitative data (actual measurements) are generally preferred over qualitative data
- Qualitative data (from interviews/observations) alone are generally sufficient
- The choice always depends on the research question/hypothesis being tested.
- A mixture of quantitative and qualitative data (mixed methods) are generally preferred (i.e., quantitative data are as important as qualitative data)
- There is no hierarchy between quantitative and qualitative data, either will be as robust/reliable.

(Next- repeat of ‘Minimum requirements’ question from the first round so panel can re-evaluate their answers)
5. In cases where experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation methods are not feasible (or perhaps not even desirable), how important or unimportant are the following considerations when designing an impact evaluation study? Please select one answer for each row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consideration</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Quite Important</th>
<th>Neither Important nor Unimportant</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Completely Inappropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constructing simple control groups (units that do not receive the intervention)</td>
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<td>Guess-estimating the direction of potential bias in interpreting intervention effectiveness</td>
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<td>Formulating detailed theories of change (causal hypothesis with explicit assumptions)</td>
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<td>Considering ecological and socio-economic factors that co-vary with the programme</td>
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<td>Making observations and collecting data on outcomes and key indicators before (at the baseline) and after interventions</td>
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(Next- ‘Barriers question’ - repeated from first round plus 5 extra options based on suggestions from R1 so panel can re-evaluate answers)

6. Given the following menu of possible barriers to using experimental and quasi-experimental methods to evaluate conservation interventions, please select the FIVE barriers you think are the most significant, and thus most likely to explain any gaps in the evidence base, by clicking in the appropriate boxes:

- Lack of funding
- Scepticism/lack of belief in the credibility of the methods
- Availability of baseline data
- Ethical considerations of randomising treatment
- Spill-over effects
- Time constraint (processes take longer than the length of the study)
- Influence of external/uncontrollable factors
- Lack of forward planning (evaluation not built into the project design)
- Availability of a suitable control group
- Lack of resources and capacity for analysis
- Cost
- Unclear programme objectives
• Lack of expertise/trained field staff
• Attrition
• Weak theories of change
• Lack of control over assignment to treatment
• Lack of technology/tools
• Lack of collaboration between different disciplines

7. If there is **ONE** barrier, from the menu above, that you would generally regard as the most significant, please write it in the space below.
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...............................................................................................(Optional question).

(Questions 8-10 are completely new questions based on comments and feedback from R1)

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following explanations for any gaps in the evidence base regarding the impacts of conservation interventions? Please select one answer for each row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaps in the evidence base have less to do with nature of the field and more to do with lack of incentives and or funding/resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaps in the evidence base can mainly be attributed to a lack of funding and/or resources and not because impact evaluation is not valued in the conservation policy field.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaps in the evidence base can partly be explained by a lack of incentive to undertake evaluations: other things are more important (different priorities).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaps in the evidence base can partly be explained by a lack of incentive to disseminate findings: writing up results for journals is not a priority.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaps in the evidence base can partly be explained by the lack of an accepted standard for the design and implementation of impact evaluations in the conservation policy field.</td>
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9. In your opinion, how important is it to develop an accepted standard (i.e., guidelines outlining best practice) for the design and implementation of
conservation evaluations? Please select one answer.

- Very important
- Quite important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Not important
- Completely inappropriate

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement (please select one answer):

Having an accepted standard as regards best practice is not necessarily important if there is a high level of transparency in documenting what evaluation methods are used, when they are used, how successfully they are implemented, and to what end.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

(Next- Repeat of ‘effort of organisations to make improvements’ question, rephrased to allow participants to just think about their own organisation and not organisations in general- adapted based on feedback from R1).

11. With regard to your own organisation, do you think sufficient effort is being made to develop or improve programme evaluation standards in an attempt to strengthen the credibility of the evidence base? Please select one answer.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

12. If you answered ‘Yes’ to the previous question, please specify how? If you answered ‘No,’ please specify why not?

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(Next – two new questions designed to assess the experience and expertise of the panel)
13. How many years have you worked in conservation? Please select one answer.
   - Less than 5 years
   - 5 to 10 years
   - 11 to 20 years
   - 21 to 30 years
   - More than 30 years
   - Prefer not to say

14. Please use the space below to briefly describe your current role within your organisation, or your work more generally if you are not currently affiliated to a specific organisation.

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15. If you would like to elaborate on any of your answers or any of the issues covered in this concluding round of questions, please use the space provided below, thank you.

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End of Delphi Survey R2.