

In the face of rapid change in Galapagos and new and emerging challenges to the conservation of this World Heritage Site, in 2006 the Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF) launched a new ten-year Strategic Plan. It outlines the major hurdles that must be overcome if Galapagos, a global icon of conservation and evolutionary history, is to be preserved for the world:

Human population and the economy are expanding rapidly in Galapagos, with growth patterns that are unsustainable. This growth has prompted conflicts over natural resources and concerns about equity in the distribution of benefits, raising barriers to cooperation.

Local organizations need to be strengthened and cooperation among them enhanced. Effectiveness in conflict resolution needs to be built up, with solutions grounded on a clear vision for the future that is accepted by all.

Invasive species have long been among the biggest threats to the native biodiversity of Galapagos. Although these islands are the world's best preserved tropical island archipelago, the problems of introduced species must continue to be addressed urgently, holistically and strategically to prevent the tables from turning.

The new CDF Strategy aims at helping to forge a sustainable Galapagos society in which the people who inhabit the islands will act as agents of conservation. This means creating awareness of and respect for the limits involved in living here, and promoting the conservation of energy, water, and other essential resources.

CDF is the only international institution dedicated exclusively to conducting research to support the conservation of Galapagos.

Since 1959, CDF has worked closely with the Government of Ecuador, providing timely information, helping to build local institutional and individual capacities, and supporting education.

The new CDF Strategy will take this history of successful cooperation a major step further, providing integrated information for decision making, ensuring effective communication, incorporating local people into conservation strategies, fortifying capacity in Galapagos organizations, and promoting sustainable and equitable business development.

To improve the contribution of research to management solutions, CDF will further strengthen its cooperation with

the Galapagos National Park Service (PNG) and other partners. Together they will build a constituency of support across Ecuadorian society for Galapagos conservation and create greater international awareness of the challenges at hand.

To accomplish these goals, CDF will focus on advancing as a learning organization that is capable of cost-effective and strategic action. The institution will build on its strengths and partnerships, emphasizing proactive public relations, sustaining a culture of teamwork, enhancing institutional flexibility through improved planning, and linking plans to fortified financial support.

The new CDF strategy will be implemented through five programs:

- a core **research** program to provide information for decision making
- two cross-cutting programs, to ensure the effective communication of **information**, and to provide **technical assistance** to build institutional and individual capacities to use that information
- strengthened **administrative support** and **institutional management** programs, focused on clearly defined objectives, to underpin the work of the CDF

Two complementary planning mechanisms will underpin the implementation of this Strategic Plan.

Business plans will ensure refinement and prioritization of activities over two-year periods, adapting the Strategic Plan to the financial and human resource realities of the CDF and ensuring that resources are strategically applied to key needs in Galapagos.

Annual operational plans, based on the business plans, will clearly define specific tasks, milestones, and indicators for each year, refining budgets and human resources needs to meet them.

The CDF Strategic Plan will be adapted regularly to respond to continuing social, economic and ecological change in Galapagos.

