

Foundations of Success 2016 Organizational Scorecard Summary Report



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June 2017

Recommended Citation:

Flower, KR. 2017. Foundations of Success 2016 Organizational Scorecard Summary Report.
Available at: www.fosonline.org.

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1. Purpose

Foundations of Success (FOS) is committed to adaptive management. The organization has made this scorecard report summary available to all interested audiences to demonstrate its own process of monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) and adaptive management. For more information on Foundations of Success, visit www.fosonline.org. For more information about FOS' MEL process or the 2016 Scorecard results, contact FOS through the contact information provided at the end of the report.

2. Background

Foundations of Success is a small, not-for-profit organization committed to working with practitioners to learn how to do conservation better through the process of adaptive management. FOS' approach and work are built on three "Foundations of Success": (1) Define clear and practical measures of conservation success; (2) Determine sound guiding principles for using conservation strategies and tools; and (3) Develop and strengthen practitioner knowledge and skills in adaptive management.

For many years, FOS had an organizational strategic plan based on an implicit theory of change, but the team did not have a results chain, and it rarely consulted its plan. In 2011 (at the conclusion of the previous 5-year strategic plan), FOS updated its plan and developed results chains to better describe its four main strategies, their intended impacts, and their interrelationships (see FOS's Theory of Change in Figure 1). The team also identified indicators for each results chain and began to monitor them annually using a scorecard format. Team members entered information based on their best understanding of partners' activities, challenges, and successes.

In 2016, FOS revised their strategic plan. As part of their effort to gather the best possible information to guide the strategic planning process, FOS hired an external evaluator to work with FOS' Monitoring-Evaluation-Learning (MEL) Team to objectively review their indicators and measure progress toward achieving key results in all four results chains. In three cases, the MEL team modified the wording of the objectives (but not the thresholds) during this exercise to clarify what they wanted to measure and achieve.

3. Theory of Change (2006 -2016)

To achieve its three foundations, described above, FOS implements four programmatic strategies. The high-level theory of change and strategies, as depicted in Figure 1, follow:

- 1. *Training, Coaching, and Systems Development for Projects and Organizations (ORG)*:** This strategy involves working with conservation organizations to build their capacity to develop skills and systems in adaptive management that result in better planning, management, and monitoring of conservation actions. As a result, FOS expects to generate a critical mass of leaders, managers, and practitioners that fully support AM and push their organizations to formally adopt the *Open Standards (OS)* and establish AM systems.
- 2. *Fostering Communities of Practice (COP)*:** This strategy includes facilitating collaborative initiatives that foster cross-site, cross-project, or cross-institutional learning about conservation strategies, tools, and processes in order to accelerate the achievement of

conservation goals. As a result, FOS expects effective learning networks generating lessons and a functional community of practice around adaptive management topics.

3. **University and Independent Training (UNI):** With this strategy, FOS supports and builds the capacity of current and future practitioners who are or will be responsible for designing, managing, and evaluating conservation interventions. As a result, FOS expects adaptive management training to be incorporated into university and professional training programs that can become ongoing sources of individuals with adaptive management skills and capacity.
4. **Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI):** This strategy entails conducting research, developing new tools, and building the intellectual knowledge for the conservation practitioner to do adaptive management on the ground. As a result, FOS expects an increased availability of smart guidelines, tools, standards, and materials for doing adaptive management, as well as several compelling examples of adaptive management in practice.

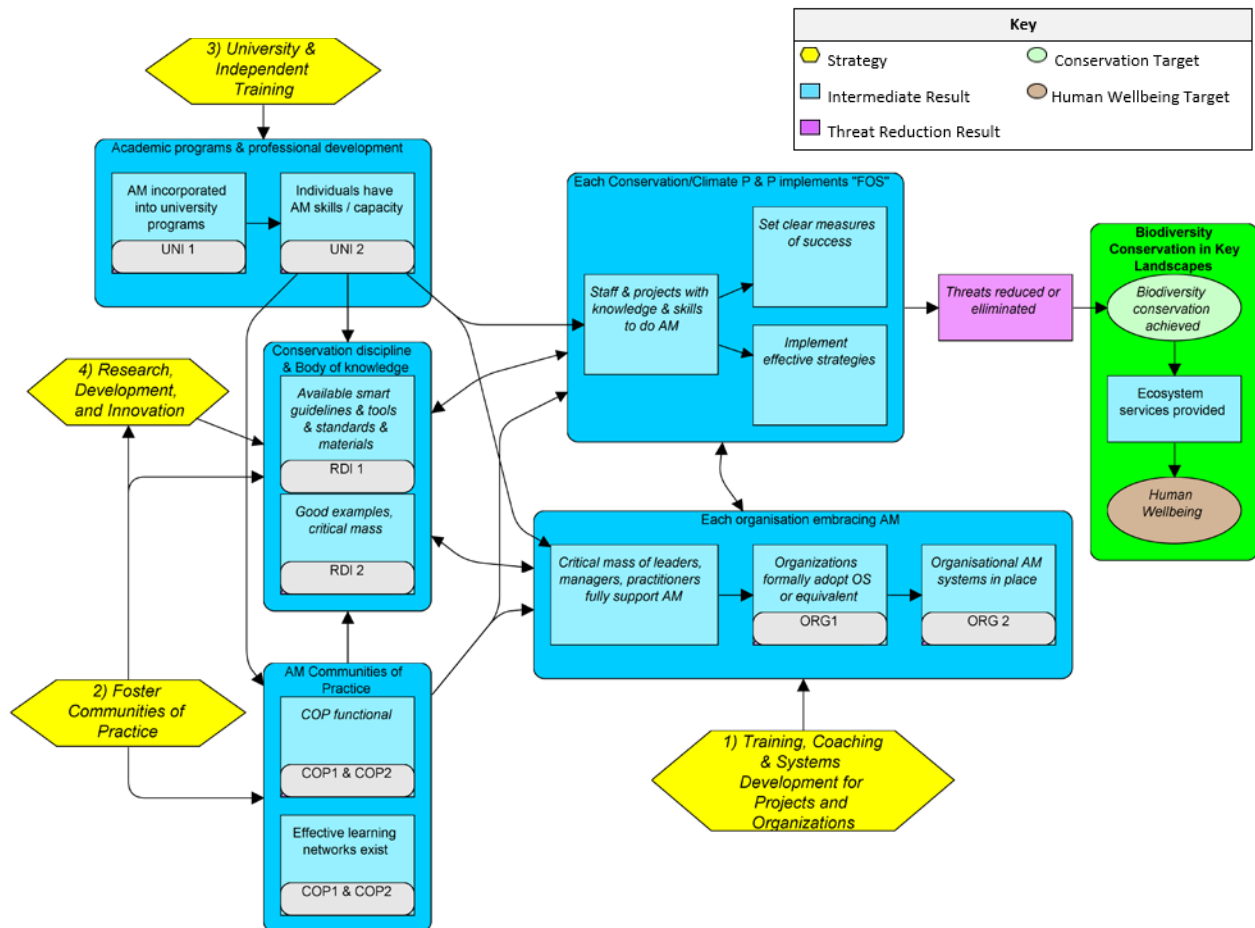


Figure 1. Results Chain Depicting Foundations of Success's High-Level Theory of Change

4. Methods

The external assessment of results related to FOS's theory of change began with a careful exercise to ensure that all indicators were well-defined and understood by the MEL Team.¹ Once the MEL team agreed upon definition sheets, KRFC developed online surveys in Survey Monkey. This process resulted in further refinements and, where possible, the grouping of similar objectives and indicators. The surveys were then pilot-tested, modified, finalized, and administered between May-September 2016. KRFC analyzed the data using contingency tables, graphs, and statistical methods, as appropriate. This included three sets of analyses: 1) assessment of individual indicators (all strategies), 2) assessment of relationships between indicators for covariance and consecutive intermediate results (ORG and UNI, which produced enough data for analysis), and 3) assessment of objectives.

For RDI, the methodology was slightly different. In this case, FOS staff had the best knowledge of the status of different FOS and community-wide products and tools. As such, KRFC used data from the responsible FOS project leads and analyzed it using contingency tables and graphs.

5. Results

5.1. Training, Coaching, and Systems Development for Projects and Organizations

The ORG strategy objectives are:

- a. Objective ORG1: By 2016, 60% of the organizations that FOS has worked with adopt the OS or equivalent and/or use the OS full-time as the process for conservation planning by the projects they implement or fund, and
- b. Objective ORG2: By 2016, 30% of organizations that FOS has worked with have adaptive management systems in place.

A total of 76 organizations were contacted, of which 68 responded to the ORG survey. However, not every organization answered every question, so the number of respondents for individual questions typically varied from 62 to 68, and was as low as 55 for one question toward the end of the survey. Of those who responded, 19 organizations (28%) had become new FOS partners in 2015-2016.

On average, leaders, managers and practitioners within responding organizations supported the OS at a moderate to high level, but not yet at the level that FOS staff hypothesized would ensure that OS use is consistent, effective, and widespread. However, organizations' level of support was rarely declining, with a majority of organizations reporting support that was staying the same or increasing (Figure 2).

¹ FOS hired KRF Consulting (KRFC) as an independent evaluator in January 2016 to undertake an assessment of the organization's theory of change, objectives and indicators. KRFC plus FOS staff involved in the Scorecard project constitute the "MEL Team." The purpose of this assessment was to contribute to FOS's five-year review and planning exercise in November 2016; it emphasized the measurement of existing indicators, making recommendations for modifications to objectives, indicators, and measurements for 2017 and beyond.

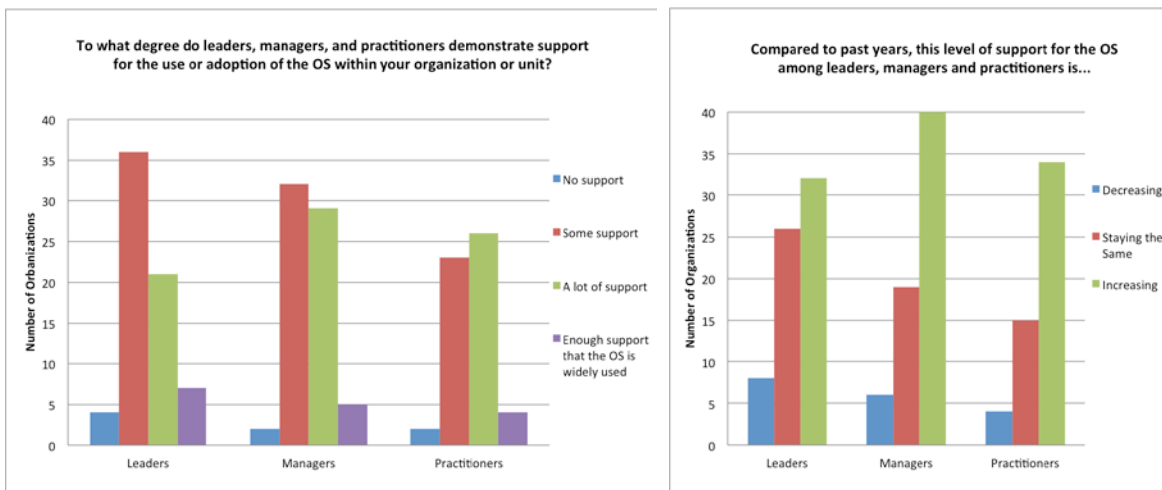


Figure 2. Levels of Support for OS Use Among Organizations' Leaders, Managers, and Practitioners (Number of respondents varies between 65-68)

It is therefore not surprising that Objective ORG1 was partially achieved: 29% of all the organizations FOS has worked with have adopted and/or use the OS full time (Figure 3). Although many types of organizations were surveyed (including government agencies, networks, and private consulting firms), only NGOs and private donors reported adoption and/or use of the OS full time. The percentage was approximately the same (28%) when only examining organizations in which FOS has invested more.² In both cases, this indicator examined OS adoption among all organizations with which FOS has ever worked or with which FOS is working now, including the 19 new ones added between 2015-2016. Importantly, new organizations are not expected to have already adopted or be using the OS full time; removing new organizations from the list would likely have increased the percentage.

Objective ORG2 was also partially achieved. This objective was measured according to the number of adaptive management elements³ an organization has in place. Having in place eight or nine of the possible nine elements signified having an adaptive management system. In 2016, only 8% had eight or nine adaptive management elements in place (Figure 4).

² Cumulative FOS investment, or investment over the lifetime of the organization (2001-2016), was measured using four categories: None= no investment; Low= one off training or workshop; Medium= a few workshops and training with some follow up; High= ongoing training and guidance with intensive follow up.

³ Elements of adaptive management considered in this survey were the regular use of: conceptual models and/or situation analyses; viability assessments; threat ratings; result chains; SMART goals and objectives tied to results chains; indicators and monitoring system associated with SMART goals and objectives; monitoring results to evaluate and adapt result chains, objectives, goals, and/or activities; and use of Miradi and/or Miradi Share.

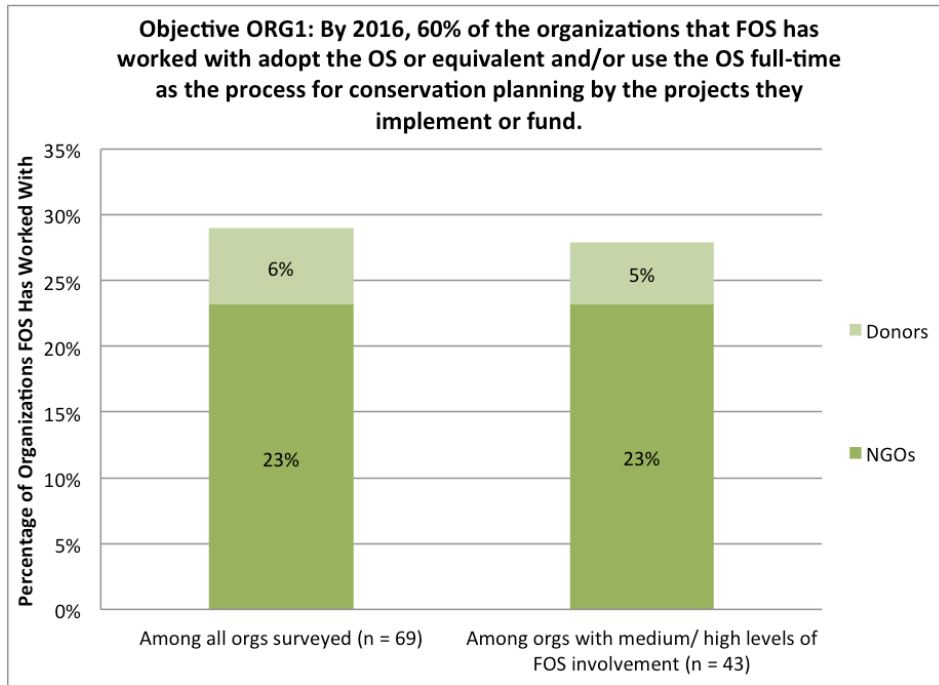


Figure 3. Adoption of the Open Standards Among Organizations

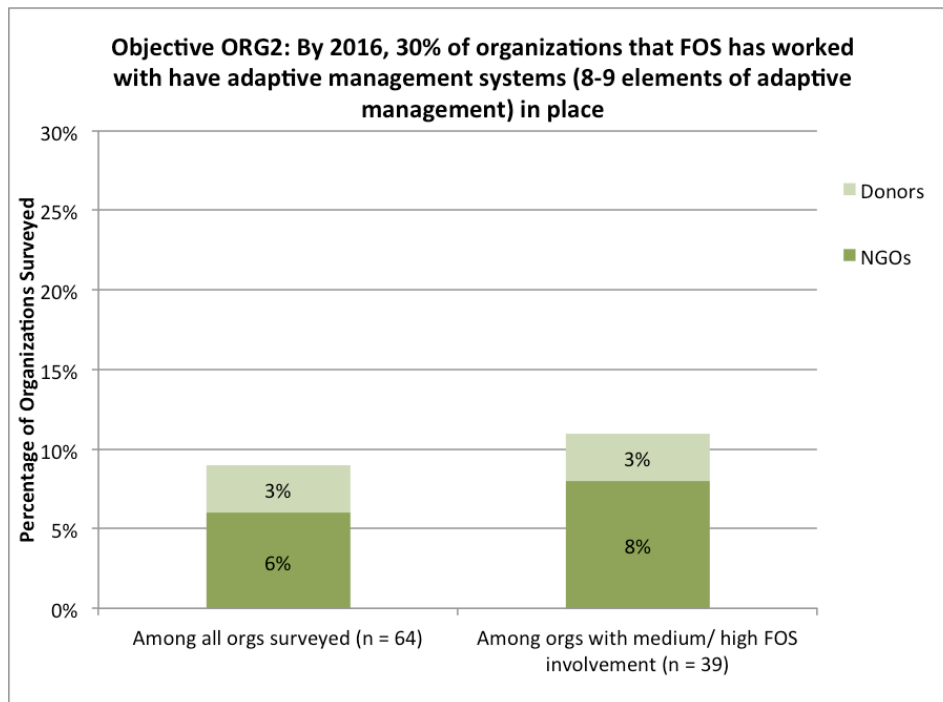


Figure 4. Adaptive Management Systems in Place Within Organizations FOS Has Worked With

5.2. Fostering Learning Networks and Communities of Practice (COP)

The objectives for the COP results area were:

- a. Objective COP1: Any learning network or COP (with active status) that FOS helps is "functional and productive" (developing and sharing key products or concepts; or developing coaches)
- b. Objective COP2: By 2016 and thereafter, greater than 50% of CMP members are using CMP products to help them implement the OS

FOS has provided support to, or has partnered with, with seven communities of practice, which focus on promotion and adoption of the OS and/or learning on specific topics. These include the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP), the Teaching Adaptive Management Network (TAM), the Conservation Coaches Network (CCNet Central), CCNet Franchises in Europe, South America, and South Asia, and the Bushmeat-free Eastern Africa Network (BEAN). Of the seven surveyed in 2016, FOS was actively and directly working with five of them (all but BEAN and CCNet Asia); the results presented here represent those five.

Objective COP1 results were mixed (Figure 5). Overall, only three COPs qualified as “functional and productive” (gaining a score of at least 2), using the criteria FOS had established: the COP (1) is functional and active (met at least once in the last year), and (2) has enough good quality coaches to meet demand, and/or (3) regularly develops and shares products.

Four of the five COPs were functional and active, of which three were fully self-sustaining. CCNet South America was not meeting regularly (and therefore considered inactive) due to a leadership transition. Even for active networks, interviews revealed a picture of limited (or zero) budgets and reliance on volunteer efforts. In almost all cases, products were developed and shared by leaders who have a professional interest in managing the COP and the flexibility in their jobs to commit significant time and effort to keeping the COPs running. However, few COP respondents felt they had the “right” kind of membership to reach their goals. Further, CCNet Central and its franchises reported that the demand for coaches was low, impeding the expansion of network activities.

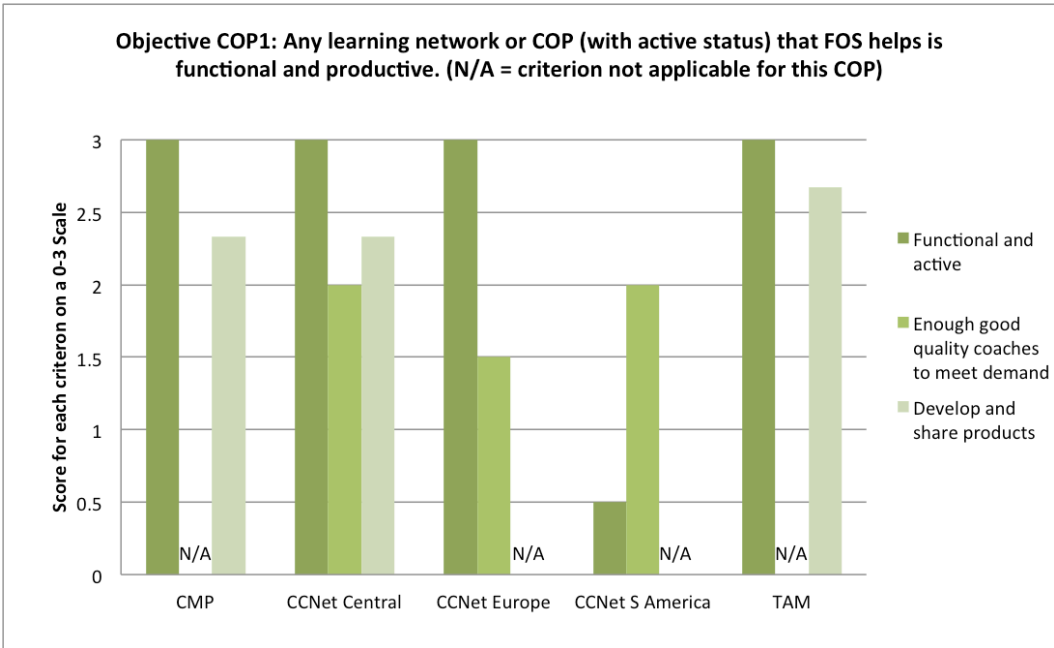


Figure 5. Open Standards Learning Networks are Functional and Productive

There are sub-objectives for this objective, with thresholds individually set for each COP (Figure 6). Three of the five of these were met in 2016: CMP was functional and productive, while TAM and CCNet Central were productive. The target number of coaches and countries have not yet been reached for the CCNet Franchises in Europe and South America, though these numbers have steadily increased over the years, and these have been among the strongest franchises across the entire network.

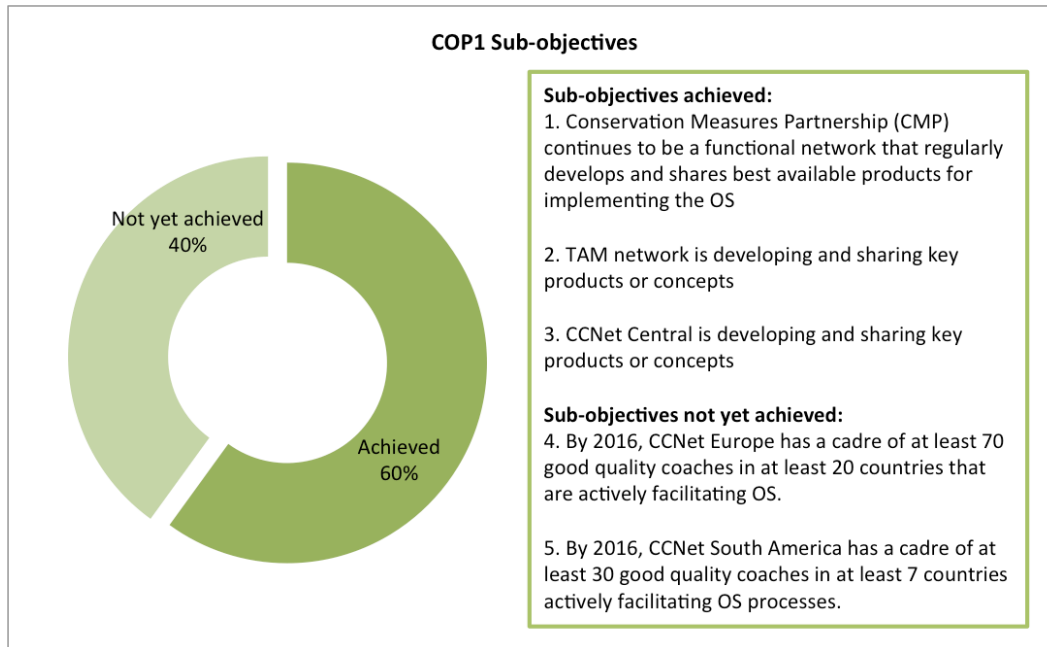


Figure 6. Achievements of Sub-Objectives by Open Standards Learning Networks

Objective COP2 was achieved: the threshold for this objective is set at 50%. In 2016, greater than 70% of CMP members use CMP products to implement the OS (Figure 7).

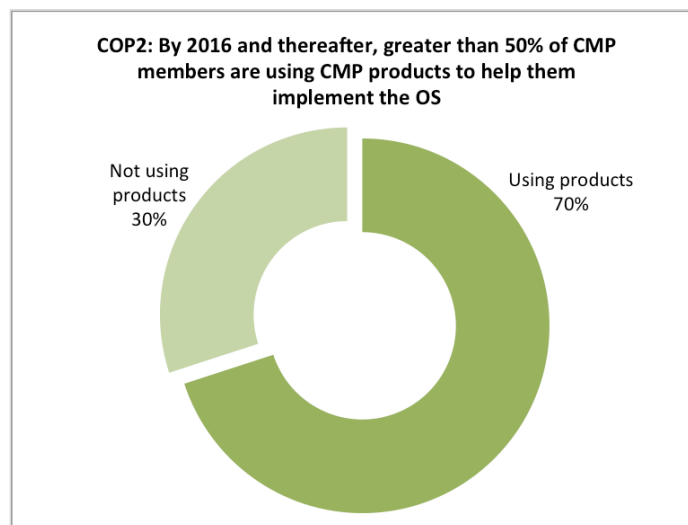


Figure 7. CMP Members Using Products to Implement the Open Standards

5.3. Universities and Independent Training (UNI)

The objectives for this result are:

- a. Objective UNI1. By 2016, at least 15 universities have integrated an AM course into their conservation-related program.
- b. Objective UNI2: By 2016, at least 25% of alumni of AM courses that FOS has been involved with are working in conservation-oriented jobs

According to the 20 respondents, FOS has played a strong role in setting up university and independent training programs. In 70% of the cases, an FOS team member has taught or co-taught an OS course directly. This initial support seems well-received, and many respondents praised the OS skills and teaching ability of the FOS instructors. FOS investment seems well-directed, as one in three programs considered themselves leaders in training conservation practitioners, and an additional third “contributed many alumni to conservation practice.”

Although two-thirds of respondents reported “some” or “a lot” of high-level faculty support for teaching the OS, only 39% reported formal integration of the OS into their curriculum. In many cases, there was no commitment to offering a regular OS course, with teaching faculty continuing to re-examine annually whether the OS would remain in the curriculum. Nevertheless, half of the programs have been running an OS course for five years or more, and an additional third have been running the course for 2-4 years.

However, Objective UNI1 has not yet been achieved. Using the criteria set (highest or second-highest possible scores in each of four categories: sustainable access to instructors, high-level support, completeness of instruction, and long-term course commitment), the 2016 survey revealed only two universities that achieved these higher scores across all categories. However, most universities achieved high scores in several categories, eight of which showed a trend of steady or increasing support.

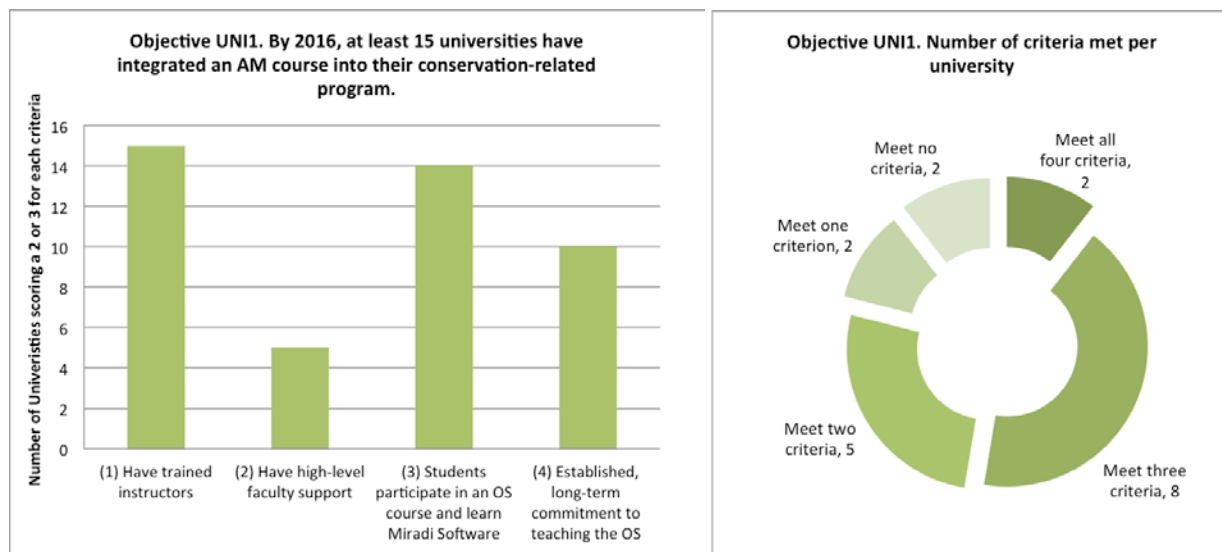


Figure 8. Number of Universities with an Integrated Adaptive Management Course

Objective UNI2 has also not yet been achieved, as approximately 16% of alumni were thought or known to be working in conservation jobs. However, uncertainty was very high with these figures

because most universities were not able to provide reliable data on alumni’s activities and instead used their “best guess” or evidence based on “students who kept in touch.”

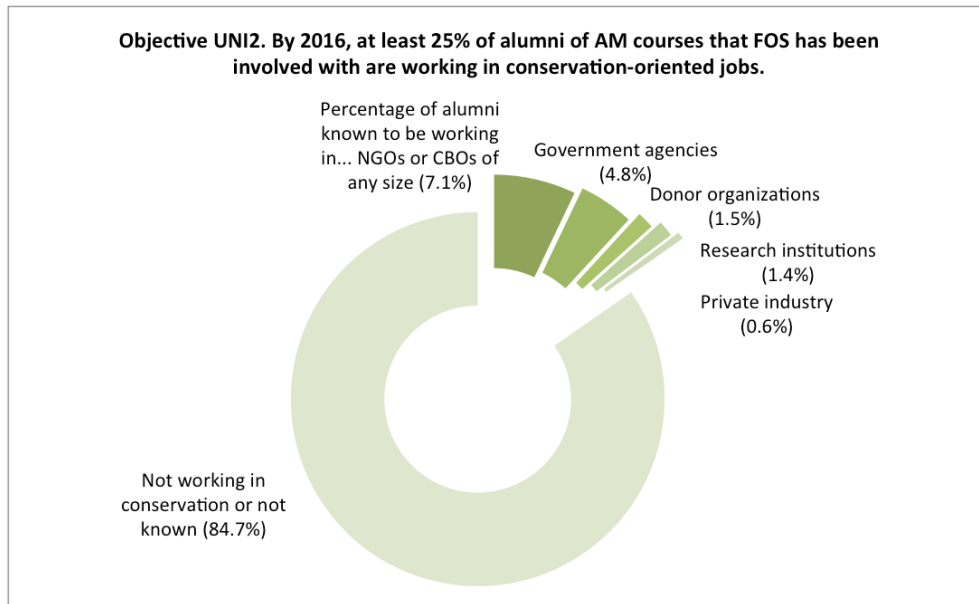


Figure 9. Open Standards University Course Alumni Working in Conservation-Oriented Jobs

5.4. Relationships among indicators (ORG and UNI)

For both the ORG and UNI assessments, some indicators measuring outcomes appeared to co-vary. For ORG, cumulative level of FOS investment appeared to be associated with the breadth and depth of OS use within organizations. Causality could not necessarily be attributed here, but the relationship may be important. Perhaps sustained FOS support for organizations has increased the breadth and depth of OS use within organizations. Or, an organization’s commitment to widespread use of the OS may have led to longer FOS involvement over time. Either way, the relationship is worth considering for future planning.

For the UNI outcomes, sustained access to instructors, level of initial FOS involvement, and number of years running the course all seemed to be strongly, positively associated with one another. That is, universities for which FOS provided a high level of initial support (i.e., FOS taught or co-taught the course, simultaneously mentoring a staff member who then takes over teaching the course) were more likely to teach the course consistently from year to year and to have more sustained access to a trained instructor. In university programs in which FOS’s initial investment as more limited (i.e., coached the instructor remotely or only provided teaching materials), the duration of the course and level of access to trained instructors diminished.

5.5. Research, Development and Innovation (RDI)

The objectives for the RDI results are:

- a. Objective RDI1: By the end of 2016, complete guidance and supporting materials are available in all necessary formats for all 5 steps of OS.

- b. Objective RDI2: By 2016, Miradi Share has at least 20 complete examples from a diverse range of geographies and ecosystems.⁴

This set of indicators tracks the development of supporting materials and products, by FOS and project partners (e.g., CMP members), related to the Open Standards and Miradi.

The first RDI objective was partially achieved (Figure 10). As of June 2016, a substantial number of guides and documents were available to support steps 1-3 of the Open Standards. A manual was available for steps 1 and 2 (with guidance available in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese); additional guidance for steps 2 and 3 was currently in development. Five or more good teaching examples existed for steps 1 and 2; and two examples existed for steps 3. Miradi supported all five steps, with fully functional support for steps 1-3 and some support for steps 4 and 5 (additional support was in development, especially via Miradi Share). Miradi (all five steps) was available in 10 languages with an 11th (Nepali) in translation; it had also been adapted for use by USAID and the Puget Sound Partnership. Additional supporting materials existed, including the Conservation Actions & Measures Archetypes Library (CAML, 34 entries) and taxonomies, which were well developed but, it was noted, could benefit from a more polished presentation.

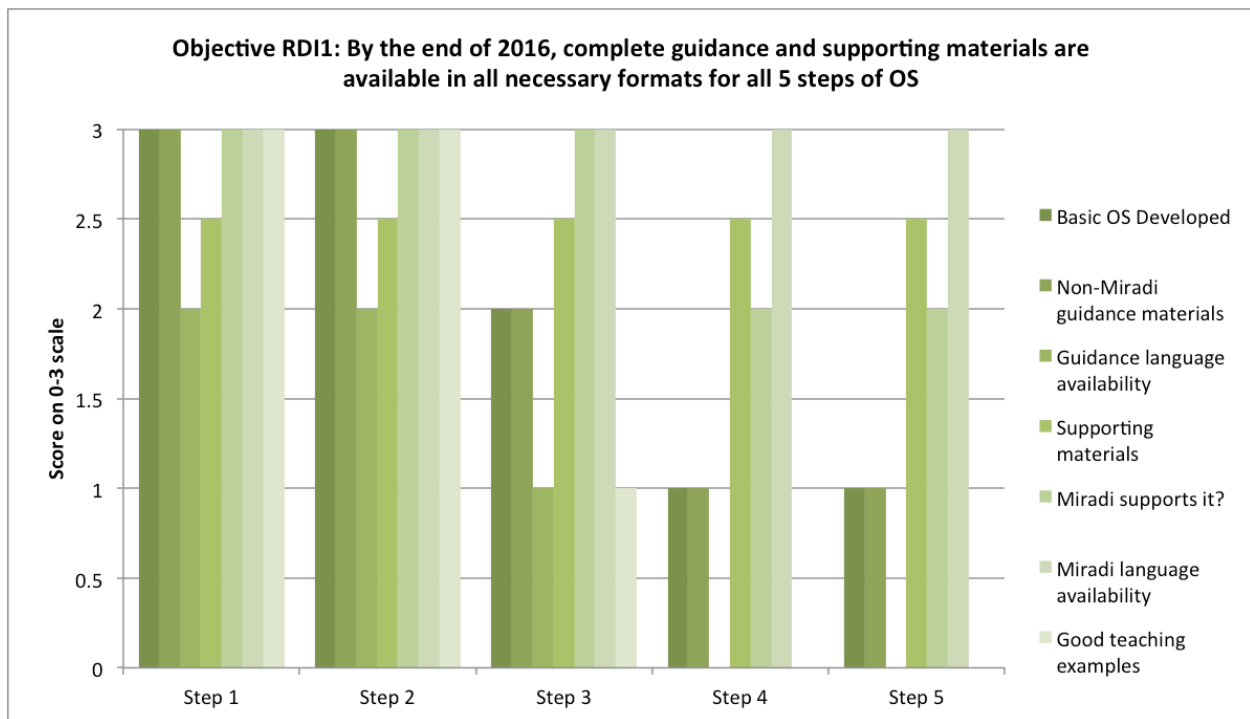


Figure 10. Guidance Available for Implementation of the Open Standards

⁴ For practical reasons, only number of geographies is tracked. However, FOS works to ensure that a range of ecosystems is covered among and within geographies.

Objective RDI2 was achieved for some OS steps but not for others (Figure 11). As of June 2016, there were 462 Miradi Share files (six added in 2015-16), but most were not complete (i.e., covering all five steps) and most were also not publicly available. FOS staff members estimate that approximately 20 files were fully or almost complete and publicly available. Miradi Share examples covered a diverse range of geographies for Steps 1-3. FOS staff estimated that, for OS Steps 1 and 2, there were complete examples from six geographic regions (North and South America, Oceania, Africa, Europe, and Asia) and a broad range of ecosystems. For Steps 3 and 4, there were only complete examples from Australia. There were no complete examples for Step 5. Notably, measurement of RDI2 was quite challenging because (1) many examples were not publicly available on Miradi Share and therefore could not be counted and (2) it was not practical to go through each Miradi Share file to determine completeness for the different steps. Thus, this assessment did not cover the completeness of what was available on Miradi Share; the analysis was instead based on FOS staff's best available knowledge.

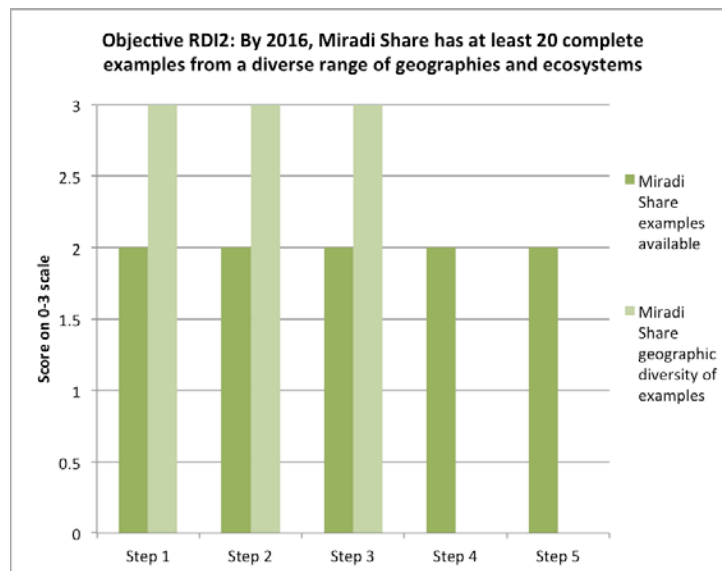


Figure 11. Availability of Miradi Share Examples

5.6. Measuring Impact and Leverage: New ORG and COP indicators in 2016

As part of the assessment process, FOS realized it would be useful to gather conservation impact data, even though the organization did not have associated indicators in its scorecard. As such, the ORG and COP surveys included questions related to perceptions of the importance of the OS, the influence of the OS on the practice of conservation, and the spread of the OS to other projects or organizations.

Almost all respondents had a very high opinion of the OS, identifying the OS or an equivalent process as either “important” or “essential” for the successful practice of conservation (Figure 12). Seventy-two percent of ORG respondents felt that their use of the Open Standards improved their conservation project design and implementation “some” or “to a large extent” (Figure 13).

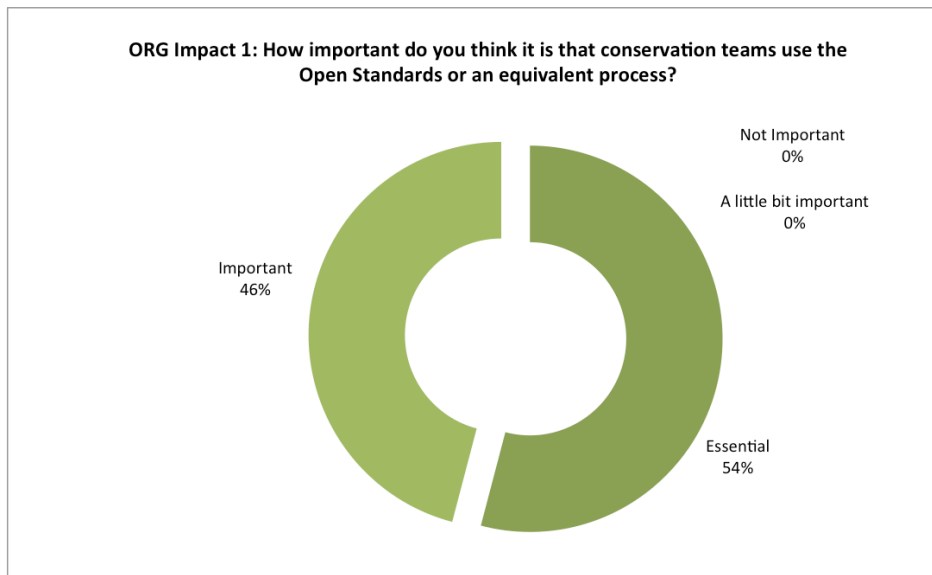


Figure 12. Importance of Open Standards to Users

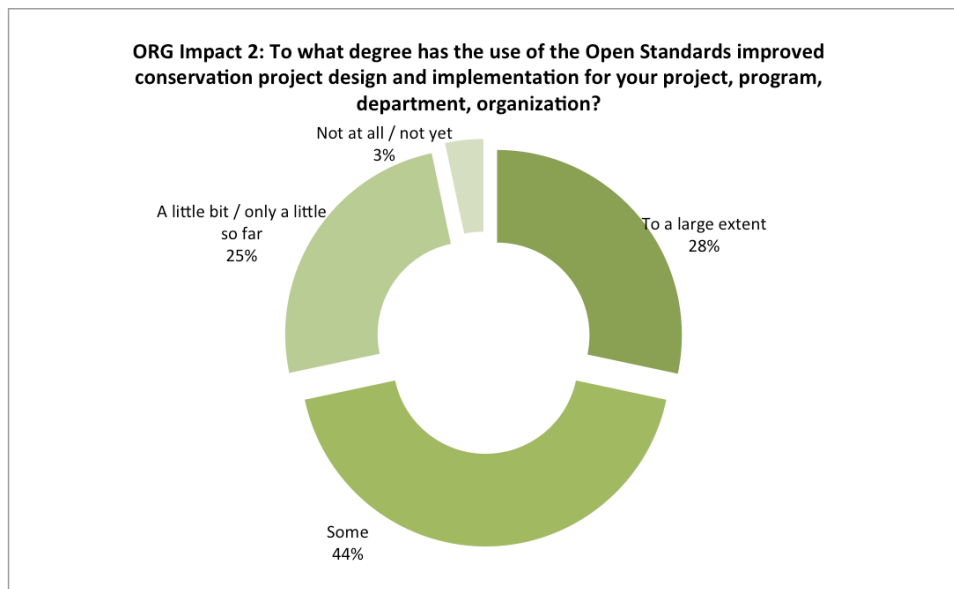


Figure 13. Open Standards Impact on Conservation Project Design and Implementation

Among ORG respondents, 38% observed that their use of the OS influenced other projects or programs *within their same organizations* to use one or more OS elements and/or adopt the OS as their standard approach (Figure 14). Forty six percent observed that their use of the OS influenced other projects or programs *outside of their organizations* to use one or more OS elements and/or adopt the OS as their standard (Figure 15).

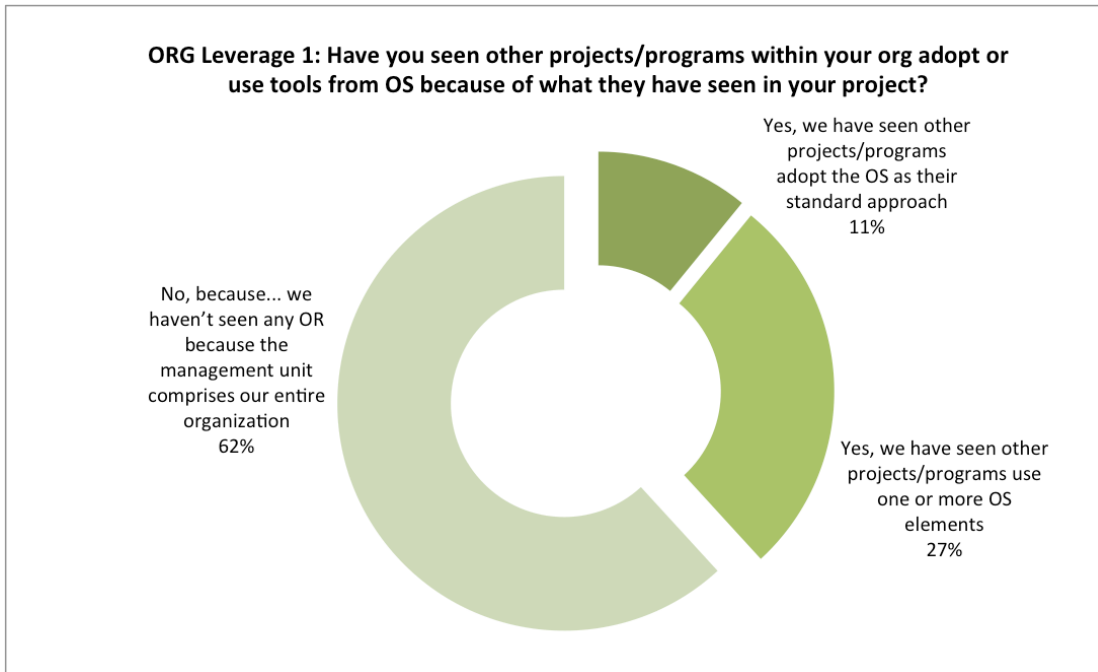


Figure 14. Perceived Spread of Open Standards Within an Organization

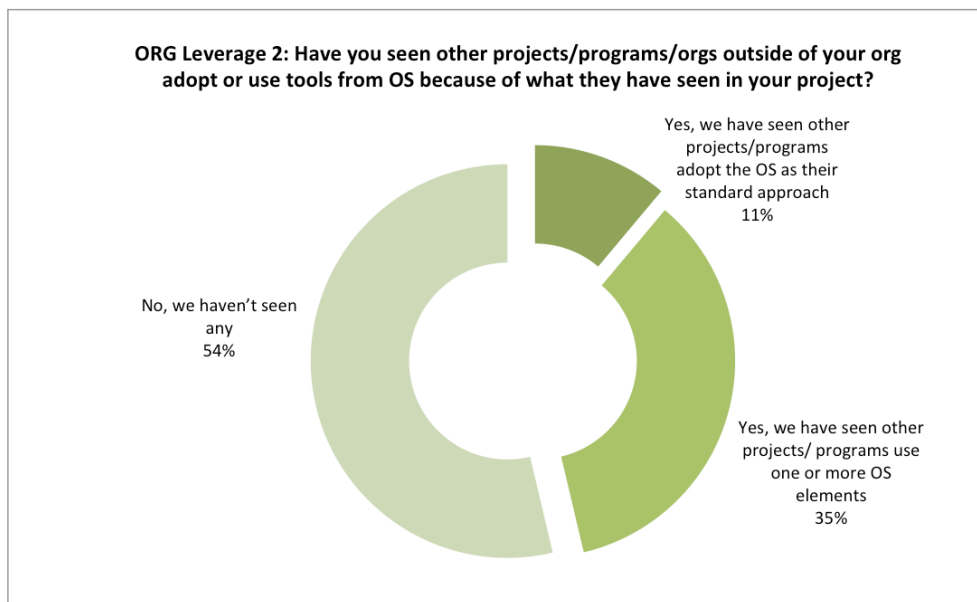


Figure 15. Perceived Spread of Open Standards Outside of an Organization

6. Recommendations for Ongoing MEL

At the beginning of the process, the MEL Team worked to carefully define many terms used in the indicators. We also made changes in three objectives and several indicators to clarify language and ensure measurability using the available data and methods. Most of the indicators scored were categorical (scored on a 0-3 point scale), including those that involved counts. Where feasible and practical, and when the likelihood of an accurate number in a response is high, the MEL Team recommended moving from the use of categorical to continuous variables. Alternately, for cases in

which respondents tended to provide a range rather than a specific number, the use of more “bins” would help differentiate responses. This would reduce the loss of important nuances and improve the ability to analyze the resulting data. A number of other small recommendations for measuring specific objectives were made and are presented in the full report.

Specifically for the UNI results chain, there were two important recommendations worth mentioning. First, the rating scale objective UNI1 is stringent: a university must have sustainable access to one or more faculty or non-faculty trainers, have high-level support for teaching OS as part of the curriculum, ensure that students participate in an OS course and learn Miradi software, and have an established, long-term commitment to running the course. University representatives were asked to score themselves in 2016. In previous years, FOS team members provided scores on behalf of the universities and teaching programs examined. The results were dramatically different: in 2015, 10 universities were identified as meeting all four criteria; in 2016, only two were. Therefore, the difference in methodology should be considered when comparing scores.

Second, the data quality for objective UNI2 was relatively poor, when compared to other objectives’ data. In this case, FOS is relying on information collected by university partners for some student-related indicators. By far, respondents described their data source as “students who kept in touch” or the respondent’s “best guess.” Only two universities were able to respond based on their own records tracking alumni. Therefore, in the future, FOS should consider gathering data only from those universities that keep careful records. Alternatively, FOS may consider tracking OS alumni through annual surveys, but this is significantly more time- and resource-intensive.

For RDI, measuring the second objective requires data that are not readily available. This second objective calls for “complete” examples that cover all five OS steps. However, there is no way to determine how complete examples are in Miradi share without reading them. While time consuming for any example, this is especially problematic for examples that are not made public (and therefore not accessible to FOS). Thus, the MEL team recommends that FOS-accessible metadata be recorded for each file in Miradi Share that indicates not just the geography and ecosystems but also the number of steps covered in and the completeness of the available files.

7. Programmatic Adaptations

FOS undertook this assessment with the intent to “practice what it preaches” and adapt its strategies based on insights from the assessment. With this in mind, the FOS team aims to adapt their strategies in the following ways:

1. **Transform Organizations to Do Good Adaptive Management** – FOS will continue to work on developing partner capacity but shift from “coaching” to “transforming” organizations with more focus on providing support for implementing adaptive management (Steps 3-5) in the context of an organization’s existing business processes and systems. FOS will place additional emphasis on incentivizing organization leaders and conservation funders to adopt and support AM processes.
2. **Fostering Communities of Practice** – FOS will continue to invest in CMP and CCNet, as well as franchises in Europe and Latin America. FOS will also increase efforts to develop coach certification and opportunities for thematic learning networks.
3. **University and Independent Training** - FOS will continue to work with existing academic partners while increasing efforts to develop high-quality training materials. FOS will also pursue opportunities to disseminate training through far-reaching online formats to exponentially expand the conservation community’s adaptive management skill set. This

will include disseminating academic adaptive management stories/successes to generate interest from training institutions to offer OS training options, while also building demand for university-trained OS practitioners.

4. **Research, Development and Innovation** – FOS will work to expand technical knowledge and develop innovative products to better support partners to do good adaptive management. FOS will also develop a new communications strategy to more effectively create and disseminate inspiring, engaging products to broadly advance adaptive management throughout the Open Standards community.
5. **Communications and Outreach** – FOS will invest in a new strategy to improve ways to communicate products and share results with the broader conservation community. This strategy seeks to provide a regular flow of adaptive management products, promote new and key adaptive management tools and materials, and maintain a social media presence to more effectively interact with adaptive management partners and collaborators

8. Looking for more?

For more information about FOS and FOS's internal MEL program, please contact:
info@fosonline.org.