2027 PRIORITIES
A Page from the Reimagining Global Conservation Playbook

DRAFT

REIMAGINING CONSERVATION

Context

In 2025, nearly all US government international conservation programs were halted and then cancelled. Congress has since appropriated hundreds of millions of dollars for the work, but it is unclear whether those funds have been obligated, or on what. 2027 is not the year to reimagine US conservation. It is time to follow the law, restore required transparency on spending, spend what has been appropriated, and keep investments strategically aligned, because what happens now will shape what is possible in 2029. These priorities aim to support the small number of staff meeting those legal obligations. The following priorities focus on the bilateral role of the US Government in global conservation, not multilateral engagement and investment.

Policy Priorities for 2027 USG Global Conservation

1. Spend the Money

Obligate Appropriated Funds and Ensure Strategic Alignment: Meet the legal mandate to invest in conservation at the levels Congress set. Ensure conservation dollars are invested in bone fide conservation programming

Clear the Backlog: Ensure funding reaches high-priority needs through effective mechanisms. Resolve contracting and related issues stemming from recent USAID restructuring.

2. Restore Capacity

Expand Agency Staffing: To meet the legally mandated due diligence and oversight responsibilities and ability to engage strategically, increase staff in key US Government Departments and Agencies responsible for USG engagement and programming in global conservation.

Authorize and utilize short term hiring authorities to meet the moment: Standard government hiring processes are slow and inflexible. Ensure that Departments and Agencies that need to staff up have and utilize the authorities they will need to acquire adequate technical capacity.

Build on What Worked: With limited staffing capacity, build on existing strategic frameworks (e.g., USAID 2024 Biodiversity Policy) for USG investment in global conservation. Restore key evidence resources (e.g., Biodiversity Links website). Consider investing in proven, vetted local partners who are able to move rapidly.

3. Ensure Transparency, Oversight, & Accountability

Restore transparency and accountability: Restore reporting to Congress, pre- and post-obligation, including mandated reports and accountability for earmarked funds.