

ESI – EUROPEAN SPECIES INITIATIVE WORKSHOP

EAZA Annual Conference, Leipzig 2024



TASK 2

Step 1. Scenario analysis

Read the scenario carefully: identify the key aspects of the scenario (species, challenges and institutional considerations) Make an analysis: asses each species in terms of conservation need, feasibility, ecological impact, public engagement potential and other relevant factors. Consider if there are any additional factors (e. g. ethical concerns, collaboration opportunities, future impact) that influence the prioritization.

Step 2: Prioritization decision

Decide which species to prioritize: after discussing the scenario choose which species your group believes should be prioritized for conservation efforts. Write down your decision and prepare to present t to the group.

Step 3: Justify your decision

Discuss and list the key reasons for your decision: why did your group choose one species over the other? Be ready to explain the criteria and factor that influenced your decision.

Step 4: Prepare for presentation

Present your groups decision: summarize your analysis and decision- making process. Justify your reasoning by highlighting key criteria, tradeoffs and factors that played role in the decision.

Group 1 – Small mammal vs. large mammal

Scenario:

The zoo can only dedicate resources to one of two mammal species. One is a small rodent (e.g. European hamster) that requires fewer resources but has smaller impact on public engagement. The other is a large carnivore (e.g. European wolf) that would require significantly more resources but could attract more visitors.

Discussion:

How should limited resources influence species prioritization? Should you prioritize "high-cost" species with greater visibility?

Solution:

Prioritized species: European hamster

Reasons for prioritization:

- space, resources, ease of management, cost
- more need for ex-situ
- optimization of funds
- political issues with reintroduction of wolves
- cute public perception
- interesting stories to be told, focus on small species too
- money saved redirected to improve environment/habitat

Prioritization criteria (listed in order of importance):

- cost/resources
- feasibility of breeding
- need for ex situ
- public perception
- IUCN status

Influential factors in decision making: /

Challenges and trade-offs:

- potentially less visible species
- harder to engage the public

Difficult trade-offs: /

How is it fitting into long-term strategies:

- local species

Does it already fit into long-term strategies:

- yes

Would new resources and collaborations change your opinions:

- no

Factors that might change your decision:

- if situation (IUCN status) deteriorated for wolves, then we would prioritize them instead

Scenario:

The zoo must decide whether to prioritize species that is popular with the public and can raise awareness (e.g. puffins) but is not critically endangered or a little known locally endangered species (e.g. Balkan terrapin) with limited public interest

Discussion:

How important s the public engagement in determining which species to prioritize?

Can public appeal be leveraged for greater conservation funding?

Solution:

Prioritized species: local/rare/unknown species

Reasons for prioritization: /

Prioritization criteria (listed in order of importance):

- threat level (IUCN status)
- being involved in local projects strengthens our international projects
- appeal, easy to relate to local species
- education, a good story
- easy for visitors to act/help the species
- having expertise and proper facilities

Influential factors in decision making:

- IUCN status
- Education of visitors
- engagement of visitors

Challenges and trade-offs:

- more difficult to attract visitors

Difficult trade-offs: /

How is it fitting into long-term strategies: /

Does it already fit into long-term strategies: /

Would new resources and collaborations change your opinions:

- no

Factors that might change your decision: /

Scenario:

The zoo has the opportunity to collaborate on a larger European wide project to conserve species (e.g. European sturgeon) but would need to significantly adjust its current priorities. Alternatively, it can focus on an independent project to conserve a smaller, locally important species (e.g. Pyrenean desman) without external collaborations.

Discussion:

How should institutions weigh the benefits of collaboration versus focusing on their own regional species? When is collaboration more impactful?

Solution:

Prioritized species: local species

Reasons for prioritization:

- a larger project would require a lot more staff time with administration, budgeting, etc.
- cuteness of the local animal
- stronger local community

Prioritization criteria (listed in order of importance):

- cost supporting the project \rightarrow which one is easier to raise money?
- expertise (own), time and people
- can we benefit the project?
- visitor profile of the zoo

Influential factors in decision making:

- feasibility (time, cost, people, background research)
- impact \rightarrow zoo and project (long/short term)
- what does the project need? unique input that the zoo can provide

Challenges and trade-offs:

- harder to connect the story with the visitors of the zoo
- local species might be harder to "sell "

Difficult trade-offs: /

How is it fitting into long-term strategies: /

Does it already fit into long-term strategies: /

Would new resources and collaborations change your opinions: /

Factors that might change your decision: /

Scenario:

A species (e.g. Northern bald ibis)) breeds successfully in captivity but faces significant challenges for reintroduction due the habitat loss. Meanwhile another species (e.g. European mink) could be reintroduced more easily but has poor record breeding in captivity.

Discussion:

Should conservation prioritize breeding success or focus on species with larger likelihood of successful reintroduction,

Solution:

Prioritized species: European mink

Reasons for prioritization:

- appropriate release (method, habitat, legislation)

Prioritization criteria (listed in order of importance):

- available habitat
- feasible legislation framework
- time to make a method

Influential factors in decision making:

- available habitat

Challenges and trade-offs:

- husbandry research and breeding

Difficult trade-offs:

- reproduction
- feasibility of the project

How is it fitting into long-term strategies:

- increases prestige of the zoo
- improves the zoo's research and knowledge
- improves education on endangered species
- improves protection of habitat

Does it already fit into long-term strategies:

- yes (could be a problem not to have a species in our collection)

Would new resources and collaborations change your opinions:

- yes

Factors that might change your decision:

- funding
- popularity