

Comprehensive framework to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in global biodiversity research

August 7 2024, by Jose Valdez



Main challenges and strategies for researchers, institutions, publishers, and funders to foster inclusivity and dismantle barriers in biodiversity research. Credit: *Conservation Biology* (2024). DOI: 10.1111/cobi.14325

The global biodiversity crisis demands comprehensive, collaborative solutions that draw upon diverse knowledge and perspectives from around the world. Yet, a critical gap exists in biodiversity research, where the expertise and insights of local scientists and communities in biodiversity-rich regions are frequently overlooked and undervalued.

Local experts in these underrepresented regions possess invaluable knowledge but face significant barriers to having their research recognized and integrated into global [conservation](#) efforts. This disconnect leads to conservation priorities being set by individuals detached from the source environments and cultures, resulting in strategies that fail to account for critical local contexts, ultimately undermining the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation.

To address this challenge, we—an international team of researchers from underrepresented backgrounds and biodiversity-rich regions—developed a comprehensive framework to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in global biodiversity research.

[Published](#) in the journal *Conservation Biology*, this holistic approach of collective responsibility provides tangible strategies for researchers, institutions, publishers, and funders to work together in dismantling systemic barriers.

In our article, we identify four key challenges hindering equitable participation in biodiversity research:

- Linguistic bias: The dominance of English in scientific publishing creates barriers for [non-native speakers](#) and limits the dissemination of research conducted in other languages.
- Undervalued research contributions: Important research from

underrepresented regions and non-English publications is often overlooked, leading to a skewed representation of global biodiversity knowledge.

- Parachute science and extractive practices: External researchers conducting studies without meaningful local collaboration fail to account for [cultural context](#) and local needs.
- Capacity constraints: Researchers from underrepresented regions often face limited access to funding, resources, and training opportunities, hindering their ability to participate fully in global research efforts.

To overcome these systemic barriers, our framework calls for coordinated, cross-stakeholder efforts. Achieving meaningful progress requires everyone involved in biodiversity research to recognize their role and take action. As interconnected participants, we all share the responsibility to cultivate a more inclusive and equitable research environment.

For researchers, this means expanding literature searches to non-English languages, fostering local partnerships, and actively promoting knowledge exchange. Institutions are encouraged to establish specialized liaison roles, implement equitable policies, and provide greater support for international collaborations. Publishers can facilitate multilingual dissemination and ensure equitable representation in peer review. Funding bodies, in turn, must start to remove systemic barriers and prioritize equitable resource allocation.

Regardless of our roles, we must promote good scientific practices that amplify underrepresented voices and dismantle biases. Inclusivity is not just an ethical imperative; diverse collaborations yield more robust science that directly informs locally relevant and culturally sensitive conservation action.

With this framework of shared responsibility, the [biodiversity research](#) community can empower underrepresented voices, integrate local and Indigenous knowledge, and maximize our collective impact for effective global conservation—unlocking new possibilities to address the biodiversity crisis.

More information: Jose Valdez et al, Strategies for advancing inclusive biodiversity research through equitable practices and collective responsibility, *Conservation Biology* (2024). [DOI: 10.1111/cobi.14325](https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.14325)

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