Biodiversity conservation initiatives have unfulfilled potential to support the UN Sustainable Development Goals

At the end of September 2018 the United Nations General Assembly reconvened in New York for its 73rd session, bringing together the international community to drive progress towards the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs were adopted by the General Assembly in September 2015. The 17 Goals and 169 related targets unite a wide array of social and environmental issues, including education, health and biodiversity, with an aspiration to achieve these globally by 2030. The SDGs encapsulate contemporary social and environmental concerns, and increasingly guide the development policies of Governments and corporations worldwide.

The contributions of natural ecosystems to all the SDGs, and the need for responsible, coherent policy-making mobilized around ecosystem management and the SDGs, are increasingly recognised in high-level discussions, including the Food and Agriculture Organization's latest State of the World's Forests Report. To this end, an interdisciplinary team of researchers associated with the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) are asking what contributions biodiversity conservation organizations can make to the SDGs. The project, Unusual Suspects, examines the Initiative's experiences of biodiversity conservation to consider where potential to deliver the SDGs might lie, and how this could be facilitated. Drawing on project experience of colleagues in BirdLife International, Fauna & Flora International, the International Institute for Environment and Development and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, this project offers CCI unparalleled linkages between practitioner experience and academic research in environment and development.

As part of the Unusual Suspects project the University of Cambridge Conservation Research Institute has launched an online tool that allows conservation professionals to look at how biodiversity projects can contribute to the SDG targets. The SDG Tool (https://sdgtool.com) was developed by the Department of Geography and funded by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative Collaborative Fund for Conservation and the Cambridge Economic and Social Research Council Impact Acceleration Account. The tool provides practitioners with a simple interactive interface that helps to navigate the complexity of the SDG targets and their links with project level interventions.

Biodiversity conservation initiatives may be the Unusual Suspects with real potential to positively support the SDGs. Bearing in mind the strong emphasis on the interconnectedness of the SDGs, more needs to be done to encourage conservation practitioners to engage with this global agenda. Biodiversity conservation and human development are two sides of the same coin, both contributing to the same global development agenda of planetary health and well-being.

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Conserving *Bupleurum dracaenoides*, the only woody *Bupleurum* species endemic to China

The plant *Bupleurum dracaenoides* Huan C. Wang, Z. R. He & H. Sun, described in 2013, is distinct because of its long woody stem (up to 1.5 m) and clustered leaves. Of > 200 *Bupleurum* species only five have been recorded to have a woody stem with a shrub or sub-shrub habit, and all of these are endemic to the Mediterranean region. *Bupleurum dracaenoides* is the sole woody *Bupleurum* species in Asia. It grows in rocky cliff habitat in the dry, hot valley of Jinsha River, south-west China. Investigations prior to 2013 located only three populations of the species, and subsequent surveys located five more localities in an adjacent area.

In September 2018, sponsored by a grant of the National Key Research and Development Programme of China (2017YF0505200), we surveyed along the Jiansha River, revisiting the range of *B. dracaenoides*. We found a total of 10 populations, two of which were newly recorded. One of these is in Xueshan town, where *B. dracaenoides* had already been recorded, and the second is in Tangdan town, > 20 km from the other known locations of the species. Only seedlings were found in the Tangdan population, and the number of individuals in the 10 known populations is low (< 50 in each). Thus even though we located two previously unknown populations, the total number of known *B. dracaenoides* in the wild may be < 500. The known range of *B. dracaenoides* is < 10-km², over altitudes of 2,300–2,700 m.

Road construction is a potential threat to *B. dracaenoides*. In the Huidong population, which is the only population known on the north bank of Jinsha River, the number of plants has decreased to only five individuals as a result of road building (22 individuals were known in 2015). The mountain cliffs around Xueshan town in Luquan county hold most of the extant *B. dracaenoides* individuals, possibly a result of the foggy, high-cliff habitat, which shelters the plants from human disturbance and is not under threat from road construction.

The seeds of *B. dracaenoides* have a high germination rate (L. Kong et al., 2017, *Plant Science Journal*, 3, 421–426), and we therefore believe that lack of germination is not restricting the species' distribution. Kunming Institute of Botany is now carrying out comprehensive phylogeographical and tissue culture studies of *B. dracaenoides* to obtain