

---

**IUCN – The World Conservation Union**

**The External Review of  
the IUCN Programme**

**Team Leader, Gabor Bruszt**

**June 1999**

---

**Addendum 1 to Congress paper CGR/2/2000/2**

**INFORMATION DOCUMENT FOR 18TH SITTING OF THE**

**WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS**

**FRIDAY 6 OCTOBER 2000**

---



## Contents

Preface	i
Abbreviations	iv
Summary	v
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Terms of reference	1
1.2 Approach	1
1.3 Activities	1
1.4 Our guiding principle: the distinctive character and quality of IUCN	2
1.5 How to act on this report	2
2. IUCN performance and impact	3
2.1 Programme implementation	3
2.1.1 The 1997-1999 Triennial Programme	3
2.1.2 Implementation of the 1997-1999 Triennial Programme	5
2.2 The impact of IUCN	6
2.2.1 Local and regional impact	6
2.2.2 Global impact	7
2.2.3 The Biodiversity Policy Programme	9
2.2.4 The Forest Conservation Programme	10
2.3 Response to previous reviews	11
3. Programme development and management	13
3.1 Progress made	13
3.2 Programming elements	14
3.2.1 Vision and mission	14
3.2.2 Distinctive core competencies	15
3.2.3 Knowledge management areas	15
3.3 Programme components	15
3.3.1 Targeted global programmes	15
3.3.2 Business plans for the knowledge management areas	16
3.3.3 Regional programmes	16
3.4 Programming issues	17
3.4.1 Priorities and budgets	17
3.4.2 Space for new ideas	17
3.5 Roles in programme management	18

---

4.3	The funding of regional operations	27
4.3.1	Funding for the Europe programme	27
4.3.2	Strengthening links between donors and the IUCN regions	27
5.	Governance of the Union	28
5.1	Regional governance	28
5.2	Global governance	29
6.	The IUCN Commissions	29
6.1	Safeguarding the global character of the Commissions	29
6.2	Ignorance about the Commissions	30
6.3	Voluntarism – a myth?	30
6.4	Interdisciplinary delivery	30
6.5	Donors’ selection of expertise	31
6.6	A Commission on Business and Environment	31
6.7	Revision of the Commission structure of the Union	31
7.	The financial viability of IUCN	32
8.	IUCN as a learning organisation	34
8.1	Managing knowledge	34
8.2	Building knowledge	35
8.3	Storing and accessing knowledge	35
9.	The management of IUCN operations	36
9.1	Managing IUCN’s operations	36
9.1.1	What sort of role?	36
9.1.2	How to handle growth?	36
9.1.2.1	Business plans	37
9.1.2.2	Quality assurance	38
9.1.2.3	Membership services	38
9.2	The multi-centre concept	39
9.3	A more equitable organisation?	39
9.4	How to handle success?	41
	Annex 1. Terms of Reference	42

## Abbreviations

ARD	Asia Regional Directorate
BCIS	Biodiversity Conservation Information System
BPCD	Biodiversity Policy Co-ordination Division
BPP	Biodiversity Policy Programme
BRAO	Bureau Régional pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
COP	Conference of the Parties
EARO	Eastern Africa Regional Office
EIA	environmental impact assessment
EOP	Equal Opportunity Policy
EPCC	Extended Programme Committee of Council
ESU	Economic Services Unit
EU	European Union
FCP	Forest Conservation Programme
GBF	Global Biodiversity Forum
GBP	Global Biodiversity Project
GTP	Global Targeted Programme
IFF	Intergovernmental Forum on Forests
IUCN-P	IUCN Pakistan
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NEDA	Netherlands Development Agency
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for International Development
ORMA	Oficina Regional para Meso América
PEBLDS	Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy
PPTT	Planning and Programming Task Team
RAC	Regional Advisory Committee
RCF	Regional Conservation Forum
RCO	Regional Conservation Office
ROSA	Regional Office for Southern Africa
RP	Regional Programme
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
SDC	Swiss Development Corporation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
SSC	Species Survival Commission
SSEA	South and South East Asia
SUI	Sustainable Use Initiative
SUR	Oficina Regional para América del Sur
TOR	terms of reference
TRAFFIC	Trade Records Analysis of Fauna and Flora in International Commerce
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCC	World Conservation Congress
WCD	World Commission on Dams



assessing and providing professional capacity to programmes and projects and for servicing selected international institutions and conventions;

not more than three **targeted global programmes**: concerted, Union wide, time limited undertakings, focusing on tangible mission related achievements;

the **regional programmes**: undivided entities in their own right, reflecting the regions' contributions to the targeted global programmes as well as the regional priorities and demands;

the **programme management** structure and process, with defined roles for the constituencies in the programme formulation and approval process.

We believe that IUCN should be structured into a strictly limited number of organisational and budgetary units, reflecting the framework outlined above.

Further, we recommend a number of measures for strengthening the **interaction** in the Union. The main proposals are:

reinforcement of the **role of the regions** in programme development and programme implementation;

intensified efforts for creating **partnership between Secretariat and members** for implementation of programmes and projects, including planned capacity building, targeting new members and quality assurance measures;

institutionalising **regional governance** forums for dialogue and for approval of regional programmes;

extension of the interval between **World Conservation Congresses** from three to five years, to leave space and time for action and implementation;

**linking donor funding** of programme, planning and capacity building work directly with the regions;

better **use of the competence and capacity of the Commission** members by educating staff, members and donors about the Commissions, and creating compensation arrangements for Commission members for work with Union programmes and projects;

establishment of a **Commission for Business and Environment** to address the increased importance of the corporate sector in conservation.

We comment on a number of other central issues for IUCN, such as the strengthening of the **learning system, including monitoring and evaluation**; the **integration of socio-economic science and gender knowledge** into changing conservation science and practice; and the concept of multi-centre structure, for better use of the world wide resources of the Union.

Most of the proposals of the review, about clarity in objectives, concentration, prioritisation, and

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Terms of reference**



The main field work of the team was undertaken in May. Two members of the team made short visits to the Botswana country programme and the southern Africa regional programme. All six reviewers visited the South/South East Asia programme for two weeks in May. They visited the Asia Regional Directorate in Thailand, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. At various dates from March to May, two reviewers held discussions about the Europe programme in various parts of that continent.

The team worked at headquarters, and produced this report, between 1 and 11 June.

#### **1.4 Our guiding principle: the distinctive character and quality of IUCN**

Throughout this review we have been guided by our basic appreciation and interpretation of the distinctive character and quality of IUCN. It is easy for the uninitiated to think of the Union's Secretariat and the work that it does as being 'IUCN'. The truth is more complex, and richer in its depth and potential. Most fundamentally, of course, IUCN is a global Union of members (all institutions and organisations, governmental and non governmental). Supporting the Union with scientific expertise are the six Commissions, comprising thousands of individual volunteers. The Secretariat of staff employed by the Union was originally intended to be a service agency for the members, with the latter fulfilling the implementation role of pursuing the Union's objectives. Over the last 20 years or so, the Secretariat has taken over much of this implementation role – or has at least created that impression, by executing hundreds of local, regional and global projects and programmes.

The fundamental principle, however, is that IUCN comprises this interdependent trio of elements. They are sometimes described as a helix. The three strands of the helix should retain their mutual connection and dependence. Otherwise, the whole will not be more than the sum of the parts. IUCN must be more than an assemblage of apparently disparate elements. It must be a union of synergetic forces that add value by the special nature of their relationship to each other.

One of the key aspects of this special way of adding value is IUCN's ability to link local voices and global forums in the fields of nature conservation and sustainable development. Through its international membership it has an unparalleled depth of institutional capacity and social legitimacy as a global body. Another key aspect is the depth and range of scientific expertise provided by its Commissions, giving authority to its policy positions and potentially assuring technical quality in its programme execution.

It would be more straightforward to do an external review of the IUCN Secretariat. Instead, our review is guided by the composite triple character of the Union as a whole. One of our key concerns is that the Union retain this character and its unique potential to add value in conservation and development. As we shall show, this challenge requires more attention than it has received from IUCN in recent years.

#### **1.5 How to act on this report**

Both the Terms of Reference for th

We assume that the Director General will initiate an internal process for reflections and action on this report's conclusions and recommendations. This process would preferably take place in the context of the new Task Teams of the Secretariat.

**We recommend that, based on these deliberations, a consolidated action plan should be developed and submitted, together with the Review Report, to the members of the Council.**

We believe that, in most of the areas covered by our recommendations, the Director General has the clear mandate to initiate and implement action. The Committees of the Council (except the Programme Committee) would be able to deliberate in December on the review report and on the action taken by the Director General. Based on that, the Council would be able to submit its own report on the review to the World Conservation Congress.

Members of the review team, if so requested, would make themselves available for discussions with the Task Teams concerned. A follow up meeting with the assembled Task Teams in November could be a suitable time to review consolidated action.

**We recommend to the donors that, after consideration of this report, they organise a one day meeting to discuss it and, in particular, to discuss the recommendations of the review report.**

encouraging, assisting and influencing societies to conserve biodiversity.

The introduction ends with three groups of priorities for the Union: programmatic; products and services; and institutional.

In setting out the Global Programmes, however, the bulk of the document presents a very long list of objectives and activities with no linkage to personnel or budget. It contains the following 11 elements:

global policy work, targeted mainly on global issues affecting prospects for conservation and sustainable development, such as global trade and debt conversion;

environmental law, aiming at further development of national and international legal instruments;

biodiversity policy: this includes 'new initiatives' such as increased Secretariat capacity in regional and country offices to help govern

social policy work, aiming to promote policies and conditions that foster full social participation in conservation, and to strengthen the capacity of IUCN Secretariat and members to build equity and social concerns into their work;

environmental education and communication;

the work of TRAFFIC International, monitoring the trade in wild animals and plants, supporting CITES and associated legislation, and other measures to deter unsustainable trade in wildlife.

These elements are at different levels in a conceptual hierarchy and often overlap. They seem to be organised mainly to fit with the organisational and thematic structure of IUCN's Secretariat and Commissions, rather than to match the major challenges to which the Union's distinctive competencies could be addressed.

### **2.1.2 Implementation of the 1997-1999 Triennial Programme**

Implementation of the triennial programme is summarised in semi-annual and annual reports (so far, up to the end of 1998) that have adopted a structure based on eight goals. To an extent these goals can be related to the four primary goals outlined for the triennial programme. Disentangling the progress of implementation of the Triennial Programme's various Global Programmes in terms of these eight goals is a puzzle.

**Nevertheless, there is no doubt that real, substantial, high quality progress has been made on many fronts in implementation of the current Triennial Programme.** Supporting implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), for example, IUCN has provided advice on various aspects of national compliance to at least 25 countries in all regions. It has worked in many other

At local, regional and global levels, IUCN members are becoming more involved in the Union's work. Direct capacity building efforts for members and partners are promoting this trend.

IUCN's programme activities, and the work of the Commissions, continue to produce essential information and understanding on ecosystems and species. The Biodiversity Conservation Information System is an important element in the dissemination of this information. IUCN is also participating actively in the Global Invasive Species Programme and other initiatives to tackle invasive species.

The impacts of human societies on the functioning and sustainable use of natural resources are being addressed in many ways. The Sustainable Use Initiative is important in this respect, with publication of the SUI Technical Series as one channel for dissemination of information. Local community

(with the assistance of the Species Survival Commission) to the CITES decision on trophy hunting in Pakistan;

IUCN-P is now recognised as one of the strongest environmental institutions in the country. It has good technical strength in both local and international staff. It is well connected: internationally and locally, it can deliver. Most donors view IUCN-P as a partner in development;

due to their good track record, most IUCN country offices have memoranda of understanding with Ministries or Departments of Environment or Natural Resources setting out the types of support they can provide on technical issues;

IUCN Sri Lanka was central in formulating the project on ex-situ and in-situ conservation of plants important in traditional medicine. The project is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medicine and involves ten villages, universities, botanical gardens and NGOs as well as the IUCN secretariat;

in Vietnam, IUCN has assisted in capacity building in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (the state member), and has contributed to the development of the National Environmental Agency of that Ministry;

IUCN Vietnam also collaborates closely with local NGOs that participate in the village level implementation of IUCN projects, thereby developing competence;

regular contact meetings are arranged for the international members with project activity in Vietnam, promoting collaboration and co-ordination;

IUCN Vietnam has led a recent review of aid in the environmental sector in that country. This gives the country office a good position to co-ordinate and wo



### **2.2.3 The Biodiversity Policy Programme**

The Biodiversity Policy Programme (BPP) constitutes the major activity of the IUCN Biodiversity Policy Co-ordination Division (BPCD). The BPCD is the focal point for IUCN biodiversity policy, and is funded approximately 50/50 by programme/project support from SDC and the Union's general programme support (core funding). The annual budget for 1998 was approximately Sfr 700,000. The IUCN-SDC Global Biodiversity Project Phase II, 1996-99, (the GBP) is a part of the IUCN-SDC framework agreement.

The BPCD partners in this programme are five Regional Conservation Offices (RCOs): South America (SUR), West Africa (BRAO), Southern Africa (ROSA), East Africa (EARO), and South and South East Asia (SSEA), together with the Economic Services Unit (ESU) at headquarters. The SDC support contributes to five staff positions at headquarters and significant staff time from the RCO partners and ESU. 'The Economics of Biological Diversity' used to be part of the BPCD, but has been converted into the Economic Services Unit (ESU). In close collaboration with BPCD, the ESU is responsible for the Economics of Biological Diversity project, Phase II, which is funded by the SDC as another element of the IUCN-SDC framework agreement.

The BPP presently has three major activities to achieve the goal 'to encourage governments, NGOs and other stakeholders to take practical steps to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and to ensure that: (1) biodiversity is protected throughout the world; (2) biological resources are used sustainably; and (3) the benefits of using these resources are shared equitably.' These activities are:

1. to influence the process under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) by developing and promoting IUCN policies;
2. to maintain the secretariat for the Global Biodiversity Forum (GBF);
3. to support regional implementation of the CBD.

The process under the CBD includes, for example, prioritising themes to be discussed at COP and SBSTTA meetings; developing protocols and guidelines on various aspects of the wide framework convention; and developing interactions with other international conventions. The GBF and IUCN's activities to support implementation constitute important elements that feed into the CBD process. One component of this process is the development of background papers and briefs on the upcoming issues. The Commissions are also involved in this process. Which Commission, and the extent of the involvement, depend on the subject of the upcoming issues.



The activities and priorities of the BPP are to a large extent based on inputs from the RCOs. The final work plan and budget are developed in collaboration with them. There are budget lines for BPCD, RCO and ESU staff and operational expenses. For many of the activities, additional counterpart funding is sought locally.

Forum on Forests (IFF) may be the most important. A prominent question in this process is whether an international convention on forests should be developed, or the CBD and other conventions provide

process of decentralisation and regionalisation created substantial turbulence in the staffing pattern at headquarters during 1997-98. Decentralisation has not always been targeted to ensure that the most useful range of senior expertise was retained. The Regional Offices are resolute in their demand for a small but professionally strong headquarters that deploys high level technical and policy expertise. Deliberate efforts to achieve that sort of headquarters have not been made during the period between the external reviews.

*Thirdly, the 1996 review called for IUCN to become more of a learning institution... IUCN has to excel as a knowledge-based institution... IUCN should make more effective the process of preparing annual programme assessments... An IUCN-specific monitoring and evaluation system should be designed and incorporated into programme and project designs on a regular basis...Regular Union-wide reviews on ongoing and completed activities should be institutionalised and regional thematic review workshops should be encouraged.*

The verbal commitment to a 'learning institution' remains strong in IUCN and a start has been made at headquarters on building a 'knowledge system' on the inter- and intranets. But the tangible progress made has been modest, partly because the funding allocated to the 'knowledge system' initiative is extremely limited. The production of six-monthly progress and assessment reports is a step in the right direction, however. Good progress has been made on developing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) procedures and skills, although that progress is conspicuously lacking at global level - partly because very little money has been allocated to global level M&E. Each year a wide range of project, programme and thematic reviews are undertaken at various places and levels within IUCN – often at the instigation of funding agencies. But they generally address the activities of only one 'pillar' of the Union: usually the Secretariat, sometimes a Commission. Explicitly Union-wide reviews, as called for in 1996, have not been institutionalised. Furthermore, no systematic efforts are made to extract and distribute the lessons learned from the numerous review documents. It has been difficult for us to get easy access to such documents, indicating that their active use is limited. Nor have we been able to find any assessment of the progress made in responding to the recommendations of the previous external review.

*The fourth recommendation proposes that IUCN, on the basis of the more seasoned experiences of its Wetlands and the Forest Conservation Programmes, explore how some of the elements of*

Next, the 1996 review recommended that *a separate study be initiated on the commission structure that can best harness the potential of the large voluntary network of experts associated with IUCN – and how the activities of the commissions may be able to enhance more directly the activities to be undertaken under IUCN Programmes.*

This study has not been done, although a number of individual Commission reviews and strategic

( 6 . 1 - 4 i ( 6 . 1 d

times in its meetings over the last three years. The first tangible step forward was the Committee's identification of eight overarching programme goals, in December 1997 (section 2.1.2). These goals were used in organising presentation and reporting of the Union programme for 1998 and 1999. But this has been widely recognised as a synthetic process: essentially, a *post hoc* rationalisation of what IUCN was doing anyway, marshalling all the various activities, programmes and initiatives under one or other of the eight goals.

More systematic attempts to introduce coherent practice have been made with regard to monitoring and evaluation since 1996. This work has inevitably confronted the need for a systematic rationale, framework and procedures in programme development and management, and has been able to contribute to enhancement of these areas at the regional level. Impact at the global level has been more limited, as we explain in section 3.8. But a March 1999 M&E meeting in Gland was partly diverted from its original purposes to address global and regional programming issues as well. This was a useful, if painful, step towards the necessary integration of programming and M&E functions. The recent combination of these functions in a single manageme164u, 2o9a 2o9fmr3--recent td6h6302 -1e, 2ive(i)3.1o[(e)6(

and social equity. The Union has correctly realised that no one aspect of its mission – and certainly not nature conservation – can be accomplished if the others are not successfully addressed.

### 3.2.2 Distinctive core competencies

While recognising the interdependence of the three dimensions of its vision and mission, IUCN must also realise that it will not add value or achieve any part of its mission if it spreads itself too thin. It must define its distinctive, core competencies, and stick to them for a convincing period. We call these IUCN's *distinctive* core competencies because they must be linked to the distinctive character and quality of the Union (section 1.4). They must be **rooted** in the scientific and institutional capacity of the Commissions and the membership: not in the staff of the Secretariat.

#### IUCN's mission

*The objectives of IUCN shall be to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.*

Definition of these core competencies must include specification of those potentially relevant areas of work that are excluded. This is not to say that IUCN should freeze its skills and paradigms within fixed confines indefinitely. Conservation and development concerns are dynamic, and the Union's core competencies will evolve. But that evolution should be a measured, reasoned process rather than a perpetual state of motion. If IUCN determines that it needs to work in a new area, it should do so after careful review of the capacities of others to do the work, and a decision that those capacities are inadequate. It should then engage in a carefully structured process to build a new distinctive core competency. This will mean devoting substantial and sustained resources to the required capacity building, in membership and Commissions as well as the Secretariat.

Despite the massively expanded execution role that the Secretariat has taken on over the last 20 years, its core function remains service and facilitation for the distinctive competencies of the Commissions and the membership in jointly addressing a limited number of core concerns. The design and delivery of the Union's programme should reflect this. So should the structure and purpose of funding agencies' support to IUCN.

### 3.2.3 Knowledge management areas

The fundamental component and purpose of IUCN's programme should be to manage and deploy the Union's distinctive competencies – scientific knowledge and institutional capacity – in the service of societies' efforts to achieve the sort of world IUCN sees in its vision. These competencies should be organised in a limited number of thematic knowledge management areas. The purpose of the knowledge management areas, as the heart of the Union's ability, is to synthesise and disseminate best practice; to assess and provide professional capacity to programmes and projects; and to service selected international institutions and processes.

The 'knowledge' to be managed in these groupings is not just scientific data. It includes all the fields of technical, socio-economic and institutional knowledge and ability that the Union has at its disposal, as well as the learning capacity that it should have in these fields. We do not presume to advise IUCN on how to constitute these groups. What we do plainly urge is that there be a limited number of them.

## 3.3 Programme components

Building on the three fundamental elements outlined above, the IUCN programme should have the following three basic components.

### 3.3.1 Targeted global programmes

Drawing upon its distinctive core competencies, the Union should be committed to two or three clear and challenging targeted global programmes, whose achievement would bring the world significantly closer to IUCN's vision. Programmes towards these targets should be time bound. For example, each

World Conservation Congress (section 5.2) could endorse a maximum of three global targets with the intention that they be achieved by the next Congress. Such targets should of course be clearly specified, and progress towards them should be measurable.

What might a targeted global programme be? The simplest example would be work towards some prominent international resolution – the signature of a new global convention on a key conservation issue, or a major regulatory or programmatic decision by an existing global forum or authority. Much IUCN work is already done within such existing global frameworks. But it may be possible to specify important new decisions to be taken within those frameworks, and endorsed by their highest authorities, that would push achievement of IUCN's mission prominently forward. It is quite likely that such a target could be identified in the Union's ambitions for achievement under the Convention on Biological Diversity, for example. Major policy and regulatory decisions by the World Trade Organization, for example, could also be identified. The IUCN could also work towards achieving the targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity, for example, through its work in the field of biodiversity conservation. The IUCN could also work towards achieving the targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity, for example, through its work in the field of biodiversity conservation. The IUCN could also work towards achieving the targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity, for example, through its work in the field of biodiversity conservation.

---

internally determined priorities and programmes at these levels. A further key quality of IUCN's regional programming must therefore be space for strategic reaction to regionally or locally expressed needs – within, and only within, the areas of distinctive core competency that IUCN has defined for itself.

In future Global Programme documents, IUCN should present each fully fledged regional programme as it stands, rather than mixing them all together into an integrated 'programme', as in the 1999 Programme document.

The next Global Programme should identify an additional group of regional programmes that will be built to full capacity over the programme period, and commit resources for that purpose. As we point out in section 4.2, most of the regional programmes are still gravely lacking in structure, content and management. Building a feasible number of these programmes to their full potential is an important priority for the Union.

### **3.4 Programming issues**

#### **3.4.1 Priorities and budgets**

If IUCN is to survive as a respected, funded contributor to its vision of the future, its programme must be clear, focused and manageable. It must be possible to make budgetary allocations on the basis of





---

World Conservation Congress (WCC)	Discuss and adopt GTPs and RPs.
--------------------------------------	---------------------------------

**3.6**





and making them easy to find. The M&E Initiative is about to appoint a consultant who will collate and analyse all the internal and external reviews and evaluations undertaken in IUCN since 1994.

Overall, IUCN's M&E theory is turning into practice at the regional level. This has not yet happened at the global level, despite the sterling efforts of the M&E Initiative and the growing commitment to integrating this work with programme development.

**We recommend that the Union commit adequate and sustained resources to developing and maintaining M&E capacity at both global and regional levels.**

## **4. Decentralisation and regionalisation**

### **4.1 Progress made**

Decentralisation and regionalisation have been major themes in the life of IUCN for most of this

one feature of the incoherence of the global programming process is its poor articulation of the links between the global programme and regional programmes (section 3.1);

the relationship between the thematic global programmes and operations at regional level, and the ways in which the former should service the latter, are not always clearly specified. What sort of action is needed at the global level on this small planet, and how should it be articulated with regional and local action to the same ends?

IUCN needs to find ways in which the headquarters can recognise, strengthen and serve successful regional or country operations to which it makes only a marginal financial contribution;

power relations have not been renegotiated or specified. Does the headquarters control the regions? Do the regions control the headquarters? Does one serve the other? The answer should obviously be that authority and service flow in both directions: but few people seem satisfied with the present compromise or the clarity of its expression;

not enough attention has been given to the potential for decentralisation of headquarters functions currently located in Gland. A number of global programme co-ordination functions or headquarters secretariat services could be located elsewhere in the world (section 9.2).

## **4.2 Regional operations**

Not surprisingly, IUCN's performance in regionalisation has been uneven. Some regional offices and programmes are vibrant, well funded and well respected for their ongoing achievements. We have been impressed by what we saw in the South/South East Asia and Southern Africa regions, whose experience is instructive for this review as a whole. Other regions have faced serious operational, structural or funding problems. Current performance in some of these regions is cause for serious concern. Very few regional programmes have strong management. In some parts of the world, the regions are essentially statutory in nature and there are no significant regionally based activities. In one case, there is a notable ambiguity in the regional geography of IUCN that ought to be resolved.

**The regions are now the central platform for the planning, programming and operation of IUCN's activities. The regionalisation process of the Union is far from complete. If the uneven situation persists, the performance of the Union as a global entity will suffer. It is one of the most important tasks of the Director General to lead and manage the process of regionalisation onwards, in order to achieve an balanced overall structure for the Union. Present management arrangements do not adequately recognise the importance of co-ordinating and supporting the Union's regional programmes around the world. Nor do they provide for the mentoring and development of management capacity in the majority of IUCN regions where that capacity is lacking.**

IUCN's strongest regional operations are in South/South East Asia and Southern Africa. Solid work is done (and has in some cases been done for many years) in more difficult circumstances in East Africa, Europe, Meso America and South America. The West Africa programme is very new, despite the antiquity of some IUCN projects in that region. The Central Africa programme has faced severe operational difficulties.

There are significant differ

historical successes and failures in the establishment of country offices, as in the case of Pakistan and the country offices of Meso America;

specific factors in the region, such as ecological differences, geopolitical and demographic conditions, and funding opportunities.

Thus, the South and South East Asia Region is built on a concept of strong country representation and offices with complementary regional level programmes and a co-ordinating role for the regional office. The Southern African Region is built on strong regional identity and programmes and the integrating role of the regional office. The Meso American Region is built around the regional office; programmes and projects are managed without country offices. Even if recent difficulties in member relations and Secretariat capacity are overcome in South America, the Secretariat will always have a much lower profile there than it does in, say, Southern Africa. The most fundamental difference will always be between the character of IUCN's work in 'developing' countries and that of its work

conservatism with regard to the socio-economic interpretation of IUCN's mission. Values and priorities often diverge. These concerns are more immediate for the Southern African Secretariat and membership than they usually appear to be in Gland.

#### **4.2.2 South and South East Asia**

Whereas the regional office has been seminal in IUCN's success in Southern Africa, the country programmes have taken the lead in South/South East Asia (SSEA). The development of the Asia Regional Directorate (ARD) is comparatively recent and has still not been fully funded. Most notably, there is no central funding for a regional Director. The Pakistan country director, while retaining those duties, has also worked as regional director (and previously chair of the Asia Working Group) for the last four years. The Pakistan programme funds these inputs. Despite these constraints, a fully functional regional office and programme have come into being – although they are never likely to play the sort of central role in regional IUCN activities that ROSA plays in Southern Africa. ARD has pioneered a structural concept that we recommend IUCN consider more broadly: locating co-ordination functions in more than one place. The regional biodiversity programme is based in the Sri Lanka country office, not the ARD office in Bangkok. Colombo also hosts a regional coastal and marine focal point.

The most immediate problem for ARD is core funding. Despite its competence and autonomy (being authorised by headquarters to handle almost all its own contracting, budgetary and personnel management), the SSEA programme is starved of core operating funds.

**As a first priority, we recommend that the Union provide ARD with full funding for the position of Regional Director.**

As we recommend elsewhere, donor framework funding to IUCN needs to be regionalised. ARD would be a prime candidate for receipt of such funding.



to comment), the South East Asian region would comprise all the other countries now in the SSEA region.

### **4.2.3 Europe**

Although IUCN's comparative advantage or niche in regional work lies mainly in the 'developing' countries, it faces major challenges and opportunities in Europe.

As a major consumer of global natural resources, and as a major provider of global development funding, the European Union should be a strong part of IUCN's regional operations. IUCN's membership is strong there. Meanwhile, the 'centre' of Europe is moving east, as is European Union membership. Ten or more eastern European countries are expected to join the EU. This will have major repercussions for conservation throughout the continent. A range of institutional, socio-economic, infrastructural and land use changes will have significant impacts on biodiversity. In the predominantly market-led adjustments to government and economy that are currently taking place in central and eastern Europe, biodiversity is unlikely to get the attention it needs without the support of IUCN and related agencies. Some promising initiatives in this direction have begun, for example in the context of the Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS), in which IUCN plays an active role.

IUCN needs to maintain its leading role in the PEBLDS. It should also intensify its support for upgrading the capacity of member organisations and other agencies in central and eastern Europe to prepare their countries for access and membership of the EU in a way that protects biodiversity. Throughout the present and the future EU, it is important that IUCN use its constituency to influence policy in favour of biodiversity, including the maintenance of marine resources.

Russia is strengthening its ties with the rest of Europe. This vast country presents very grave challenges to sustainable development and global biodiversity. Although IUCN has a small office in Moscow, it should develop a much stronger presence and greatly expanded programmes in Russia. Government and society there would welcome this.

IUCN's activities from its regional office at Tilburg and its representation office at Brussels have had mixed fortunes. The Brussels office has had very little impact on EU policy and programmes, and has not been able to access major EU funding for IUCN. It is also very expensive to run. The Tilburg office, generously supported by the government of The Netherlands, has undertaken a number of useful activities and initiatives, and has helped develop the IUCN profile in various parts of Europe. But, as Europe's centre of gravity moves east, the Tilburg office is not best located in relation to the biggest challenges facing the Union on that continent.

At present, the IUCN Statutes split Europe across two Regions: West Europe, and East

**IUCN should develop a strong Russia country programme and office in Moscow. In global biodiversity terms this is one of the most urgent challenges facing the Union.**

### **4.3 The funding of regional operations**

#### **4.3.1 Funding for the Europe programme**

The pan European programme that we propose will need substantial core funding to build up its activities and create a sound balance between programme and project activities on the continent.

Whereas most of IUCN's external resources are provided by development funding agencies, it is fortunate to have substantial support for its Europe programme from the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries. However, this is the only major donor supporting the Union's activities in Europe. To provide the necessary funding for a pan European IUCN programme, innovative funding approaches will be required.

IUCN should make early efforts to secure a broader funding base for its Europe programme. As it expands to central and eastern Europe, and especially Russia, it is tackling biodiversity problems of global urgency. This is a strong rationale for a major increase in external funding to this IUCN region. Several initiatives could be explored:

in addition to seeking funding from the usual bilateral development funding agencies, IUCN should seek support from other European Ministries of Agriculture, Environment or

donors. The latter allocations represent 7% of the total core (unrestricted, general programme and

These statutory regional bodies should gradually be introduced throughout the Union. Some regions are ready to establish and use them immediately, or already operate versions of what we recommend. Other regions must develop further before their introduction would be appropriate. The IUCN Council should draw up a plan for the implementation of these regional bodies and for the development work that this will require.

## **5.2 Global governance**

The World Conservation Congress is a major manifestation of the global presence of the Union, and a valued venue for interaction between members. But its role in penetrating the details of IUCN programming is limited, and the practical feasibility of its doing so is even narrower. With the increasing emphasis on the regional programmes as the backbone of Union activities, the programmatic role of the WCC diminishes further. The Congress should retain its roles of deliberating and adopting targeted global programmes, and of approving programming objectives and principles for the regional level. But its role for substantive determination and approval of regional programmes should be transferred to statutory regional bodies (section 5.1).

In this perspective, the traditional three year interval between World Congresses is too short. The WCC is a very costly event that puts a heavy stress on Union finances for several years. Furthermore, the extended periods needed to prepare for each Congress and to interpret its proceedings afterwards do not leave much space for action by the members, the Commissions and the Secretariat. A combination of less frequent World Congresses and meetings of statutory Regional Conservation Forums would be a more purposeful mechanism for the governance of the regionalised Union.





**7.**

Taken with Table 1, Table 3 shows the decline in core funding from 48% of the total in 1995 to 36% in 1999.

**Table 4. Funding by major donors, 1998 (general programme funds, programme restricted fund plus project funding)**

(SFr '000)

<b>Donor</b>	<b>GP+PR funding</b>	<b>Project funding</b>	<b>Total</b>
Danish Government	3600	2376	5976
Dutch Government	3546	10500	14046



Many of the proposals and recommendations we make in this review are related to improvement in the

are being pursued on an ad hoc basis and do not contribute to the building of systematic knowledge management capacity within the organisation.

There is, as yet, no overall knowledge management strategy in IUCN. If the Union is serious about nurturing its core asset, then it needs to establish a solid knowledge management system: maintaining rosters of relevant expertise, storing information in technical systems, operating formal and informal systems to build up knowledge, and nurturing a framework of values to provide for direction for all of this.

It is important to distinguish knowledge and information. Knowledge comprises information and understanding of subjects, contexts and methods. Knowledge management is directed at the absorption, diffusion, generation and use of knowledge in an organisation.

We distinguish two types of knowledge within the organisation: *documented* and *person-based*. The first refers to factual information and harmonised knowledge that can be stored on, distributed by and retrieved from the intranet/internet systems of

domains of people and organisations should be mapped and stored in such a way that the information can be easily retrieved through IUCN's intranet. The role of the Commission on Education and Communication in achieving these goals should be assessed.

Finally, the success of the knowledge management system is closely bound up with the extent to which the Union is able to achieve focus in its activities. An IUCN programme with a limited number of clear goals, strategies and priorities will channel energy and effort to developing knowledge in the most fruitful directions.

## **9. The management of IUCN operations**

### **9.1 Managing IUCN's operations**

#### **9.1.1 What sort of role?**

Much of IUCN's current reputation is built on its performance during the 1980s and early 1990s in developing policy, strategies and international instruments for conservation and sustainable development. IUCN's contribution to the formulation of National Conservation Strategies lies at the root of much of its growth over this period. CITES and the Convention on Biological Diversity are other global achievements in which IUCN played a prominent role.

What next? Sometimes, there is much more work to be done in preparing subordinate policies and strategies for specific sectors, provinces or districts. But sooner or later, the answer has been to move from formulation to implementation. Building on its established re



organisation and management responsibilities;

financial income and allocations.

**A plan for building the capacity of members and Commissions:**

targets and responsibilities for capacity building work;

targeting new members and proposing Commission members;

professional and administrative development of selected members for partnership;

resource allocation in terms of staff and funds for capacity building.

These business plans should enable the management of the units to set their priorities, control resource development and plan capacity building for partnership.

**9.1.2.2 Quality assurance**

The IUCN Secretariat needs to ensure that its operations, services and products meet defined quality standards. This is not only an internal prerequisite for economic, effective, efficient and equitable operations. Increasingly, it is expected and required by donors and other partners. We recommend that IUCN establish a set of quality standards with which it is committed to comply. These standards should include adherence to the defined framework of distinctive core competencies of the Union, as well as performance towards the goals of the targeted global and regional programmes. They should include principles of accountability and transparency, together with scientific and operational standards. The quality assurance system should also provide for continual improvement of quality, for which purpose the Union's M&E and feedback mechanisms play a crucial role.

When the role of the Secretariat changes from implementing programmes and projects to facilitating implementation by members, quality assurance gains a whole new dimension. In relation to donors and to recipients (governments, communities, etc.), the IUCN Secretariat will still remain accountable for quality in project administration and delivery. Quality assurance should therefore include the principles and standards to which any member organisation that is implementing activities facilitated, brokered or in any other way related to the Union must adhere. Such standards should state clear management responsibilities, the professional level of personnel, financial transparency and accountability, timely delivery conditions, and principles for auditing and evaluation. Only then can third parties be assured of the high quality which should characterise all IUCN undertakings – by Secretariat, members and Commissions. A popular word for this kind of relation between parties in the business world is the **franchise**. The term is often used in IUCN, but with very different meanings. We believe that a franchise system for quality assurance in IUCN is a good way to handle diversity and autonomy for the different parts of the Union, and at the same time to guarantee the necessary cohesiveness and collective responsibility for quality in all undertakings.

**9.1.2.3 Membership services**

Few would contest our argument that IUCN's membership structure is a key part of its distinctive character and quality (section 1.4). Yet, for the outside observer (and the external reviewer!) the profile of the membership in the Union's activities is not convincing at present. Partly, this profile can be strengthened by the policy, strategic and programming initiatives that we recommend in this report. Partly it is a matter of money. The Secretariat's membership services are typically starved of operating resources. The international funding agencies are among those who strongly endorse the special qualities that the membership brings to IUCN. We recommend that the Union review the structure and funding of its membership services, and develop funding proposals for enhancing these services that it can submit to the funding agencies. If they want to build the contributions that IUCN can make to conservation and sustainable development through its membership, they are likely to receive such proposals sympathetically.

## **9.2 The multi-centre concept**

At both headquarters and regional levels, rapidly improving communications facilities have prompted the IUCN Secretariat to co-ordinate its programmes from more than one centre. In South/South East Asia, for example, not all the regional functions and programmes are located in Bangkok. Some are in Colombo and Karachi. At the global level, the Global Initiatives are housed in various offices around the world. For example, two are co-ordinated from the Regional Office for Southern Africa.

We endorse this approach in principle. Its application affirms the global character of IUCN. It helps the Union to optimise its use of the diverse scientific and institutional qualities to which it has access in different parts of the world. It offers good prospects of reduced operating costs. But it requires good management.

For the multi-centre concept to succeed, communications must be good and co-ordination clear. Not only must the telecommunications be efficient (and they certainly are not in all parts of IUCN's world). Everyone must know which offices are responsible for what, and all involved must optimise their internal communications to ensure that the multi-centre concept enhances participation and relevance rather than exacerbating confusion.

**We recommend that, subject to the conditions and criteria specified above, IUCN apply the multi-centre concept to its global and regional operations.**

While it is important to retain a critical mass at the headquarters in Switzerland, operating from Gland imposes heavy costs on the Union – despite the significant fiscal and other concessions it enjoys from the Swiss government. It is therefore important to give particular attention to the potential for further repositioning of some functions from Gland to lower cost locations.

## **9.3 A more equitable organisation?**

To what extent does IUCN provide the kind of work environment conducive to realising the best potential of its employees and the optimal delivery of its products? This question touches on questions of equal opportunity, cultural and professional balance within IUCN staff, decision-making, conflict resolution and attention to career development. It was raised as a problem in the 1991-93 External Review, which referred to IUCN's 'image problem'.

An Equal Opportunity Policy (EOP) was submitted and approved by Council in 1995. The policy essentially committed IUCN to ensuring that no employee was discriminated against on the grounds of colour, national or ethnic origin, sex, marital and parental status, sexual orientation, disability, class, age, political and religious beliefs. It also called for the Union to play a more pro-active role in the career development of its staff.

A staff liaison committee was set up at headquarters to deal with the interests of the staff as a whole and to liaise between staff and management. Staff elect its members for a year at a time. An ombudsman was also appointed to deal with staff grievances, particularly those relating to violations of the EOP, which could not easily be dealt with through other channels. Aside from these actions, the process by which the EOP was to be implemented and monitored was not explicitly planned for and very little progress appears to have been made subsequently.

The 1996 external review noted that some progress had been made on the diversity front. However, the overall north-south ratio of staff at headquarters had only improved marginally. There had been virtually no progress in bringing women into middle and higher level positions at headquarters.

The Triennial programme 1997-1999 commits itself, inter alia, to improving the balance of representation at headquarters of different nationalities and regions, of nationalities from the region within regional offices, and of country nationals at the national office. It commits itself to improving gender balance at all levels at headquarters and non-headquarters stations. It also commits itself to

promoting a motivating and supportive work environment and to the promotion of principles and practices of equal opportunity. These intended goals are essentially reiterations of past review recommendations and of the EOP. However, once again, no plan of implementation is included.

In 1999, some prominent progress is being made with regard to the gender balance in high level headquarters positions. There have been some improvements with regard to the work environment and equal opportunity. The Staff Liaison Committee also appears to have played an active role in raising matters of concern to staff. But an ombudsman is needed in each region, as well as at headquarters.

There has also been some progress in the standardisation of headquarters employment contracts. The rapid growth in IUCN's activities and the drive to regionalisation had resulted in a plethora of different contracts with very different terms and benefits. A legal review was undertaken in 1998 and a policy of standardised staff and consultancy contracts has now been adopted. However, questions still remain about equal pay standards within grades both at headquarters and in the regions. There is evidence that at least one region that does not observe the principle of equal pay for equal work is failing to recruit, or retain, capable female staff who could expect more equitable treatment in other organisations. On the other hand, of the offices visited, Pakistan stood out as one that had taken a very proactive stand on some of these questions in a political and social context which is particularly inhospitable to gender equity. In Vietnam, there was evidence of a very participatory mode of management.

To sum up, progress has been slow in bringing IUCN up to the standard of the more progressive international organisations. By opting to conform to Swiss law on many of its employment conditions,

**9.4**



## **Annex 1. Terms of Reference**

### **INTRODUCTION**

On the basis of the agreements between Sida and IUCN external reviews, commissioned by the Director General, were undertaken of the IUCN Programmes for 1990-1993 and 1994-1996 in October 1993 and April/May 1996 respectively. The reviews were undertaken by two international teams with members provided by the Development Cooperation Agencies of Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States of America (1993) and Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Denmark (1996). The reports of the reviews were presented to the General Assembly in Buenos Aires in January 1995 and the World Conservation Congress in Montreal in October 1996 and have been taken into consideration in the further development of the Union's Programme.

At meetings of IUCN's principal donors in June and December 1998, it was agreed that an external review of the Programme should be undertaken in 1999 in order to contribute to the development of the IUCN Programme for the next triennium 2001-2003. The present Terms of Reference set out the requirements for this review.

### **RELEVANT BACKGROUND MATERIAL TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION BY THE REVIEW TEAM**

The first World Conservation Congress (WCCI) of IUCN approved, in Octov

1987, adopted the following resolution (IUCN, 1987, p. 48): (IUCN, 1987, p. 48)

4. The extent to which IUCN's policy work has had an impact at global and regional level, including the extent to which IUCN has effectively applied programme lessons and experience in key areas of policy.

## **THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW**

In pursuit of these objectives the review team will examine a set of issues and elaborate a set of conclusions and recommendations. These tasks will include to:

### Programme Development and Decentralisation

#### **Programme Development and Management**

Analyse and comment on the adequacy of the present vision, strategic planning and programme development process in IUCN.

Analyse and comment on the adequacy of programme management practices (decision-making, committees, conflict resolution, participation of staff, gender and cultural balance, and communication processes).

Analyse and provide comments on the approach and delivery system now being pursued in its programming and programme implementation process.

Analyse and comment on the present programme structure in view of an emerging holistic programme development process.

Review current changes being introduced in the development and management of IUCN's Programme and comment on their value in addressing the weaknesses identified.

Examine the extent to which IUCN has been able to use general programme support and programme-specific support to improve the implementation of its programme and provide guidance as to how future programme support might be more productively applied within the organisation and the Programme with the aim of supporting IUCN's Mission more effectively.

Analyse and provide comments and recommendations on IUCN's budgeting procedures and in particular, planning, utilisation, monitoring and reporting on general programme and programme restricted funds provided by donors.

Analyse and provide comments and recommendations on IUCN's report on the results of its activities as it is done through the annual Progress and Assessment reports and the semi-annual reports submitted to donors and Council.

### Decentralisation

Examine and comment upon the decentralisation process and in particular its strengths and weaknesses in achieving the Union's Mission. Comment on how these strengths can be enhanced and weaknesses addressed, including the adequacy of effectiveness of IUCN's regional operations and scope.

In particular, comment on the extent to which the decentralisation and regionalization process has strengthened IUCN's capacity to:

- Ø Develop and implement a programme designed to achieve the Mission.

Ø Carry out its programming process with the active involvement of the

Transparency and Credibility

**The ToR** for the Review have been discussed by Management Board, and made available to all who wish to comment on them, including in particular the Programme Committee of Council and the Chairs of the Business, Policy and Membership Committees.

**Methodology and work plan:** The Team should develop and discuss their methodology and work plan with the DG and key senior Secretariat staff, with the Chair of Council's Programme Committee, and with IUCN's principal donors.

The methodology and work plan should outline clear objectives, analytical process and information needs of the review. The work plan should clearly link to the methodology (consultations for what purpose, travel to where, why, what data is required).

A key aspect of transparency is clarity of