

**IUCN – The World Conservation Union**

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**REPORT of**  
**THE EXTERNAL REVIEW**  
**of the IUCN PROGRAMME**  
**1994 – 1996**

**APRIL 1996**

**IUCN**

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### External Review of the IUCN Programme - 1996

I am attaching for your perusal and consideration a copy of the final report of the 1996 External Review Team which looked at various aspects of the 1994-1996 Programme of IUCN - The World Conservation Union in March-April of this year. The team was ably led by Leif E. Christoffersen (Norway) and included Peter Laban (Netherlands), Ramon Perez Gil Salcido (Mexico), Nampaa Nangoun Sanogho (Mali) and Arne Schiatz

(Denmark).

I am immensely grateful to the team for having produced such a useful and thought-provoking report after a short time in the field. They have included some ideas about the scope and focus of future such reviews:

we will certainly take these into account.

The review is the second one led by Leif Christoffersen. Once again he has succeeded in summing up very succinctly the point the Union has reached in its rapid evolution. We are in debt to the perspicacity and



# REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM

FOR IUCN 1994-1996 PROGRAMME

APRIL 1996

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The external review of IUCN's 1994-96 Programme was conducted over a period of three weeks (mainly from March 18 to April 6, 1996) by a team consisting of Leif E. Christoffersen (Norway), Peter Laban (The Netherlands), Ramon Perez Gil Salcido (Mexico), Nampaa N. Sanogho (Mali) and Arne Schiotz (Denmark). Its Terms of Reference was formulated by the Secretariat with inputs from some of the large international development agencies which funded broad programme support to IUCN for its 1994-96 Programme. Attachment 1 presents the full Terms of Reference. Attachment 2 lists summary list.

1.5 Within IUCN these external changes have caused a re-examination of issues regarding its

During the beginning of the 1990s, IUCN has led to an organizational structure, which will

c) Project development and evaluations.

Significant progress has been made in working closer with members and with regional and

country offices in identifying and developing project proposals. Project development procedures

have been improved. However, little progress has so far been evident in regard to setting up a monitoring and evaluation system for IUCN's field activities. In the absence of such a system, the different donors funding IUCN activities have no other options except specifying their own monitoring and evaluation requirements in this regard. The basic acceptance of the need for setting up a IUCN monitoring and evaluation system was strongly endorsed in 1994. Some steps have been taken in recent months and are mentioned in para. 8.5. In our view IUCN can become a more effective knowledge-based institution by giving higher priority to systematic evaluations and deriving its own lessons from field experiences.

d) Membership:

Impressive efforts have been made by the Secretariat to recruit a wider membership in IUCN and to make IUCN more of a member-focused institution. However, the quality of its membership is as important as its quantity. Members include a large variety of institutions which have quite diverse reasons for joining IUCN. Issues related to state membership for governments

being set aside on an annual basis. It is somewhat surprising that IUCN has not been able to improve its finances further in the immediate period following UNCED, when considerable global attention has been devoted to international environmental issues in the media, among the general public, and at political levels. The longer term situation for the funding of headquarters activities seems uncertain. The need for new cost effective solutions must be intensified. The

financial position of IUCN. Specifically, the governance and management costs of the organization and the costs of all headquarters programmes need to be kept under constant

1995 reviews of the South/Southeast Asia Programme and the West Africa Programme. They provided valuable insights into critical issues arising from program and project activities. However, the multiplicity of external reviews seemed somewhat confusing to the external review team. Many of these activities would have been more useful had they been preceded by internal

raising reasons than being part of a thoughtful systematic process of reflective analysis and learning from program and project experiences.

3.7 Recently IUCN has begun to provide self-assessments of each programme category. Each Annual Assessment Report attempts to examine the main achievements during the past year. This initiative is a good one, but needs further improvements. The external review team was provided with a final version of the 1994 Report and an incomplete draft of the 1995 report. The quality of these reports was mixed. On the one hand, it was encouraging that attempts had been made under some program categories to reflect thoughtfully on what had been achieved during the year just completed and on which programmatic lessons could be drawn. On the other hand, some programme assessments were largely descriptive and provided few substantive reflections.

3.8 A more systematic and consistent approach to these annual processes seems needed. For one thing, the timing of the reports are out of step with the current cycle for work programming and budgeting. They are prepared several months after the basic decisions have been made



4.3 The results of these efforts have contributed to a stronger "South" involvement in the

[REDACTED]

IUCN to take sides in such conflicts. As long as IUCN is deeply engaged in these fields

projects carried out under government auspices, it may be very difficult for it to take an impartial stand. This might create difficulties in establishing a national forum which may be perceived as being neutral in the national context.

4.9 In order to establish and maintain credibility and respect as an independent international

considered impartial in a local context, IUCN should not become too deeply involved in the implementation of field projects. It must have the freedom to

recent relatively large increases in membership from developing countries, SSC's extensive membership is getting a better North/South balance.

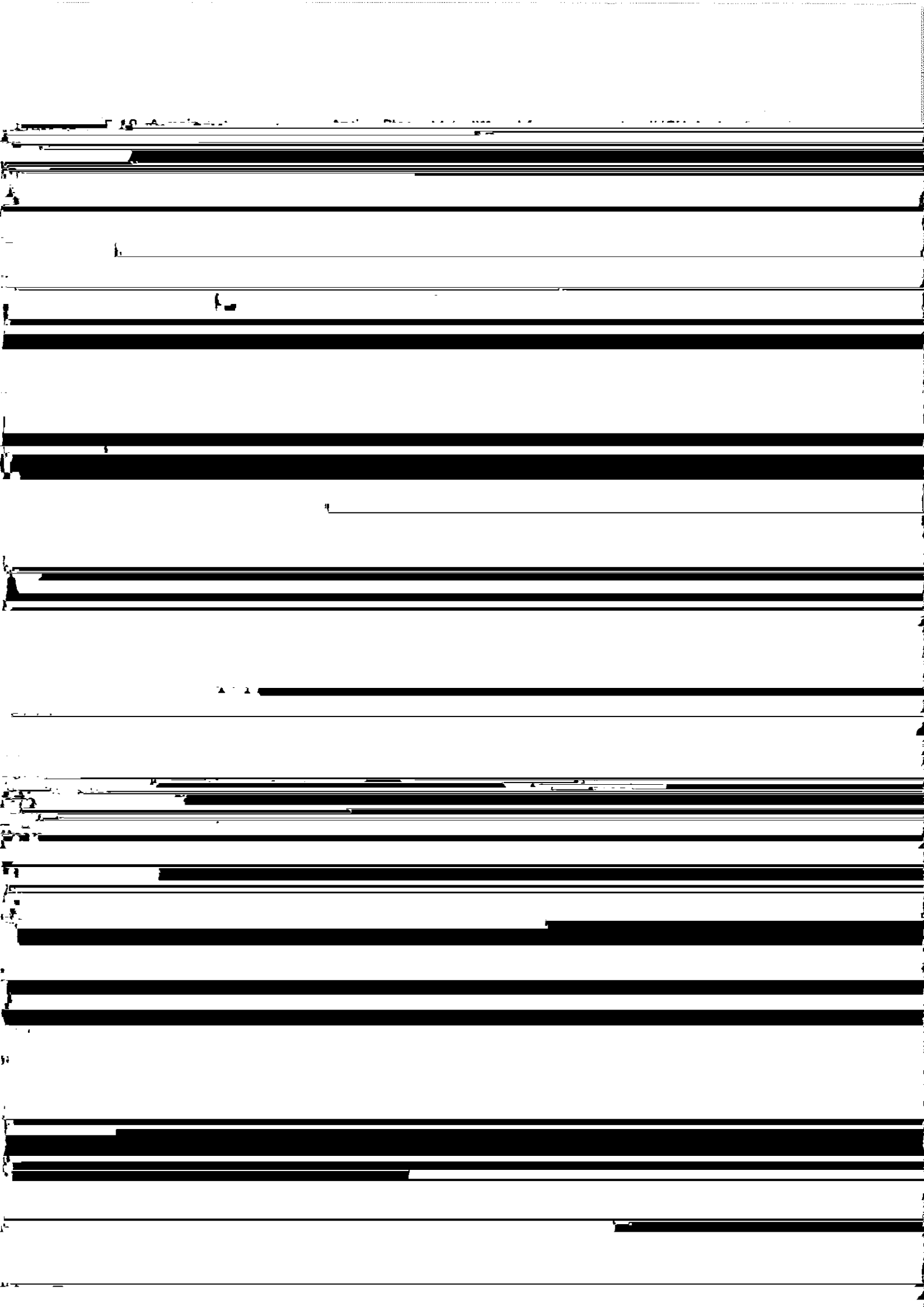
5.4 Its network of members, first and foremost the SSC Specialist Groups, has been active in gathering data. Relations with the World Conservation Monitoring Center (WCMC) in the UK have been strengthened, partly through the newly established Biodiversity Conservation Information System. This is a consortium in which SSC and WCMC join up with several other partners. Its main objective is to become an effective vehicle for gathering and disseminating data.

5.5 Information of this kind is being derived and also put to direct use through various SSC Action Plans. Since 1986 a total of 30 such plans have been published and several more are under preparation. So far all Action Plans have related to animals, but plant species plans are

5.11 The relationship between SSC and the rest of IUCN needs to be given very close scrutiny in the context of discussions of the structure of SSC, the location of its secretariat and of the Species Survival Group, and its links to the Sustainable Use Initiative and the National Biodiversity Groups. A working group to address some of these issues has recently been established by the SSC Chair.

5.12 The issue of having commission secretariats established at or outside IUCN headquarters

advantages in having commission secretariats established outside headquarters. In order to provide better cohesion and interaction at IUCN's global level, and to reduce and reverse trends



programmes of the regional and country offices and also with headquarters.

## **6. REGIONALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION**

### **a) The Regional Programme for West Africa**

#### **6.1 The objectives of the triennium for this Region were:**

- *to reinforce national and local capacity to adapt to changing demands of natural resource management, through National Conservation Strategy (NCS) related activities and the development of partnerships with local and national interest groups;*
- *to assist with creating national and regional networks on the environment, through studies, workshops and the establishment of a regional advisory council;*
- *to develop and implement a strong environmental communication and education programme by continuing to foster WALIA-type projects developing other awareness-raising activities, and increasing the level of interaction with local media;*

Regional IUCN programmes are required at this particular stage in order to create the

necessary interest for and a sufficient degree of acceptance of IUCN in the region. These national councils may become instruments for building up future membership and becoming the "forerunners" for National Committees.

6.5 Membership expectations should be set at realistic levels. Some of the stronger NGO

intersection between field activities and policy work at the national level could be achieved if the



While the consultative structure of national coordinators for programming could be maintained, it will be necessary to redefine their mandates, responsibilities and required qualifications. The

124

emphasized wildlife activities and the Sustainable Use Initiative. The social development activities include specific analysis of key gender issues. The forest conservation activities seemed

The technical, networking and scientific capacities of ORMA are well recognized and generally

strongly supported by its members.

6.28 NGOs have a large share of IUCN's membership in the region but there are few scientific institutions among its members. Scientists involved in commissions seldom interact with NGOs, in part because it is considered prestigious to belong to a commission but perhaps not so much to mix with the activist or advocacy role of the non-scientist NGOs. IUCN's role in bringing

scientific knowledge into the political and decision-making arenas is well addressed by ORMA and members, but stronger efforts would be needed to bring the activities of the commissions more fully into this endeavor.

6.29 There was little evidence of direct involvement of scientists in the

to global policy issues, to provide senior-level technical advice, and to examine, synthesize and derive operational lessons from those project and programme experiences from other regions

which have direct relevance to nature conservation and development in East Africa.

6.34 IUCN's role as a science- and technical-based intermediary in environmental conflict

resolution may come under difficult pressure if IUCN is too heavily involved in implementation

capacities at the center is a necessity for IUCN, if it wants to keep up a high degree of credibility with its different partners. Maintaining a minimum of such technical core staff to provide independent quality control over its programmes seems to be a legitimate argument to justify core funding by IUCN's major financial partners. On the other hand the external review team believes that some additional technical programme staff at headquarters (in addition to the

provided to Regional and Country Offices. This would also enhance accountability of such additional technical staff towards the specific services they are expected to provide to the regional and country programmes.

## **7. THE TECHNICAL PROGRAMMES**

### **a) The Biodiversity Programme**

**7.1** The Biodiversity Programme was designed as a follow up to the Global Biodiversity Strategy

(GBS), with the following main objectives for the triennium:

- *advise members on integrating biodiversity issues into national development processes; participate in international programmes to conserve biodiversity and promote IUCN views at international fora;*

the "users" associated with the Convention, we endorse the view that such services by the

Biodiversity Programme have been very timely and strategically important for the Convention.

7. In assessing the impact of the Programme, it is clear that the Programme has been very

offices, and supported by the commissions, should put IUCN in a very advantageous position in

Biodiversity Convention.

~~h) Review of the Social Policy Programme~~

...not been well developed. An interesting step in the right direction was the recent workshop



*sites of special conservation concern in order to develop understanding of fundamental*

turn them into an important learning opportunity

1. What are the key messages from the report?

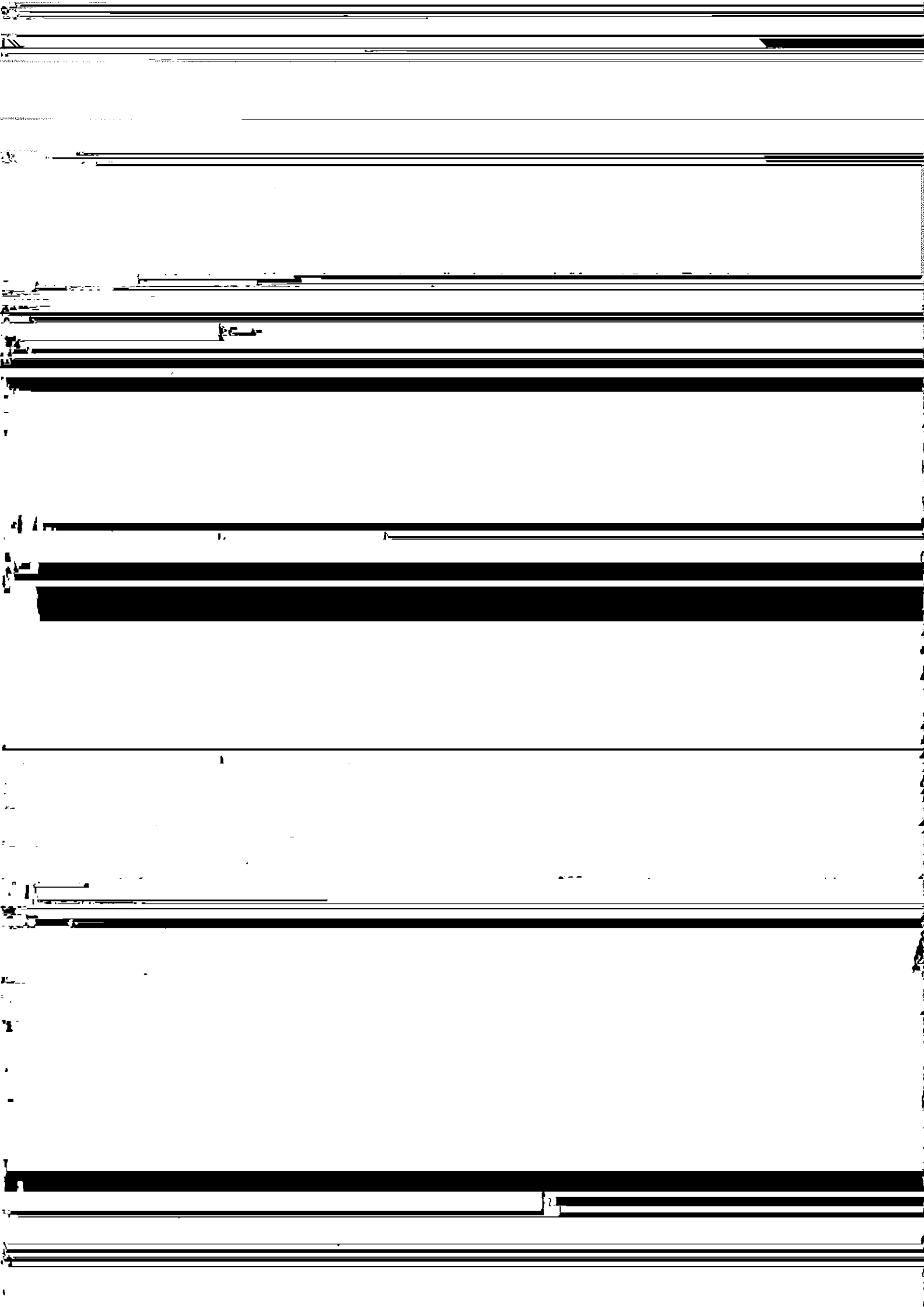
IUCN programmes. Such reflective work should be highly encouraged and rewarded. IUCN

**4. General Comments on the Technical Program**

7.34 With increasing regionalization and decentralization, HICM will need to maintain a strong

professional core at its center. It should be able to work flexibly and dynamically as a senior technical team serving several functions - including providing general guidance and technical support, regional and central program management, and providing a framework for future

communication implies a strong capacity to capitalize the experience and lessons gained through field and other activities. If ICN should indeed be engaged in a constant search to develop and



9.6 The third critical area in IUCN's cost structure concerns the relationship between that part of headquarters cost which is covered by the field offices and that part which is not covered by the field offices.

policy support to regional and country programmes. To the extent that mutual agreements are being reached on what specific senior supports services from headquarters will be provided under each field project, the costs of these services will be added to the field office's budget.

- a continuing insecure financial structure;
- the need for improved cost control systems in work programming and budgeting and also in ~~forward to the governance and to overall management costs:~~

- a clearly articulated fund-raising strategy; and
- an inadequate gender balance among staff at middle- and higher-level positions at Headquarters. On this latter point we have been convinced that the Director-General will intensify his already strong recruitment efforts, and hence we have not included any main ~~recommendation in this regard~~

**i) Programme Focus.**

10.3. Our first main recommendation is to reinforce the view that a special strength of UNOM is

clear, and to consider field activities in countries with active members but without fully functioning regional or country offices. The third step would focus on the work programs of the Commissions and explore opportunities for linkages with the Secretariat programmes. The next step relates to policy work at the headquarters. Having considered the priority signals expressed by the regions, policy work should then be determined from an overall global management point of view.

10.8 In order to carry out these functions effectively, IUCN must retain a strong senior level

corps of technical and policy expertise at headquarters. We would advise against possible

relocation of the staffing capacities necessary to carry out the headquarters functions emphasized in our recommendations, including the senior advisory posts for the technical programmes and the main core of the commission secretariats.

iii) Learning functions:

10.9 The third recommendation concerns the need for IUCN to become more of a learning institution. A main objective for IUCN is to 'influence societies all over the world, to encourage and help them to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature'<sup>4</sup>. In order to meet that objective effectively, IUCN will have invest more in its own capacities to capitalize on lessons learned from



technical, socio-economic, institutional and scientific knowledge, and which impact these

might have on policy guidance and technical advice provided by IUCN at international fora.

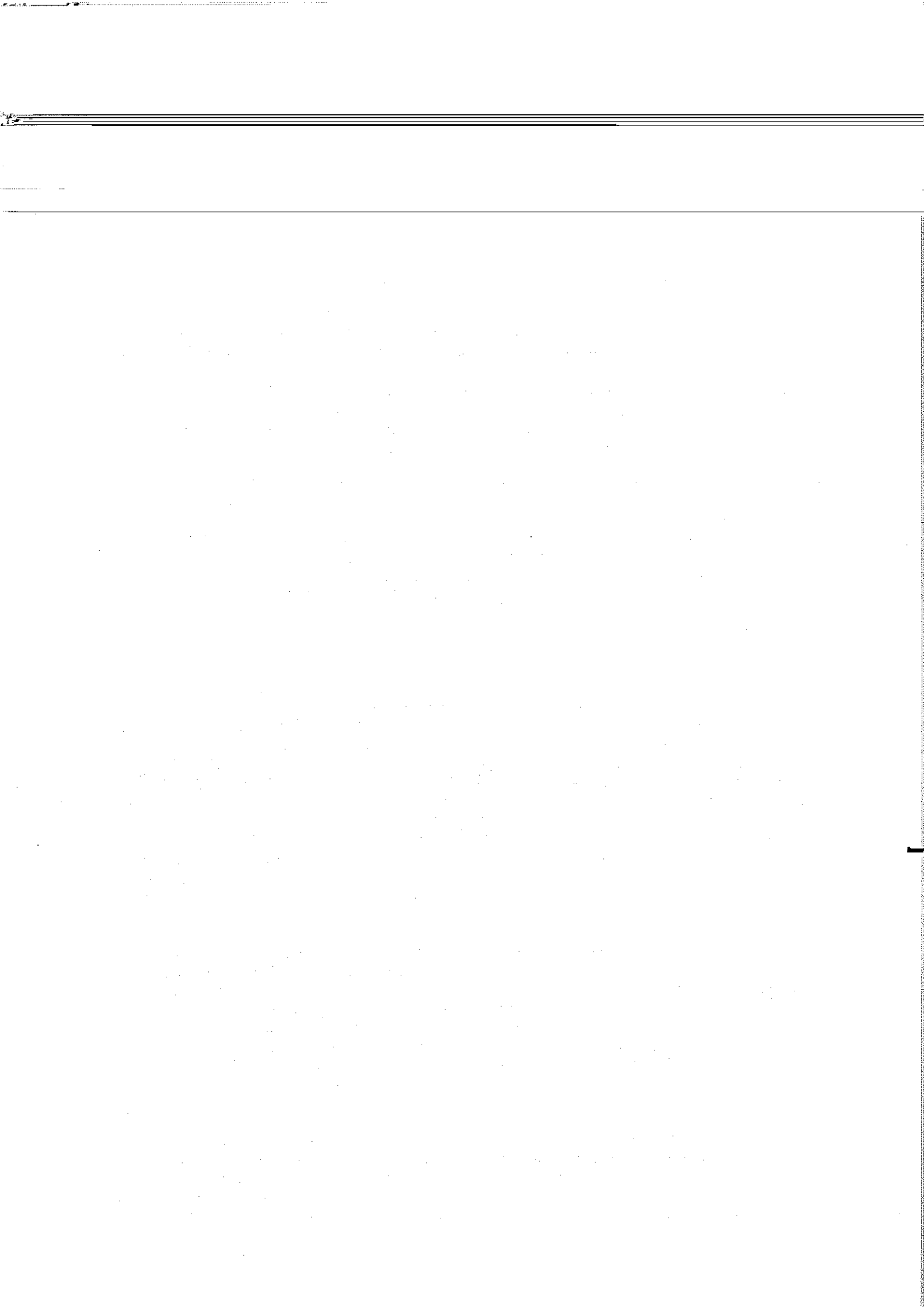
**iv) Operational approaches**

10.12 Several of the Technical Programmes and the policy activities conducted by IUCN have had difficulties in searching for effective operational approaches. Some have been seen to be excessively donor-driven, while some others have had difficulties in being understood and

generated at country and sector levels to develop projects. The following table

carried out through the regional and country offices. Yet, the key overall management, and the program level technical and policy staff capacities should be maintained at headquarters

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ATTACHMENT 1  
TERMS OF REFERENCE

EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE IUCN PROGRAMME AND COMMISSIONS

*INTRODUCTION*

On the basis of the agreement between Sida and IUCN as presented in the letter of intent dated 11 October 1994, the following terms of reference have been agreed:

The review should cover the period from 1990 to 1994, with particular emphasis on the period from 1992 to 1994. The review should also cover the period from 1990 to 1994, with particular emphasis on the period from 1992 to 1994.

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Regarding Resolution 10.1, the CA assumed the State of Florida will...

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provides the underlying principles for the work of the Union and will essentially form part of it

**SPECIFIC TASK TO BE UNDERTAKEN**

In order to provide an answer to the overall objective of the contract, the contractor shall

undertake the following specific tasks and evolve a set of recommendations and

**APPOINTMENT OF THE REVIEW TEAM**

The evaluation team will be appointed by the Director General of IUCN in consultation with interested donor agencies. The team will consist of five members, one will have as a specific

brief to review the commissions. At least two members of the team will be from developing countries. The Team leader will be a person proposed by Sida. All team members must have extensive developing country experience, possess global knowledge of natural resource

## ATTACHMENT 2

### EXTERNAL REVIEW/TEAM MEMBERS/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Leif E. Christoffersen (Norway) was the team leader. With a background in economics he served with the World Bank in various management capacities until 1992, including five years as head of the Environment Division for the Africa Region. In Norway he chairs the Board of GRID-Arendal, an

international foundation associated with UNEP in the field of environmental information, and he heads a programme committee under the Norwegian Development Cooperation Scheme.

Scandinavian Seminar College, a Danish foundation focusing on policy issues related to international education and the environment. He is member of the Natural Resources Policy Consultative Group on Africa at the World Resources Institute in Washington DC. He was the team leader for the external review on IUCN's 1991-93 Programme. He now heads his own consulting firm. Recently he has





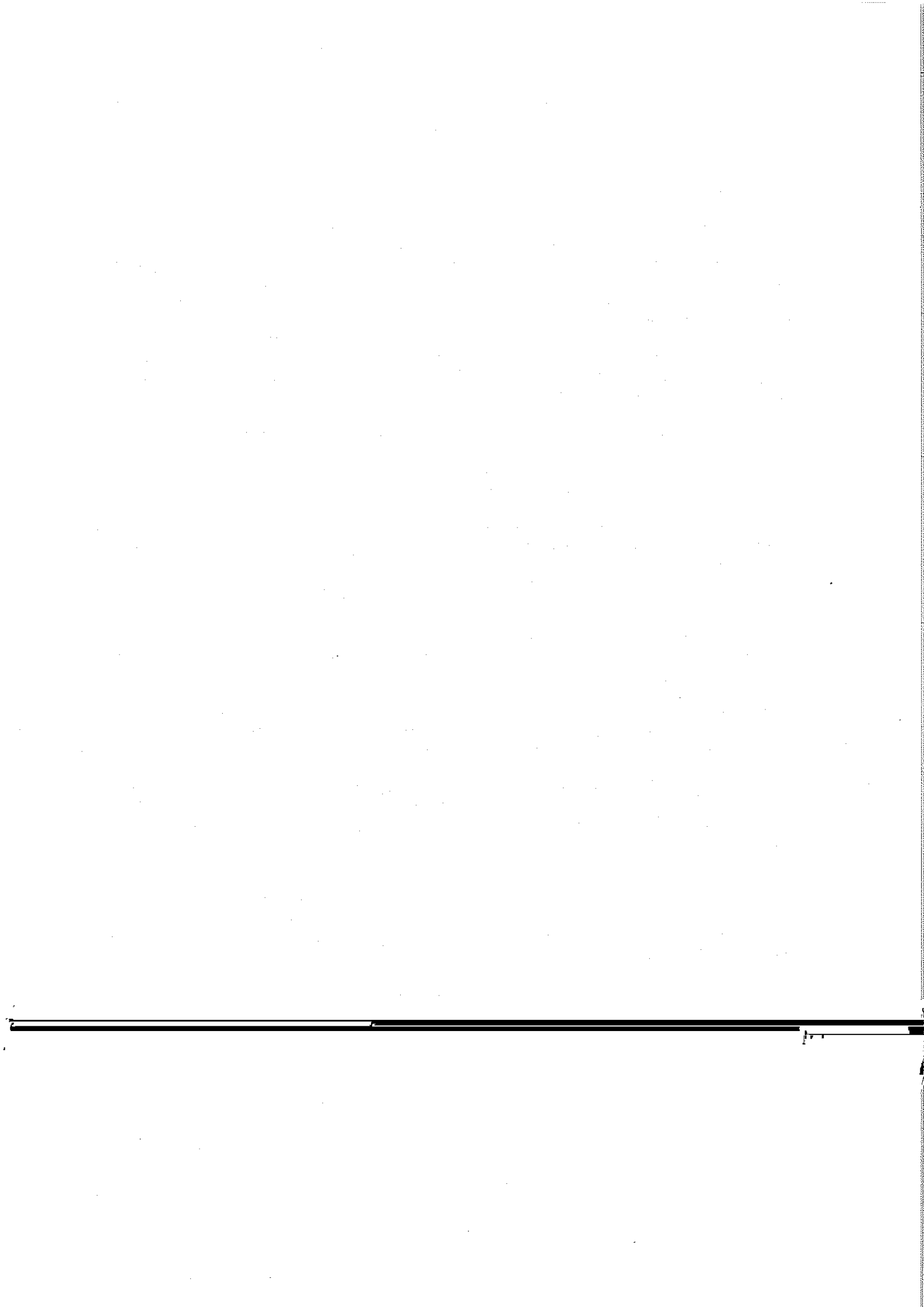
**ATTACHMENT 3**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE EXTERNAL REVIEWS**

1. The importance of external reviews is well recognized by both IUCN and its General Assembly.

The importance of the four external reviews in 1992, 1996, 1998, and 2000

effectiveness and efficiency of such reviews. Each of these external reviews covered IUCN's global



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