



EVALUATION OF THE IUCN WORLD HERITAGE PROGRAMME

December 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IUCN World Heritage Programme coordinates IUCN's work on the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, a major global nature conservation instrument. In its advisory role to the Convention, the IUCN World Heritage Programme evaluates sites nominated for World Heritage Status, monitors the state of conservation of existing sites, implements capacity building initiatives, and provides technical advice to the World Heritage Committee. In addition the Programme carries out projects aimed at maximizing the potential of the Convention for nature conservation.

Purpose, objectives and scope

The evaluation of the IUCN World Heritage Programme took place at the request of the Director of the IUCN World Heritage Programme, and was carried out by the IUCN's independent Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. The overall purpose of the evaluation was the help inform future planning and assess programme performance since 2008. The specific objectives of the evaluation were to assess the relevance, performance, organizational capacity and impact (if possible and where relevant and appropriate) of the programme, culminating in recommendations for enhancing programme performance.

Methodology, data analysis and reporting

This report presents the results of an evaluative inquiry mostly conducted between January and August 2013. The evaluation was composed of in-depth structured interviews, focus groups, a survey, extensive document analysis and observation. A total of 68 stakeholders were interviewed and a further 70 completed an online survey.

Information sources were triangulated where possible to ensure maximum validity and to minimise the risk of spurious correlations. The findings are based on descriptive quantitative analysis, comparative qualitative analysis and content analysis of relevant documents. This served to better understand the programme and its evolving context. A draft Theory of Change

was developed to better understand the Programme's underlying logic and situate its results within broader conservation goals.

Main findings

Overall, the IUCN World Heritage Programme is well-functioning, well-managed and well-led.

the Convention has become increasingly political and this is reflected in the overall decreasing level of acceptance of IUCN recommendations. However, data on Committee decision making over time is not clear cut.

The work of the IUCN World Heritage Programme is perceived to be highly **relevant** to the World Heritage Convention and relevant to the IUCN Programme and Mission. There is scope for World Heritage to become more relevant to biodiversity conservation.

The issue of economic development and World Heritage sites was raised repeatedly by stakeholders throughout the evaluation, and in particular in answer to questions on the relevance of the IUCN World Heritage Programme to the Convention, to the IUCN Programme and Mission, and to biodiversity conservation. Many stakeholders interviewed perceive World Heritage sites as impeding economic development to one degree or another, thereby reducing their relevance to State Parties. This also appears to negatively affect the perceived relevance of the World Heritage Convention and therefore, indirectly, the IUCN World Heritage Programme.

List of recommendations

Relevance

1. IUCN should produce an explanatory document to contextualize the role of World Heritage in its conservation toolkit, demonstrate its role in biodiversity conservation (business case) and manage expectations.
2. The IUCN World Heritage Programme should make use of IUCN knowledge products that allow for prioritization and assessment, such as Key Biodiversity Areas, the proposed Green List of Protected Areas, to increase relevance to biodiversity conservation and, by implication, IUCN's mission.
3. The IUCN World Heritage Programme should define its theory of change or conservation logic relating World Heritage with biodiversity conservation and test the results.
4. The IUCN World Heritage Programme should explore, with relevant stakeholders, the reasons behind the perception that it has a stance against economic development in and around World Heritage sites. This could include clarification and communication of relevant sections of the Programme's World Heritage Convention mandate
5. IUCN needs to clearly set out its formal position on the relationship between World Heritage and sustainable economic development approaches such as No Net Loss and Net Positive Impact, used by other IUCN units and which aim to prevent biodiversity

6. The IUCN World Heritage Programme should facilitate a dialogue with State Parties on how to approach economic development, including in and around natural and mixed World Heritage sites with a view to increasing/maintaining the relevance of both the

Turn guidelines and standards into training materials
Offer regionally balanced training opportunities

19. IUCN senior management should position the IUCN World Heritage Programme as a test case for new data sets, maps and tools to measure impact on biodiversity and local communities and indigenous peoples. The testing should

the Species Survival Commission (recognizing that work has already started) on the use of, and contribution to, the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the Key Biodiversity Areas standard
the Commission on Ecosystem Management on the Red List of Ecosystems
the Commission on Economic, Environmental and Social Policy on the Natural Resource Governance Framework and more generally on rights-based approaches and indigenous peoples issues.

27. The Programme should continue its close collaboration with the Global Protected Areas Programme particularly, to ensure congruence between State of Conservation monitoring and the proposed Green List of protected areas, species and ecosystems and associated standards.
28. IUCN senior management should recommend ways of improving IUCN programme integration more generally, including between thematic programmes, and between global and regional levels.
29. The IUCN World Heritage Programme should aim to develop medium to long term reciprocal collaborations with one or two IUCN technical programmes to demonstrate the use of management or restoration tools within World Heritage sites.