

IUCN Strategic Review:

**Regional Office for South America
(SUR)**

Final Report

January 2001

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background – Origin of the Review

The strategic review of the IUCN office for South America (SUR) originated from the annual budget hearings concerning the allocation of general programme funding, held in November, 2000. The budget task team noted in the submission presented by SUR that a significantly high percentage of staff time was factored against projects not yet developed or submitted to a potential donor, either internal or external. A third observation by the budget and task team was the fact that for several years SUR has drawn significantly from General Programme funds. In addition to this observation, a number of major projects in SUR had closed or would be closing in the near future. Taken together, it was also noted that these factors presented a high level of financial risk for the programme in South America as well as for IUCN as a whole. Drawing heavily on this information the acting Director General, based on the recommendation of the Senior Management Team of IUCN, requested a strategic review of the IUCN operation in South America in December 2000.

It should also be noted that this decision was not taken in isolation. Fully 4 component programmes were selected for strategic reviews, based on similar analysis of financial data during the budget hearings of November 2000. However, strategic reviews of this nature form an integral component of IUCN's overall evaluation policy. It is the intention of Senior Management that periodic reviews of this nature will soon become a regular occurrence within the activities of all IUCN component programmes.

1.2 Mandate – Purpose of the Strategic Review

The focus of this review is strategic in an operational sense, rather than programmatic. As such, it is not the intent of this review to analyse in detail the conservation success or impact of the IUCN programme in South America. Rather, this review seeks to answer strategic questions, which are more operational in nature. These questions may refer to issues of mandate, relevance, effectiveness/efficiency, and financial viability of the office. Within this context, the following objectives for this review were defined:

- Analysis of the strategic mandate of the programme – particularly in the context of the IUCN membership in the SUR Region. (This analysis will be conducted in the context of the current IUCN Quadrennial Plan and Business Plan recently approved by Council. It will take note of the strategic opportunities and benefits of an IUCN presence in South America, as well as its associated costs.);
- Assessment of the financial viability and financial risk of the programme;
- Overview of the effectiveness and efficiency of SUR as an organisational unit within IUCN.

In essence, the above would normally constitute the core objectives of any strategic review conducted within IUCN. In addition to these objectives, however, two additional issues of specific interest to the SUR programme were also taken into account:

- Analysis of the approach and progress in establishing an IUCN presence in Brazil;
- Assessment of the degree of interaction currently existing between SUR and other component programmes within the Union.

The full terms of reference for this review may be found in Annex 6 of this report.

1.3 Methods and Approach

The review of the IUCN SUR office was a joint exercise carried out by Enrique Lahmann, Regional Director of IUCN ORMA (team leader), Tom Hammond, Programme, Policy and Evaluation Team – IUCN HQ, and Natalia Ortiz, an independent consultant based in the region with past monitoring and evaluation experience with IUCN SUR. Initial preparations for the review took place during the week of January 15, 2001. Consultations with IUCN SUR staff and stakeholders of the IUCN programme based in Ecuador, including participation of the entire review team, took place in Quito during the week of January 22. Additional consultations with stakeholders took place in Cali and Bogota, Colombia, on January 27 - 30. Initial analysis of results took place during the first week of February, which included consultations with key members of the IUCN Council during their meeting in Gland at this time. The draft final report was prepared during the third week of February.

The collection of data during this review was based on two distinct sources of information: review of background documentation and consultation with stakeholders. A list of the individuals consulted during the course of this review may be found in Annex 1 of this report. In addition, a list of the documents reviewed and consulted during this study may be found in Annex 4. Individuals consulted during this exercise were considered to be in one of five discrete stakeholder groups:

- Ø IUCN SUR staff;
- Ø Member representatives (including country chairs, Commission members, and Councillors);
- Ø Directors and senior staff of IUCN global thematic programmes based in Gland;
- Ø Representatives of the donor community;
- Ø Former staff of IUCN SUR.

Consultation with stakeholders was accomplished via four distinct methods:

- Ø Face to face interviews;
- Ø Focus group sessions;
- Ø Telephone interviews;
- Ø Questionnaires sent to IUCN member representatives electronically.

In all, 34 face to face interviews were conducted, 8 telephone interviews, 8 responses to the IUCN member questionnaire were received as well as 13 responses to the IUCN staff questionnaire. A copy of the interview guide, which was also used as the basis for electronic questionnaires, may be found in Annex 7 of this report.

An in-depth analysis was conducted for all of the data collected through the above processes. This analysis was based on the specific objectives of the review, and was applied for each of the major stakeholder groups noted above. The analysis matrix used during this process may be found in Annex 3. The intent of this analysis was essentially two fold – to determine the overall perspective for each stakeholder group with respect to each of the specific objectives of the exercise as well as to identify in a similar fashion a consensus view for the way forward in each of these areas.

2. Factors Related to the Performance of the SUR Office

2.1 Strategy and Workplans

The IUCN Office for South America has a well-developed strategic plan for the quadrennium, prepared in late 1999. A follow-up Strategic Review was prepared in late 2000, up-dating and revising the original plan. This review incorporated issues arising from the Harmonisation process, member views, and the Amman Congress. A copy of this document is found in Annex 5 of this report.

Within this context, IUCN SUR has developed an annual workplan for 2001 which fits specifically within IUCN's current results based planning system. Although this was not a specific objective of the strategic review, the Review Team did not detect any deficiencies in this regard. Indeed, it was felt that IUCN SUR has both a clear and well-developed strategic plan and an annual workplan that is fully integrated within the overall planning and monitoring system.

2.2 Programme and Projects

The IUCN SUR Programme, when compared to other IUCN regional offices, does not have an extensive portfolio of projects and other activities under implementation. As such, this significant potential source of revenue for both programme development and the building of core competencies, as well as for the generation of funds to sustain the office locally, are currently lacking. This fact has significant implications with respect to whether IUCN is capable of achieving its mandate in South America. It also has implications with respect to whether the membership recognises any particular "value added" from SUR's relatively low level of project/programme delivery.

The IUCN SUR Programme does, however, have a well developed list of project concepts ("A" list) which reflect both the strategic issues described in the documents noted above as well as the concerns of members in the implementation of projects by IUCN in the region. Irrespective of this fact, a significant issue facing the SUR Office in the short term will be the internal technical capacity necessary to develop these concepts into full-fledged project proposals submitted to funding agencies. It is questionable whether, in the short term at least, the SUR Office will be able to fully develop project initiatives in sectors for which there is currently no installed capacity (wetlands, coastal and marine, environmental law, etc.). An alternative to developing project initiatives in house, which is perhaps preferable in the SUR context, is mandating this responsibility to national committees or ad hoc groups of members. This would require financial support, in addition to technical support, which currently does not exist in the Region.

2.3 Engagement in Programme Delivery with the Union

Programme development and delivery, as noted above, has been a problem in general in IUCN SUR over the past 3 to 4 years. While project initiatives have been developed and initiated over this time period a number of these have resulted in a high degree of criticism from members. Those projects singled out, such as the IDB sponsored project to develop a management plan for the Galapagos Marine Reserve, were viewed this as national-level project initiatives placing IUCN in direct competition with members for funding.

Perhaps symptomatic of the above, there has been a general lack of engagement or declining engagement over this time period between SUR and component programmes (i.e. Global

Thematic Programmes) in other parts of the Secretariat. Directors and senior staff of Global Thematic Programmes in the Secretariat who were interviewed during the data collection phase of this review noted that past investments made in support of thematic programme initiatives in South America did not prove successful from a financial point of view in developing new projects and other activities (although most acknowledged that from a technical perspective the work carried out in these sectors was of high quality).

A number of factors were identified as contributing to the situation of poor return on investment noted above. Clearly the membership in the region, as noted elsewhere in this report, were adamant that IUCN not become a competitor for traditional sources of bilateral donor funding. In addition, former senior level technical staff responsible for programme sectors did not appear to clearly understand the expectations from headquarters in this regard. Finally, many respondents in the review noted that technical support and guidance from headquarters to programme activities in many thematic areas has been quite weak. This issue is discussed further in Section 4.3, "Support from Headquarters".

2.4 Management and Operations

With respect to office management, administration and general operations, the SUR office functions very well. Financial management has been handled with a very high level of professionalism in the 9 years the office has been open, verified by both Finance and Audit in headquarters. Services, such as information management, the web site, and communications with members also appear to be carried out with a high degree of efficiency and effectiveness. The SUR web site, which contains a variety of member and staff services available permanently on line, represents an example to the rest of the Union with respect to how these services may be developed in future in other regional offices.

Issues related to management, administration or general operations were generally not raised or identified by stakeholders during the interview/data collection process. The exception to this was the question of staffing in the office, both the level of current staffing and the balance of staffing between senior technical and administrative support staff, the subject of a specific discussion below.

2.5 Membership

There are currently a total of 86 IUCN members in South America, representing almost 10% of world wide membership. Non-government organisations make up the largest contingent, with 75 organisations represented throughout the continent. The balance is made up of 6 governmental organizations, 3 states, and 2 affiliated organizations.

The majority of the NGO members are well-developed organisations working at national level, many with a diversified portfolio of projects and other activities. Many of these members are well integrated into national-level policy making on environmental issues.

In terms of Commission membership, a total of 821 experts are found in the region listed amongst the 6 Commissions. Within this context, a number of these individuals have r T

2.6 Service to Members

The issue of service to member may be divided into two distinct aspects: 1. Services the SUR office is currently capable of delivering; 2. Services that the membership would like to see coming from the SUR office. With respect to the first point, the view of stakeholders was overall very positive. The staff at IUCN SUR has clearly worked hard in coordinating information flow to members, the distribution of publications, and stakeholder consultations, particularly over the past 18 months. The development and continuous updating of the SUR web site, noted above, has also been recognised as a significant service to members. The web site provides regular updates of current events, on line publications, links, a mechanism that allows members to develop their own web site housed on the IUCN server, and a variety of other services.

With respect to the second point, it is clear that there are specific services of a technical/programmatic nature, which the membership and other stakeholders in South America wish to see, and expect, from the IUCN SUR office. These issues (technical expertise in key sectors; leader in bi/multinational undertakings; regional policy development, information clearing house; regional facilitation role) will be detailed under Section 3.4 relating to Mandate. While the Mandate of IUCN SUR may be clear amongst (particularly) the membership and other stakeholders, the delivery on this mandate is currently lacking. The impact this has on perceptions amongst stakeholders of the relevance of the IUCN programme in South America is correspondingly significant. Given that technical and programmatic issues are paramount in the minds of most members and other stakeholders, the overall perception of respondents in this study is that SUR is currently not delivering an adequate service to members. This perception is reinforced by the knowledge of recent past history in SUR, when senior level technical capacity existed in a number of sectors.

The above technical and programmatic issue certainly has implications with respect to current staffing with the IUCN SUR office. This point is discussed further below under Staffing.

2.7 Relations with Members

The past history of relations between the Regional Office and the IUCN Membership in South America has been fraught with controversy. IUCN Members in the region are, generally, quite sophisticated and have significant capacity for the development and implementation of conservation projects. As such, tensions have existed with respect to the degree to which IUCN SUR may engage in project activities itself.

These issues came to a head approximately two years ago when IUCN SUR engaged in a number of activities that were viewed by many members as project activities in direct competition with themselves. A case in point was a consultancy with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) aimed at developing a marine conservation strategy for the Galapagos Islands, initiated in early 1999.

Of late, relations with members has improved markedly. This is due largely to the last two Regional Committee meetings, the "Cochabamba" workshop of 13-15 October, 1999, as well as the meeting held in Paraguay held on July 20-21, 2000. A survey of member needs and perspectives was also conducted in late 1998 in preparation for the development of the 2000 – 2005 Strategic Plan. These actions have greatly clarified IUCN's mandate in the region and its relationship with the membership in achieving this mandate. The specifics of this mandate are discussed in Section 3.1 below.

3. Performance of the IUCN Office for South America in Key Areas

3.1 Relevance

The issue of relevance, in the context of this review, may be divided into two distinct themes defined by the following questions: First of all is it relevant for IUCN, given the organisation's mission and constituency, to be present in South America? Secondly, is the work of IUCN in South America relevant to the membership and other stakeholders present in the region? The issue of relevance, of course, particularly in the context of the latter issue, links very closely with mandate.

With respect to the first issue, at no time during the course of data collection and speaking with stakeholders was there any indication that IUCN's presence in South America was immaterial or irrelevant. On the contrary, there was strong consensus from all stakeholder groups that IUCN has a very significant and highly necessary role to play in the region, and that a well-established and active IUCN presence in South America would be highly beneficial.

- Act as a leader in the region into the research, development, and diffusion of approaches, strategies, and other tools necessary for the effective conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the region;
- Promote the generation, sharing and use of conservation expertise at a regional level, through thematic or geographically based member and stakeholder networks;
- Facilitate and promote the implementation and/or adoption of global and regional conservation agreements (or policies) and support regional level policy development, capacity building and implementation in this regard;
- Promote agreements between public sector agencies, non-government organizations, and the private sector towards the adoption of innovative strategies for sustainable development.

The value added of IUCN in South America, due to its unique structure and membership, is clearly its ability to operate at a regional level on environmental issues – where governmental agencies and national level NGOs cannot. Given the cross-boundary nature of most environmental issues on the continent, IUCN is well placed to act in a co-ordinating, capacity building, information sharing, as well as in a programme development and delivery capacity at this level. The membership, in addition, would be well disposed to work with IUCN in this manner. Clearly, this approach poses significant hurdles for IUCN with respect to programme development and funding, as it is traditionally difficult to obtain funding for regional level activities in South America. While this concern must be monitored closely, it is the opinion of the Review Team, however, that in partnership with members in the region these hurdles are not insurmountable.

4. Issues Emerging from the Analysis

A number of specific issues, both expected and unexpected, arose during the course of this review, which are discussed below. One significant issue, touched on above, which is self-evident to many but at times overlooked in strategic terms within IUCN, is the question of biodiversity. South America is certainly one of the most biologically diverse continents on the planet. With respect to aggregate levels of species diversity amongst vertebrates and birds, South America contains 6 of the top 12 countries in the world. Five of the top 12 countries in the world in terms of amphibian diversity are also found in South America, as are 4 of the top countries in terms of superior plant species.

In economic terms, South America evolved rapidly, albeit not particularly smoothly, in the latter half of the last century and is currently a region which contains a number of significant “emerging economies”. Brazil, for instance, is the 7th largest economy in the world in terms of overall production. Chile and Argentina, despite current problems, are economically quite stable and in general have a very high standard of living.

This pace of economic development, in a region with a poor track record in environmental governance issues, has come at a high cost. Rates of land degradation, ecosystem fragmentation, biodiversity loss, and contamination are among the highest in the world. The gap between rich and poor is wide and becoming increasingly wider. In light of these issues, and given IUCN’s mission with respect to biodiversity conservation and human development, it is difficult to contemplate a reasonable scenario for the future wherein IUCN is not present in South America.

4.1 Regional Director

A number of scenarios for the future of the IUCN SUR office have been outlined in the following section of this report. What is common to all of these scenarios, however, is the need to have the Regional Director for SUR based in the same location as the Regional Office. This situation would create a more effective management structure and consolidate the current level of technical capacity for IUCN in the region. It is strongly recommended by the Review Team, therefore, that this transfer be completed without delay.

An issue, which should also be noted here is the fact that the Regional Director’s responsibilities for Brazil are stipulated in this person’s contract of employment. No mention, however, of the Regional Director’s specific responsibilities with respect to Brazil may be found in the terms of reference for this position. While not central to this review, it is the recommendation of the Review Team that a similar situation of significant divergence between responsibilities laid out in an employment contract for a senior position and those of the terms of reference for the same position not be repeated in future.

4.2 Geographic Coverage and Location of the SUR Office

South America is roughly the size of sub-Saharan Africa, an area of the world where IUCN maintains 4 regional offices and a series of 10 national offices. South and Southeast Asia are also served by one regional office and a series of 6 national offices. Geographically speaking, running a regional programme for South America from Quito is similar to running a regional programme for North America (Mexico, USA, and Canada) solely from Miami, or a regional

programme for sub-Saharan Africa solely from Cape Town. Feasible, perhaps, in both instances, but not necessarily effective from a logistical or “representativeness” point of view.

Despite this constraint, it was acknowledged by most stakeholders that Quito is still a reasonable location for a regional office with responsibility for all of South America. The office is well established and, from an administrative point of view, functioning very efficiently. The cost of living in Ecuador is moderate compared to some its neighbours. Ecologically speaking, most of the main ecosystems of particular interest to IUCN are found in or near the Andean region. Telephone and Internet communications are reasonable, however Quito is not as well served by international airline connections as compared to other capital cities in South America.

Although Quito is a good choice for a regional office for South America, the difficult logistical constraints this entails remain. It is difficult and time consuming to travel from Quito to Montevideo or Buenos Aires, and the cost of these trips is generally higher than an airline ticket to Europe. Given these constraints, it is extremely difficult to service the needs of the well-developed membership in the region and address key environmental issues in an effective manner. The low level of senior technical staff currently in the SUR office compounds this problem.

What has become exceedingly clear during the course of this review is, over the medium to long term, the need for IUCN sub-regional offices in South America. South America is far too large and diverse to have a regional programme effectively developed and implemented via one regional office. In order to address this issue, at least two potential country or sub-regional offices (or focal points) should be considered, particularly Brazil as well as the “Southern Cone” countries.

4.3 Support from IUCN Headquarters

In terms of support from Headquarters, two areas of concern were noted. Specifically, these are support in the development of regional thematic programmes in the region as well as introduction and training on IUCN systems, methods, and approaches to programme development. In terms of the latter issue, this is discussed more fully under section 6.1 below.

With respect to the development of thematic programmes in the region, the Review Team noted that current levels of support to SUR from headquarters are low with respect to other regional programmes. At present, only the Global Forest Programme is providing funding for the ongoing development of a regional forest initiative. It is also perhaps worthwhile to point out that in the past 18 months there have only been two visits from IUCN Headquarters to the regional office in Quito.

In the past, the Water and Wetlands Programme, Species, Protected Areas, Biodiversity, Monitoring and Evaluation and other programmes (including Forests) provided support to SUR in order to build professional technical capacity on staff and develop a programme of work in the region in these areas. Water and wetlands was also indicated by many IUCN members as an obvious niche area for IUCN in South America, given the importance of this sector in South America, IUCN’s expertise in this area, as well as the fact that no other international conservation organisation currently has an integrated programme of work in wetlands on the continent.

This situation is unfortunate on a number of levels, some of which have already been identified in Section 2.3 above. In particular, initial investment from Headquarters in the first years of IUCN’s presence in the region came at a time when it was not at all clear, with respect to the relationship

with members in South America, how IUCN could develop a programme of work there. Early

exploring avenues of cooperation with bi-lateral donors (and private foundations) in bi-national or regional level undertakings, in partnership with members.

4.6 The Southern Cone Sub-Region

The Southern Cone sub-region, comprising Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, is an area under-developed in programmatic terms. Conversely, however, it is an area with a well-developed and active membership, particularly in Argentina. A number of important constraints to developing a programme in this sub-region currently exist. Air travel links between Ecuador and the Southern Cone countries are generally not efficient. This logistical issue was also noted as one of the constraints in undertaking the strategic review. Moreover, traditional sources of donor funding are essentially unavailable in these countries due to their degree of economic development.

A major difficulty, of course, in improving this situation will be start-up funding. In the short term, IUCN likely does not have the resources to establish a Secretariat focal point in the sub-region, an undertaking which would likely require a budget of approximately USD100,000 annually. In the medium term, however, it is difficult to conceive of a comprehensive and coherent IUCN programme in South America, which does not effectively include the Southern Cone. The Union may wish to consider non-traditional options such as "sub-contracting" representational and focal point responsibilities to a local member or national committee, in order to reduce costs and explore new approaches to working in this sub-region. It is important in consolidating IUCN's presence in South America, however, that this sub-region not be marginalised in future strategic planning and programme development exercises.

4.7 The Guyana Sub-Region

The countries of the Guyana sub-region, comprising Guyana, Suriname and French Guyana, as opposed to the Southern Cone countries, is a forgotten sub-region of South America within IUCN. In fact, it became increasingly clear when discussing strategic programme issues with many of IUCN's members, IUCN staff, and other stakeholders that, despite shared geography, the countries of the Guyana sub-region are not actually considered parties of IUCN's strategic exercises.

5. Future Directions: Choices for the Way Forward

The following section describes the possible scenarios for the future of SUR presented to the Review Team by stakeholders in the process or which became self-evident during this exercise. These scenarios have not been ranked formally here, although the view of the Review Team concerning the viability of each is provided. A one-page summary table of all of the options described in detail here is provided in Annex 2. This table also provides an estimate of the financial impact the Union should expect from each of these. As noted earlier in this document in Section 4.1, all of the options described here (with the exception of closing the SUR Office altogether) take for granted the fact that the Regional Director should be based directly out of the Regional Office.

5.1 Business as Usual

Clearly, one possible option for IUCN's future in South America would be to maintain current staffing levels and programme activities as they are. Provided that the 2 senior technical positions currently vacant are not filled, it would be feasible under this scenario for the Regional Office to operate within the limits of its current confirmed income and General Programme allocation for the year. The regional office for IUCN would be maintained and the financial risk to the Secretariat would be greatly reduced or eliminated.

The "Business as Usual" approach, however, presents a variety of distinct disadvantages. Although the mandate and way forward for IUCN in South America has been clarified amongst the membership, the Regional Office currently has very little technical capacity to act on this mandate. The membership is acutely aware of this situation, as it has existed for some time. Most members interviewed are very interested in collaborating with IUCN based on the mandate as defined, within the context of the current regional strategic plan. Concomitantly, they question the value added of the IUCN presence in the region based on current levels of technical capacity in the office. In the opinion of the Review Team, this option would exacerbate the current situation of membership dissatisfaction with IUCN's activities and role in the region and likely result in the "natural death" of the office within two to three years.

5.2 Closure of the Regional Office for South America

The impact of closing the IUCN Regional Office in South America altogether was also considered by the Review Team. This option would have the distinct advantage of completely eliminating the current projected deficit in this programme and significantly reducing the overall financial risk for the Secretariat this year. Funds earmarked for SUR could be re-directed to other component programmes where there may be a greater likelihood of these resources generating a wider variety of project or programme spin-offs. This is, however, the only foreseeable benefit this option presents.

Closure of the office would present a number of distinct disadvantages. The SUR programme now has a clear strategic plan and, more importantly, a clear mandate, the latter developed with significant input and support from members in the region. The way forward in this regard is clear. Moreover important funding, new membership, and membership renewal possibilities exist on the continent. Finally, IUCN would face a situation where it would not be present on a continent of extremely high biodiversity and where threats to this biodiversity were equally as high.

Should this option be pursued, any new funding possibilities present in the region would effectively be lost, and membership would likely plummet. Provided the financial status of the Union as a whole does not dictate otherwise, it is the opinion of the Review Team that this does not represent a viable option for the future of the Regional Office for South America,

5.3 Closing of Quito Office – Opening of a Small Regional Office in Brazil

At present the level of scepticism amongst members, particularly in the Andean and Southern Cone regions, that IUCN can re-establish a meaningful programme in South America is relatively high. In Brazil, however, recent additions to membership and the resurrection of the National Committee suggests that a positive basis for developing a programme may exist here. This situation, therefore, presents a possible scenario that would entail closing the current Regional Office in Quito, which has been performing relatively poorly from a programmatic perspective, and opening a small regional office in Brazil.

This option would certainly allow for a fresh start for IUCN in the region, and could be managed within existing budget constraints. Moreover, this option would also further improve IUCN's presence in Brazil, building on the successful work in this regard carried out over the past 18 months there.

The potential constraints to operationalising this scenario, however, are significant. Foremost among these is the very strong likelihood of further disenfranchising a wide body of membership based in the Andean and Southern Cone countries who are already dissatisfied with IUCN's work of late. In addition, basing the regional office in Brazil may further exacerbate, within the context of IUCN's work at least, problems associated with the fact that Brazil plays a hugely dominate role politically and economically on the continent. It was the opinion of the Review Team that, while the ability to balance the Regional Office budget this year within this option may be appealing, the adva

A number of other disadvantages with this option are also apparent. Most significant amongst these is the issue that the low level of technical capacity this option entails virtually ensures that the Regional Office for South America will require a very high degree of unrestricted funding in future in order to cover the bulk of its operating costs. Similar to Scenario 5.3 above, the Review Team is of the opinion that this option should only be considered in the event that financial issues are of an overwhelming concern.

5.5 Reduce Quito Office – Open Brazil National Office and Sub-Regional Office for

also be possible to achieve greater economies of scale by merging the administrative support and service functions carried out by both IUCN offices in San José and Quito.

While this may appear, at least initially, as a potentially viable way forward, the complexities inherent in merging two regional offices are such that many issues remain unaddressed and were outside of the scope of this review to explore. It may indeed be possible to achieve certain economies of scale, however other costs (such as travel) would likely go up. It would also be necessary for sub-offices to be established, as the new Latin American region would be far too large for one office to handle - perhaps further increasing costs depending on the approach taken. The question of where to locate the regional office under this scenario also has the potential of becoming a contentious issue. Given these and a variety of other complexities regarding this approach, it was not possible for the Review Team to come to any formal conclusion concerning this option. A full and accurate proposal in this regard would necessarily require a separate study.

5.7 Strengthen IUCN's Regional Presence in South America

The four key elements of this scenario are the following: Maintaining the regional office in Quito, significantly improving the current technical capacity there, relocating the Regional Director to Ecuador as soon as possible, and continue efforts to build IUCN's presence in Brazil.

In order to successfully act on this option it is necessary to put in place a coherent and successful programme on the ground, building on and complementing the expertise of members as well as clearly demonstrating IUCN's value added in the region. The problem at present, as noted above, is not the lack of a clear strategic plan or mandate. Rather, there is a severe shortage of senior technical staff to develop and concretise the strategic plan and mandate. Thus, should this option be acted upon the current vacancies of Programme Co-ordinator and Programme Officer (Biodiversity) should be filled as a matter of urgency. In addition, all efforts should be made to secure a senior level secondment or a junior professional officer in order to complement the skills of the SUR technical staff and help obtain the necessary "critical mass" within the programme team required in a region of the size and diversity of South America, along with the high degree of professionalism and expertise exhibited from the IUCN membership there.

All efforts must also be made to cut operating costs within the SUR office. The current budget relating to non-staff costs must be reviewed and an austerity budget put in place in order to cut costs to the greatest extent possible. In addition, and while acknowledging the efficiency of the administrative support in SUR, there is a need to bring the level of administrative support into balance with the complement of technical staff in the office.

Much more effort must be devoted to fundraising under this scenario. Provided a good technical team is put in place, the regional director should be able to devote much more time and effort to this high priority area. Ideally, any fundraising effort should be developed primarily with the support of the fundraising and donor relations units within headquarters, the PPET, the US office, and ORMA.

Finally, the positive efforts to develop an IUCN presence in Brazil, along with developing new membership opportunities, improving the capacity of the National Committee, as well as improving relations with the government of Brazil, should be continued. It is the opinion of the Review Team that Brazil is an extremely important country in the region that requires a unique

strategy. To halt efforts that have taken place in Brazil over the past 18 months, in the view of the Review Team, would seriously damage IUCN's reputation in this important country in the region.

This scenario has the multiple advantages of addressing the primary concerns of members/stakeholders regarding technical capacity and value added in the IUCN SUR Office, providing the necessary core competencies to build a strong, coherent, and self-sufficient programme, as well as continuing and building upon IUCN's presence in Brazil. The primary disadvantage of this option, however, is that it is certain to generate a significant budget deficit for at least the next two years, and perhaps three (please refer to Annex 8). Should programme development and implementation proceed as expected, however, it is estimated that the SUR budget could be balanced within 3 years. Despite this constraint, and provided that funding within the Secretariat as a whole is not of an overwhelming concern so as to rule out the possibility of absorbing a significant budget deficit in SUR, it is the opinion of the Review Team that this scenario should be given strong consideration.

5.8 Strengthen IUCN's Regional Presence, Including the Southern Cone

This option is essentially a variant of the scenario described in detail under item 5.7 above, where all of the advantages and disadvantages described therein would apply. This approach, however, would have the distinct additional advantage of building IUCN's presence in the Southern Cone countries. This is an area, as noted above, of particular interest from a biodiversity perspective and where there is a high level of existing support from a well-developed and established membership. At the same time, it is a region of the world long-neglected by IUCN. A comprehensive IUCN strategy for South America cannot logically exclude the Southern Cone

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The estimated cost of maintaining a small but permanent presence in Brazil is USD100,000 annually. In a situation where maintaining budget control is of overwhelming concern, largely discontinuing current efforts in Brazil would represent one of a number of straightforward options for keeping costs under control which would not incur staff retrenchment. This option, as a variant of option 7 above, would still entail a budget deficit over this year and next. However, this deficit would be significantly lower – by roughly the amount indicated above – than that indicated in Scenario 5.7

The fundamental disadvantage of this approach is that efforts to date in establishing an IUCN presence in Brazil would essentially be lost. Moreover, discontinuing efforts in this area may actually result in a backlash in Brazil amongst the membership (and potential membership), setting IUCN development efforts back a number of years in this country. Finally, discontinuing IUCN's current work in Brazil would ensure that the process of negotiating payment on membership dues with the Government of Brazil would become a very difficult (if not impossible) exercise. It is the opinion of the Review Team that all efforts should be made to maintain an IUCN presence in Brazil.

6. Concluding Comments

6.1 Training for Regional Directors and other Senior Staff

An issue that became exceedingly clear during the course of this review is the urgent need for an induction course for incoming regional directors and other senior staff with no previous experience in IUCN. This is particularly necessary for staff based outside of headquarters in Gland.

The success of regional programmes is dependent, to a very large degree, on a strong level of interaction with the global thematic programmes and Commissions based in headquarters. A significant level of funding for new programme development in regional offices may be secured internally within IUCN in conjunction with these programmes. Strategic planning, project planning, and M&E support is also available from the Programme, Policy and Evaluation Team. Additional support for regional programmes in terms of diversifying funding sources may be obtained from donor relations. It is essential, therefore, that any incoming regional director or senior staff be fully aware of these important relationships within the organisation.

The responsibility for adequately orienting incoming senior staff rests primarily with headquarters. The danger of not adequately orienting incoming senior staff, particularly in the regional offices, is to potentially create situations where the relevance and mandate of the programmes is endangered, and significant funding opportunities are lost.

6.2 Conducting Strategic Reviews in Future

Notwithstanding the constraints and limitations to this review outlined at the beginning of the report, which were significant in the view of the Reviewers, in general the process for this exercise went very well and the expected results for this review were obtained. One issue already mentioned under the review limitations, however, bears repeating here. Specifically, a strategic review of this type should be sufficiently resourced (in terms of time and budget) to allow for balanced face-to-face consultations amongst stakeholders throughout the region. Again, the SUR Strategic Review Team is of the opinion that the lack of consultations of this type (due to time and budget) outside of the Andean sub-region was a significant weakness in this study (and perhaps detrimental to member relations). In addition, the following issues should be taken into consideration in the preparation of exercises of this type in future:

6.2.1 Review Team Composition

The composition of the SUR Strategic Review Team worked very well for the assigned task, and could be used as a model for similar exercises in future. Specifically, a minimum of three persons is recommended for the review of a component programme. A high degree of background knowledge of the programme is required, as is knowledge of IUCN's overall programme and approach, objectivity, as well as necessary evaluation and language skills. These skills may be spread amongst the review team. At least one member of the team must be a senior programme employee with IUCN, preferably on the Senior Management Team.

6.2.2 Timeframe

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continuous and overlapping commitment of 2 weeks per team member (6 person/weeks) be made during the course of the review itself. This will have implications with respect to other professional commitments of IUCN staff on the review team.

6.2.3 Logistical Support

It is expected that the review team will require a high level of administrative and logistical support. The component programme in question should be prepared to provide this support. Support of this nature may be estimated as 2 person/weeks.

6.2.4 Briefing and Transparency

It is important that staff working in the component programme subject to a strategic review be fully briefed throughout the process. These staff should also participate in development of the specific terms of reference of the exercise.

6.2.5 Data Collection Process

Given the complexity of IUCN's programmes and the variety of stakeholders involved, the use of electronically distributed questionnaires as a data collection tool is almost unavoidable. Given this reality, it is important that stakeholders consulted in this way are fully briefed on the purpose of the review well in advance of the main body of work (minimum 2 weeks suggested). Also, electronic questionnaires should be distributed no later than one week in advance of the main body of work in the review, so that there is sufficient time available for follow-up if required.

It should also be noted that the questionnaires initially designed for this process were useful, with some modification, for members and other organisational stakeholders. The Review Team found, however, that the questionnaire was not particularly applicable to addressing the particular points of view of Commission members or heads of global thematic programmes. These two important stakeholder groups should be given more specific attention when formulating future data gathering tools such as questionnaires in reviews of thcsc 3.89p.276

Data rnsparencyir

List of Annexes

1. List of Persons Contacted
2. Future Directions for the South America Regional Office – Summary Table
3. Analysis Matrix – Questionnaire and Interview Data
- 4.

PERSONA	INSTITUCIÓN/FUNCIÓN	FECHA DE ENTREVISTA/CONTACTO	TELÉFONO	E-MAIL
		EX-STAFF UICN SUR		

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Eduardo Pires Castanho Fiho

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Formulario diligenciado
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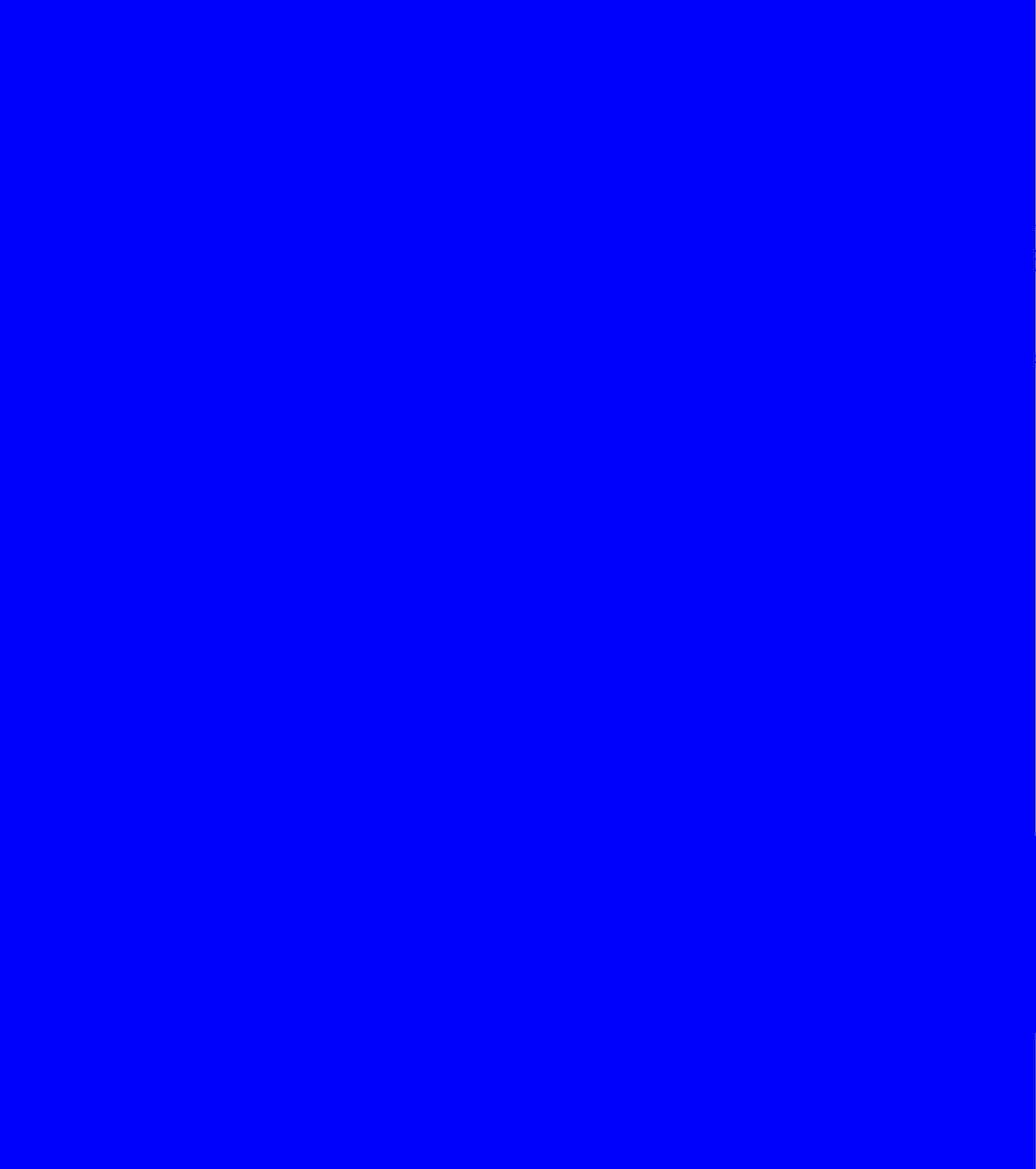
CMAP
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Gricelda RIVADENEIRA AGUIRRE	Asistente Administrativa-Financiera			
Denise RODRIGUEZ CISNEROS	Secretaria			
COORDINATORS AND STAFF OF GLOBAL THEMATIC PROGRAMMES				
Bill Jackson	Coordinator of Global Forest Programme Headquarters	12 January, 2001 Personal interview	41 22 999 0264	bill.jackson@iucn.org
Simon Rietbergen	Senior Programme Officer Global Forest Programme Headquarters	19 January, 2001 Personal interview	41 22 999 0258	simon.rietberben@iucn.org
Jean Yves Pirot	Coordinator, Water and Wetlands Programme Headquarters	19 January, 2001 Personal interview	41 22 999 0256	jeanyves.pirot@iucn.org
Wendy Goldstein	Head, Environmental Education and Communication, HQ	19 January, 2001 Personal interview	41 22 999 0282	wendy.goldstein@iucn.org
Christina Espinosa	Head, Social Policy Programme Headquarters	19 January, 2001 Personal interview	41 22 999 0266	christina.espinosa@iucn.org



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Future Directions – Regional Office for South America: Summary Table

Scenarios

Advantages

Disadvantages

Financial

Matrix: Analysis of interview and questionnaire responses

Primary
Themes of
the Review

Assignment of
questions from
questionnaires
and interview
guides

Annex 4

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED (Organised by date)

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Annex 5

Regional Office for South America (SUR) – Strategic Review

Terms of Reference

Introduction

The purpose of Strategic Reviews in IUCN is to analyze, on either a regular or selective basis, the strategic focus, relevance, effectiveness/efficiency, and financial viability of an organizational unit within the Union. The organizational units normally implicated in reviews of this type are global thematic programmes, regional programmes, country offices, and Commissions, although similar reviews may be adapted to other organizational units within IUCN (such as projects). Data and analysis from these reviews allow Senior Management, from time to time, to make key decisions concerning the future directions of a unit within the organization's overall strategic plan. These reviews differ significantly from in-depth technical programme reviews (or evaluations), as they seek to answer higher order strategic questions concerning mandate, strategic focus, organization and resource allocation within the unit.

Objectives of the Review

The objectives for the Strategic Review of the Regional Office for South America, of course, flow directly from the overall purpose of strategic reviews within IUCN as noted above. Specifically, the overall **objectives** of the review may be summarised as follows:

- Analysis of the strategic mandate of the programme – particularly in the context of the IUCN membership in SUR region. This analysis will be conducted in the context of IUCN current Quadrennial Plan and Business Plan recently approved by Council. It will take note of the strategic opportunities and benefits of an IUCN presence in South America for the Union, as well as its associated costs;
- Assessment of the financial viability and financial risk of the programme;
- Overview of the effectiveness and efficiency of SUR as an organizational unit within IUCN.

In addition to the overall objectives, two additional issues specific interest to the programme in question will also be analysed:

- Analysis of the approach and progress in establishing an IUCN office in Brazil;
- Assessment of the degree of interaction currently existing between SUR and other component programmes within the Union.

Ultimately, the review seeks to determine whether the Regional Office for South America has made optimum use of the investment of IUCN resources in the region, as well as what (if any) changes in the form or direction of that investment could be contemplated in order to improve the effectiveness of that investment in future.

Finally, a number of factors that contribute to overall effectiveness and performance, which are listed in the appendix to this document, will also be considered during the course of this review. These issues, such as the existence of basic management systems, will be assessed in checklist fashion and will be analysed in greater detail (time and resources permitting) provided any significant areas of concern are identified.

Methodology and Approach

The overall objectives noted above represent the primary focus of the review, and will be given priority weighting in the analysis of results and presentation of recommendations. The issues specific to the SUR Programme, as well as those contributing to overall management effectiveness and performance, will in most cases be accorded secondary importance in the presentation of results. In the case where a significant area (or areas) of concern are identified in the overview of management systems, the review team may propose that this issue be considered of primary importance in terms of the weighting of overall results.

The main stages of the strategic review (detail for each provided in the appendix of this document) will be the following:

1. Initial preparation
2. Data collection
3. Analysis and preparation of report
4. Presentation and discussion of the report

Collection of data necessary to conduct this review will be derived from the following sources:

1. Review of existing documentation (strategic, programmatic, financial)
2. Facilitating an initial workshop with staff in the unit to clarify objectives and approach;
3. Interviews with senior staff members and key individuals outside of the unit;
4. Focus groups sessions (issue or theme specific, etc.) if appropriate;
5. Development and distribution of questionnaires (if necessary);
6. Closing workshop with unit staff to discuss preliminary findings.

The identification of key questions to be addressed during the course of these reviews will provide the necessary framework both to analyse relevant background documents as well as to develop an interview guide. The definition of these questions will be the responsibility of the review team. Sample questions, developed by the IUCN M&E Initiative, are provided in the appendix to this document

The development of a list of individuals to interview during the course of the review will be the responsibility of the review team. Interviews should be conducted either in person or via telephone, and wherever possible be conducted by at least two interviewers on the review team. Questionnaires, circulated electronically or by other means, may also be used - although it may be necessary to follow on the submission of questionnaires with a short interview (provided confidentiality is not an issue) to help ensure data accuracy and improve response rates. At a minimum, the review team should draw on the following groups in the development of an interview list:

- Ø Senior programme and administrative staff in the component programme being reviewed;
- Ø Former staff members where appropriate
- Ø Senior representatives of IUCN members in the country/region;
- Ø Senior staff from other component programmes working with the unit being reviewed;
- Ø Senior financial and administrative staff from IUCN-HQ

Regional Office for South America

Financial Estimate for Scenario 5.7 - Future Directions

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SUR'S COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT OF THE STRATEGIC REVISION

- 1.

the BMZ project has nothing to do with the UNDP project and we are not sure whether or not a proposal will be presented.

SUR has not initiated a negotiating process for the second phase of the National Biodiversity Strategy

The Species Co-ordinator left IUCN on 31 March 2000 (not May as mentioned in the report)

The Wetlands Co-ordinator left IUCN in May 1998.

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3. Analysis Matrix – Questionnaire and Interview Data
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5. Strategic Review - Regional Office for South America (January, 2001)
6. Terms of Reference
7. Interview Guide
8. Financial analysis of Scenario 5.7, Future Directions