

IUCN - The World Conservation Union

**ACTIONS TAKEN ON THE
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXTERNAL
REVIEW OF THE IUCN PROGRAMME
1991 - 1993**

(Christoffersen Report - October 1993)

Issued September 1994

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BACKGROUND

In October 1993, a team of external consultants undertook a three-week review of the IUCN Programme for the period 1991-1993. The review was based on IUCN's agreement with SIDA which stated that during the third year of the Programme period "IUCN shall, together with SIDA and other interested donor organizations supporting the Programme, commission an independent review of the Programme and its implementation, including organizational and institutional aspects."

The report of the review ("Christoffersen Report") was published in October 1993 and discussed by the General Assembly in January 1994. The General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the review team which were presented under eight major headings. This report provides information on actions taken by IUCN in response to those recommendations.

1. LINKING CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation of the review team: *IUCN should draw more upon the operational experience of other agencies with related field experience. It should also make a major effort to formulate clear operational guidance on how conservation and development objectives can be effectively linked under different policy and projects scenarios.*

A number of projects have been the subjects of both internal and external reviews. In all of these reviews, the issue of establishing linkages between conservation and development has been considered a major one. More specifically, the Mount Elgon project in Uganda, the East Usambaras project in Tanzania, and the National Conservation Strategy programme in Nepal have all been visited by the Head of the Forest Programme, upon request by the respective offices, with the explicit purpose of analyzing the projects from the point of view of

integrating conservation and development. The Mount Elgon project has also been the subject of an external review. The Head of the Forest Programme has also contributed to planning a project in Congo and in this context the conservation/development linkage has been given special emphasis. The reviews of the two projects were undertaken by using the logical framework concept and the staff of the projects were assisted in undertaking a logical analysis of what factors, technical as well as policy-related, need to be addressed to form the linkage between conservation and development.

In cooperation with WWF, the Social Policy Service and the Forest Programme have been discussing and planning joint activities to address the linkage between conservation and development. This is being done under the concept of developing joint management regimes, or natural resource management systems, which seek to identify how the resource base is being used, who are the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the prevailing use system, what are the impacts on the resource base (negative and positive) as a consequence of the present system, what changes, from a social as well as a physical point of view, need to be implemented to arrive at a sustainable use regime.

"Joint Management" is one of five major themes to be pursued by the restructured Social Policy Service (see below for further information; see also the Progress Report January-June 1994). The very objective of this programme component is to generate action-oriented tools and guides that address the interlinkages between conservation and development on-the-ground.

2. CAPACITY FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Recommendations of the review team: *Social policy activities should focus on conservation-related issues. They should also be clearly related to economic development objectives.*

A new position of Environmental Economic Advisor should be established and recruitment sought among candidates with good networking contacts and skills.

Gender issues should be explicitly treated in both economic and social analysis. In order to ensure that this is given due attention we strongly recommend the Director-General lay down precise guidelines and ensure that these are followed within all programme components. Sensitizing staff and bringing them into contact with organizations and individuals able to support IUCN on gender analysis, need to be given priority.

On the basis of the review of the Social Policy Service in September 1992, the recommendations made by the external review team, and the recruitment of a new head of the Social Policy Service who took up office in late 1993, a thorough revision of the objectives and content of the Service has been undertaken. The Service is now focusing on five main themes: Local Access to Resources; Local Organizing for Resource Management; Local Skills, Knowledge and Attitudes; Local Population and Natural Resource Dynamics; and Local Economics of Resource Management. These themes are combined with six approaches: Technical Assistance to IUCN Members and Partners; Training and Capacity-Building; Demonstration Sites; Gathering Lessons and Translating them into Tools for Action; Networks of Professionals and Organizations; and Developing Policy Options. In combining themes and approaches, five specific programme areas have been identified: Joint Management; Negotiation and Conflict Management; Indigenous Peoples; Population Strategies for Sustainability; and Local Economics. Thorough discussions have been held with technical and regional programmes in order to identify where the various programme areas can most efficiently be pursued and in cooperation with which technical programme(s). A number of specific project/programme documents have then been prepared which are being discussed with potential donors. It should be clear from the above that the Social Policy Service, in cooperation with other programmes, focuses on conservation-related issues and seeks to address the problem of combining conservation and development at the local level.

Immediately following the publication of the Christoffersen Report, discussions were initiated with the Government of Norway with regard to the position of environmental economic advisor. As a result, the agreement between IUCN and Norway for support to the IUCN Programme for 1994 includes the secondment of a Norwegian

economist to IUCN. One candidate was interviewed in April but was not found suitable. In cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the search for an appropriate candidate is continuing. Once an economist is in post it will be possible to address the issues referred to in the review team's report and, as shown above, preparatory work has already been done.

Two of the programme areas mentioned above address gender issues. The Joint Management programme area will address issues such as which groups in a society control what part or process related to utilization of the resource base. Women will no doubt feature as one distinct group in many instances but other social groupings will also be identified. The Local Economics programme area will have a strong emphasis on women since, in many rural communities in developing countries, they are the actual managers of natural resources and thus have a strong link to the economy based on the utilization of the resource. The Population Strategies for Sustainability programme area has, of course, a clear linkage to gender issues.

Gender issues are thus featuring as an important and significant component of the Social Policy Service but precise guidelines have not yet been laid down as recommended in the review team's report.

In this context a reference should be made to the initiative taken at headquarters to set up a Task Force on IUCN as an equal opportunities organization. Gender issues have been considered in this context and will be addressed as an element of the policy which is being developed. Three workshops designed to sensitize staff to gender and other equal opportunity issues were held during September in headquarters, facilitated by an external consultant.

3. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION; MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Recommendations of the review team: *New projects should be identified through close cooperation with members and partners and new project processing procedures should be formulated.*

Project identification and preparation guidelines are needed to implement such procedures. These guidelines should emphasize a few implementable management objectives of key importance.

A small monitoring and evaluation unit should be established at headquarters. It should provide guidance to project and programme staff on how to set up relatively simple monitoring systems for each field activity. It should have an advisory and "overseer" role, rather than involvement in each task to be carried out. The unit should monitor the overall implementation of monitoring and evaluation tasks in the field, and make sure that lessons learned in a specific project can be related to lessons derived from other activities.

The Strategic Plan for the Union, presented to the General Assembly in January 1994, emphasized the role of members and partners in the identification and preparation of projects. In order to institutionalize this approach, the Secretariat has, over the past couple of years, encouraged the establishment of National Committees of IUCN and the setting up of Regional Advisory Councils. National Committees bring together all members of IUCN with which the Secretariat can discuss programme priorities and the involvement of the membership in project activities. Regional Committees or Advisory Councils bring together a smaller group of member representatives to perform much the same function. Whether a National Committee or a Regional Advisory Council is formed depends on the development of the membership in the region. In some regions, as in Central and South America, both National Committees and a Regional Advisory Council exist.

Although there is still some ground to cover with regard to the involvement of members and partners in programme and project formulation, the process is under way and the restructuring of the Secretariat presently being implemented aims at further strengthening this process.

In order to streamline the preparation of project proposals, project preparation guidelines were prepared in 1992. These guidelines are now being revised and will be distributed to all IUCN offices. They are meant to be used by all staff when preparing a project so that a logic is followed from a defined goal through to objectives and through to specific activities. They also address issues such as project management, reporting and monitoring, and processes of consultation to be observed between the different programmes within the Secretariat before a proposal is submitted for final approval by the Programme Development Group.

In the restructuring of the Secretariat which the Director General has now initiated, the capacity to effectively plan, monitor and evaluate projects has now been addressed. A wider process

on evaluating the effectiveness of sustainability strategies is under way. But an evaluation capacity, including the wider dimension, will be established by early 1995. It will report to the Executive Team and draw on existing staff, not least field staff, plus consultants.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Recommendations of the review team: We recommend an immediate re-examination of existing membership services in order to determine how these services can be expanded to make IUCN membership more attractive.

In order to avoid the foreign exchange problems facing many developing countries, it should be generally possible to make payments of IUCN dues in local currencies.

We also recommend that the Director General make an appeal to "Northern" NGO and State members of the Union to sponsor memberships of new and financially weak NGOs in low-income countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, by helping them meet their dues payments through "twinning" arrangements. The Director General should provide advice on these matters and should facilitate such contacts, which may eventually lead to a broadening of cooperation between a Northern NGO and a Southern NGO into other matters of mutual interest and benefit.

This recommendation corresponds, in content and in tone, with the thrust of the 19th General Assembly, which took place a few months after the report was circulated. Indeed, the General Assembly made it clear that the members expected the Director General and staff to give greater emphasis to its role as secretariat to a Union, and less to working as an entrepreneur, operating a programme of field activities with a range of partners, only some of which are members.

In response to this, the Director General convened a Task Force on Membership, made up of staff from both headquarters and the field, and of Councillors (elected by and therefore representing the members). This Task Force has a dual function: on the one hand it is advising the Director General and Council how best to ensure that IUCN becomes a much more membership-driven organization; on the other, it is looking closely at what changes need to be effected to the Statutes and Regulations to provide the optimal legislative framework for this change. In early 1995, an operational plan

for membership development will be drawn up, addressing both the need to recruit and retain a balanced membership, representative of the conservation movement, and also the need to enhance services to existing members. This operational plan will draw heavily on the Strategy for IUCN, approved by the General Assembly. The Task Force's finding will also contribute to the work of the Statutes Review Committee established by Council.

The report of the Task Force on Membership is a large step toward addressing the recommendations cited above. It either addresses directly, or singles out for future attention, all of the specific suggestions contained in these recommendations.

5. THE COMMISSIONS AND OTHER SCIENTIFIC NETWORKS

Recommendations of the review team: *We support the view that IUCN should not tolerate anything but the highest performance standards from each Commission and should ensure that only those that meet such standards continue their existence.*

We believe that the Regional and Country offices should be active in proposing candidates for each of the viable Commissions and thereby helping to ensure that these bodies benefit from broad geographical representation together with the quest for international recognition and scientific repute. It is clearly essential that the Commissions organize themselves to directly serve the needs of the Regional and Country offices.

We share a sense of urgency that the Union's work in the field of conservation education and communications must be backstopped by an effective network among respected experts of excellent international reputation.

The role of the Commissions in the formulation and implementation of the Programme was discussed at some length during the General Assembly. The Assembly underlined the importance of the Commissions in this regard and, by approving the Strategic Plan, also instructed the Secretariat to make better use of the voluntary network the Commissions and other networks represent. There has been a number of discussions on this subject subsequently in Council as well as in meetings between the Commission chairs and the Director General. As a consequence, the allocation of financial resources to the Commissions for 1994 has been increased

from the amount proposed in the budget presented to the General Assembly, SFR470,000, to SFR610,000. It is foreseen that this amount will be increased substantially in the 1995 budget.

Three of the Commissions have embarked on, or concluded, a strategic planning process with the aim of better defining their role and tasks, their relation to the Programme and their linkages to Regional and Country offices. The Species Survival Commission, the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas and the Commission on Education and Communication are more advanced in this respect. The Director General has made it clear that funds advanced to the Commissions are to be fully accountable.

With regard to the Commission on Environmental Strategies and Planning, a liaison group has been set up within the Secretariat with the aim of achieving better coordination between the work of the Commission and the Secretariat programmes to which it relates.

The Commission on Environmental Law has initiated a process of regionalization by appointing vice-chairs for each of the regions. This will facilitate interaction between the Commission and Regional and Country offices as well as with regionally-based institutions in the field of environmental law which are now being created.

The Commission Review recommended to the General Assembly that the Commission on Ecology be abolished since it no longer performed the full range of functions expected of a Commission. The review had found that it no longer had a clear and limited focus; nor was it a primary source of ecological knowledge. The General Assembly decided, however, to replace the Commission on Ecology by a Commission on Ecosystem Management and requested Council, in consultation with the membership and the Director General, to agree on a mandate for the new Commission within one year. A first discussion on the mandate and terms of reference was held in Council last May. Council decided, however, that more consultations were required with scientists as well as staff and ecological experts from various regions before a final decision could be taken on the future role of the Commission. It has thus been decided to call such a meeting for late October/November this year, in time for the preparation of a revised proposal to go to Council for its meeting in late November/early December.

In the restructuring of the Secretariat, it has also been emphasized that an important role of

headquarters is to coordinate and animate the Commissions and other voluntary networks rather than Secretariat staff being the implementors of many of the activities. Similarly, the Regional and Country offices will have as a central function to animate the voluntary networks in their respective region or country.

6. REGIONALIZATION OF SECRETARIAT FUNCTIONS

Recommendations of the review team: *More frequent external evaluations of the regional and national offices are needed.*

The Regional Affairs Division should provide clear guidelines on the regionalization process. Our field discussions indicated that it would be helpful to have more explicit guidance on the basic structures of regional and national offices and a clearer policy on how to ensure a viable financial base for each regional programme and its staff.

IUCN has addressed the recommendations of the Review Team as an integral part of activities to implement the Strategic Plan adopted by the General Assembly in Buenos Aires. In doing so a distinction has been drawn between Regionalization, defined as "the process of restructuring the programme and delivering support to the members on a regional basis, taking account of regional, social and natural heterogeneity and targeted to members' needs on the ground", and Decentralization, defined as "the process of devolving greater responsibility for the preparation and implementation of the Programme of the Union to Regional and Country offices of the Secretariat and, where possible, to the regional and national structures of the membership and Commissions". The recommendations of the Review Team address these two linked processes.

In order to guide the ongoing processes of Regionalization and Decentralization the Director General has established a Working Group on Regionalization and Decentralization. This includes staff from headquarters and regional and country offices, together with four Regional Councillors. It is chaired by the Director General. In its first meeting in August 1994, the Working Group concluded that the regional distribution of IUCN's membership, Commission networks and secretariat was at best uneven and at worst not targeted at the most important conservation issues worldwide. Accordingly the Group proposed that IUCN recognise 14 major geographical regions and structure its activities in each

of these such that the Union does indeed address global and regional priorities. The proposed regions are: East Asia; Southeast Asia; South Asia; Central Asia; North Africa and the Middle East; West and Central Africa; Eastern and Southern Africa; the southern Cone of South America and Brazil; the Andean countries; Meso-America and the Caribbean; North America; Europe; CIS; Australia/NZ/Pacific. While statutory recognition of this regional framework will require approval by the General Assembly, the Working Group recommended that in the interim, the Director General proceed with any changes in secretariat structure and procedures that might be required to strengthen IUCN's presence in the regions. However the Group argued that no single model for decentralization should be pursued. Rather the need for regional and country offices should be assessed region by region, and the secretariat structure established that best meets the needs of each. In some regions no regional office will be required, while in others e.g. eastern and southern Africa, two may continue to be necessary in view of the complexity of the regions and the volume of the Union's activity. Wherever possible all field projects and regionally focused technical activities should be managed from RCOs, so reducing project management needs in headquarters.

Many of these recommendations build upon the internal reviews and analysis in 1993 and early 1994 that have led already to a restructuring of IUCN's regional programmes in Meso-America and South America and eastern Africa. As part of this process new Regional Representatives are being recruited for eastern Africa and South America, with appointments anticipated for 1 November 1994 and 1 February 1995 respectively. In 1995 this process will be continued with reviews of IUCN's work in Asia and Europe.

As this evolution in the secretariat structure and staffing proceeds, the broad guidance of the Working Group on Regionalization and Decentralization needs to be developed into specific guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the different elements of the secretariat, the Commission networks and the members. A restructuring paper covering these issues has just been sent to staff. With the development of new and expanded regional programmes, greater effort is needed to strengthen the financial base for these programmes and the offices that will carry these forward. The Development Division has begun to strengthen support to the regional programmes in 1994 and this will be developed further in 1995.

7. OVERCOMING IMAGE PROBLEMS

Recommendations of the review team: *The Director General should make it a high priority to address the unsatisfactory image of a headquarters staff dominated by a few "Anglophone" countries. It is the team's firm conviction that such changes can be made without jeopardizing the high standards of professional excellence of which IUCN is justifiable proud.*

It is our judgment that progress in this point can substantially improve IUCN's ability to expand its membership base and considerably enhance its acceptance and support from the international community. The Director-General should consider addressing his proposals in this regard in a special communication to the Council and to the Union's membership as soon as he is satisfied that a significant action plan for such changes can be implemented. This should include measures to select consultants on a broad geographical basis.

The new Director General took up his post in April this year. Task forces were established shortly thereafter to look into a number of issues raised by the General Assembly and which had, to a larger extent, emerged out of the Strategic Plan approved by the Assembly. Thus, task forces have provided recommendations on the decentralization and regionalization process, on membership development, on human resources development and on IUCN as an equal opportunities organization. A similar process has also produced broad programmatic priorities and proposals on how best the Secretariat should be structured to respond to the new way of operating as laid down in the Strategic Plan. During this process, there has been a virtual freeze on recruitment and only three new professional staff have been employed at headquarters. One for the Biodiversity Programme, a woman from Colombia, one for the Protected Areas Programme, a man from Cuba, and one for the Development Division, a man from Belgium.

The Director General has indicated that the total number of staff at headquarters will be reduced by about 15 per cent over the coming 18-month period. But, even in this case, there will still be a need for a limited number of new posts so as to respond to the new challenges of headquarters. The reduction in the total number of staff at headquarters, in combination with new positions being filled with non-anglophone nationals, should over time redress the current imbalance. The Director General is committed to this process.

The post of Regional Director for Eastern Africa will shortly be filled by a national from the region. Three of the programme staff of that office will also vacate their posts within the next few months. This will provide another opportunity for redressing the imbalance in that office.

8. WEAK FINANCIAL POSITION

Recommendations of the review team: *A special advisory panel should be appointed to look into the financial issues commented upon by the external evaluation team, for the purpose of strengthening IUCN's financial policies. We suggest that each of the six major funders of IUCN's programmes have an opportunity to appoint an expert to sit on this panel. It should be convened as soon as possible.*

Such a panel should consider setting explicit limits for further expansion of field project tasks until considerably more core or programme funding can be mobilized. It would seem appropriate to formulate a specific financial policy which can specify the appropriate relationships between these three principal funding categories.

IUCN should encourage more creative types of funding through stronger and longer term relations with bilateral agencies at the local level. New funding may also result if efforts are made to find better ways to interact with UNDP, World Bank and FAO on in-country environmental planning processes and with UNEP on a more active role in GEF and in support of several new global environmental conventions.

Consistent efforts have been made, for a number of years now, to improve the ratio between unrestricted and general programme support on the one hand and project support on the other hand. Whilst there has been some success in overall terms, not all donor agencies have yet been willing or able to work with us in this way. As the process of decentralisation continues, so the proportion of project work, signed directly by regional and national offices, increases substantially. In general terms, headquarters has been mildly successful in improving the ratio between flexible and inflexible funds, but continued effort is essential.

IUCN has, over the years, been criticised for the narrowness of the funding base. Interestingly, other NGOs working in our field have exactly the same problems. Some prominent NGOs receive as much as 50 per cent of their income

from only two sources. Whilst it is quite clear that IUCN should endeavour to broaden its funding base, it is considered by professional fund raisers that, unless we fundamentally change the characteristics of this institution, we will not succeed in changing the current situation substantially. There will inevitably be a group of major donors, probably numbering no more than twelve and within this group, relative contributions will change from year to year. Outside this group, there will be a further group of important donors who provide substantial support to the Union, but not at the same level as the first group. Many of the donors in this second group will be regular and dependable donors.

IUCN is currently finalising memoranda of understanding with UNDP, the GEF and The World Bank for collaborative programmes. It is hoped that these three memoranda will lead to a much closer partnership with these three organisations and thereby a more substantial financial support for some of the key activities of the Secretariat and networks.

The challenge for IUCN is to ensure that donors in these two groups understand what IUCN is doing and are satisfied with IUCN's outputs. Outside of these two groups is the broader donor base, presenting a slightly different challenge to IUCN. IUCN has not invested heavily in fund raising with funds and foundations, the corporate sector, or private individuals. There has been a modest level of effort and success has been patchy, often as a result of a totally opportunistic way of working. Again, this is all a question of investment. If IUCN is prepared to invest serious money in raising money, then over the years, there will be a pay off. Typically, where organisations like ours design to raise money from the corporate sector or from private individuals, the long term investment is greater than 30 per cent of the funds received. IUCN is in a less fortunate position in that we have very few national offices in OECD countries. Raising money for international activities, even if you have a national office, is not easy but raising money in, for example, the United Kingdom or France from a base in Switzerland is fraught with problems. Over and above this, IUCN is a union of members, many of whom would take a dim view of the IUCN Secretariat trying to raise money from their donor community. Nevertheless, IUCN has recently signed a licensing agreement with a major corporation in Ireland, which is expected to generate a significant revenue within two years from now. Further licensing agreements are being studied at present. We are also looking once more at the development of our

corporate programme, particularly building towards the next General Assembly. IUCN will also be developing a legacy programme in the near future, something which was planned three years ago but never came to fruition. Furthermore, IUCN entered into debt-for-development arrangements in Zambia and, in particular, in the Middle-East, the client (member of IUCN) is partly paying for the services provided by the Secretariat.

Particular effort has been made to deepen our understanding of the donor agencies in OECD countries. The Development Division has pursued this work through visits to the headquarters and, in particular, to field missions of major OECD countries in Eastern and Southern Africa as well as in Latin American regions. Similar visits to the North Africa, Middle East and Asian regions are still to be completed. During these visits, modalities of approaching the various agencies have been worked out in order to optimize the possibilities of obtaining funding from the different sources available. The information gathered in these visits will serve to prepare Donor Profiles which will provide a basis for the development of a long-term funding strategy for IUCN with regard to OECD countries.

The Christoffersen Report recommended that a special advisory panel be appointed to look into the financial issues. It was suggested that each of the six major funders of IUCN's programmes should have an opportunity to appoint a representative to sit on this panel. In discussions with some of the six major funders, it was considered that this proposal should not be pursued, at least for the moment. Similarly, a proposal that the six "like-minded" funding agencies, who provided IUCN with general programme and unrestricted support, should meet separately, just before the main donors' meeting, was not favoured. IUCN has one donors' meeting and all donors are invited to that meeting. Over and above that, IUCN's Council has a Business Committee mandated to look critically at IUCN's overall fund raising strategy and performance. At the last session of IUCN's General Assembly, the Business Committee proposed that IUCN's operational reserve should be built up over the triennium to at least 10 per cent of its operating budget. The target was SFR6.5 million by the end of 1996. It is hoped that by the end of 1994, we will have an operating reserve of some SFR3.8 million and we have budgeted to achieve the target of SFR6.5 million.

IUCN's main financial problems over the years have really been a combination of two factors.

Firstly, we have spent all funds received (and on occasions slightly more) and secondly, IUCN never had any substantial financial reserves to act as a buffer in particularly lean years, or when projected income did not materialise for one reason or another. It is considered that with

a tighter, more focused programme, a more substantial reserve, together with increased efforts to promote IUCN's work in the main donor countries and increased efforts to broaden the funding base, IUCN's financial problems will become far more manageable.

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