

Evaluation Abstract

Title, author and date of the evaluation report:

Strategic Review of the IUCN Canada Office and Management Note on Follow Up Actions, March 2001

Name of project, programme or organizational unit:

IUCN Canada Office

Objectives of the project, programme or mandate of the organizational unit:

1. To engage Canada-based institutions in promoting the mission, programmes and networks of IUCN particularly including recruitment and retention of members and related communications.
2. To serve as fundraiser and ambassador of IUCN in liaising with principal development agencies in Canada as well as other organizations and potential partners.
3. To represent the global interest of IUCN to a variety of constituencies, particularly those headquartered in Canada.
4. To manage or participate in a range of global, regional IUCN programmes and initiatives.

IUCN area of specialisation: Organizational

Geographical area: Canada

Project or programme duration, length of existence of organisational unit: 1993 – to date

Overall budget of the project, programme or organizational unit: IUCN unrestricted fund allocation: CHF 60,000 (1993); 240,000 (2000)

Donor(s): the Federal Government of Canada, Provincial Governments, the City of Montreal, the Canadian Committee of IUCN (CC-IUCN), and the Union Québécoise pour la conservation de la nature (IQCN)

Objectives of the evaluation:

- Analysis of the strategic mandate of the Office, taking into consideration the strategic opportunities and benefits of an IUCN presence in Canada, as well as its associated costs;
- Assessment of the financial viability and financial risk of the programme;
- Overview of the effectiveness and efficiency of the IUCN Canada Office as an organizational unit within IUCN.

Additionally, four specific issues of interest were defined:

- The role of the Canada Office in the IUCN Arctic Strategy;
- The current degree of interaction between IUCN Canada and other component programmes of the Union;
- The most effective location of the Office in the context of this Review findings;
- The extent of the requirement for allocation of unrestricted funds, and the options to identify new funding sources to support the office.

Ultimately, the Review sought to determine whether IUCN Canada Office had made optimum use of the investment of IUCN resources, as well as what (if any) changes could be contemplated to improve effectiveness.

Type of evaluation: Organizational

Period covered by the evaluation: 1996 – 2001

Commissioned by: IUCN Director General; IUCN Director Global Programme

Audience: IUCN Director General; IUCN Global Programme Director; IUCN Senior Management; IUCN Canada Office Director; IUCN Canada staff

Evaluation team: Mixed (Internal/External)

Methodology used:

- Reviewing of existing information;
- Development of conceptual approach with the support of M&E and Universalia Consulting;
- Preparation of data collection tools (a set of Questionnaires and Interview Guidelines for the different stakeholders identified (staff, members, donors, RCOs, Global Programmes));
- Field data collection (over three weeks through Questionnaires, personal interviews, phone interviews, e-mail and focus groups);
- Data processing, report preparation and presentation.

Questions of the evaluation:

Strategic Mandate: Is the fundamental purpose for the existence of the unit clear? Is it strategically advisable for IUCN to maintain the unit in its current form? How relevant is the unit's work in relation to its constituency? How well respected or credible is its work, both within and outside IUCN?

Effectiveness/Efficiency: Is the current project pipeline sufficient to deliver on the planned programme? Has the unit been effective in achieving its own programmatic results and/or contributing to those of the Union? Has the unit efficiently drawn on the resources available within the Union (other component programmes, Commissions, etc) in order to maximize its effectiveness? How well has the unit managed its resources (staff time, funding)? How effective has unrestricted funding investment been in generating new initiatives?

Financial Viability: How broad is the funding base for the unit (number/variety of funding sources and level of support)? How dependant has the unit been on IUCN unrestricted funds over the past 3 years? How effective has the unit been in securing external funding? Has the unit been able to keep expenses within budget over the past three years?

In addition, a number of factors contributing to the overall effectiveness and performance (i.e. strategy, structure, programme, stakeholders, HR and financial management, M&E, and administrative support) have been reviewed. A full list of the questions is available in Section 7.9.5.2. of the Report.

Findings:

- All stakeholders identified the strategic need for a Canada Office.
- The Canada Office contributed significantly to the IUCN programme in a number of Key Results Areas. Table 1 in the report contains a summary of the main products and results of the IUCN Canada Office for the last three years.
- There are widely differing perceptions of performance between 'external' stakeholders such as Canadian members and internal stakeholders as IUCN regional offices and global programmes.
 - *The Canadian Committee of IUCN members* is pleased with the support provided by the Canada Office and the continued growth in membership to which the office contributed. It would like to see a strong programme contribution continued and expanded.

- *Regional and Global/Thematic programme stakeholders* give high importance to the Office's fundraising role and the development of programmatic links with Canadian specialists and Centers of Excellence. They are dissatisfied with the Canada Office performance in these areas.
- *Donors*. Secondments from Canadian agencies played a significant role in the development and value-added operations of the Canada Office. But sponsoring agencies and IUCN regional and global programme managers are critical of the effective use of this resource.
- *Canada Office staff* feels positive about its role and contribution. It perceives its contribution to be underestimated by programmes and regions.
- Major issues identified by stakeholders include: lack of clarity of mandate, weak strategic leadership, effectiveness of office operations, use of core competencies, use of consultancy business model to finance operations, lack of coordination and cooperation between US and Canada Offices, effectiveness of Montreal as office location for fundraising, and lack of recognition for programme contributions.
- The IUCN Canada Office has not posed serious financial risk to IUCN. However, it has not developed a business model that reduces the demand for unrestricted funds.
 - *Business Model*. The following features were found to characterize the Office: a hierarchical structure with clearly defined areas of work and clear tasks assigned to each person; a significant level of staff specialization; no teamwork; vertical information flows; little or no formal mechanisms for horizontal communication; detailed work planning; weak long-term/strategic planning; high response capacity; low proactive capacity.
 - While this approach has allowed the Canada Office to be fairly successful in its relationship with governmental and external organizations, it has constrained its role in relation with the Canadian members and its capacity to find new and creative ways to fund the office operation.
 - *Financial Model*. Though the financial model of the Office seems to have worked for 2-3 years, from a regional and global thematic viewpoint it is considered high cost/low return.
- There is no clear consensus on location. When fundraising is listed as priority, the Ottawa-Hull area is favoured.

Recommendations:

Four scenarios for the future of the IUCN Canada Office were identified. The advantages and disadvantages of each scenario are discussed in the report. The options described are as follows:

1. *No Office* (i.e. transferring the minimal roles to other parts of the IUCN global and regional programmes and offices);
2. *Minimum Office* (i.e. limiting the office mandate to fundraising for IUCN component programmes and representing the Union to international organizations and conventions);
3. *Adaptive Office* (i.e. fundraising, representation function + strong proactive thematic fundraising activities, strong proactive links with Canadian expertise, and no project/programme management, while locating institutionally those programmes whose operation is best served from Canada (Temperate Boreal Forests, Arctic, etc);
4. *Modified Status Quo* (i.e. substantially improving the current model, while reengineering the process recommended for all options).

Based on an analysis of stakeholder perceptions, the Evaluation Team has recommended either the Adaptive Option, or the Minimal Office scenario. Undertaking a strategic planning process with key stakeholders for the development of an appropriate business plan is also proposed.

Lessons Learned: Not specified

Language of the evaluation: English

Available from: IUCN Global Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative, Gland, Switzerland; IUCN Canada Office