



External Review of the IUCN Programme 2017-2020 – Management Response.

Overall Response

IUCN has been reviewed at 4-year intervals since 1991, at the request of our Framework Partners. Each review has played a significant role in renewing the relationship with our Framework Partners, sharpening our strategies, as well as setting the agenda for organizational change.

As in the past, the 2020 Review was undertaken by a team of consultants¹, selected jointly by the Framework Partners and the Director General. The review process spanned the period January-May 2020. Due to the Covid19 crisis, country missions had to be cancelled, except for the mission in Kenya. The interviews planned in the selected countries were therefore conducted remotely (except for Kenya where they were done in person). The IUCN Programme 2017-2020 has been assessed according to the OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability, and the cross-cutting themes of gender responsiveness and social inclusion.

IUCN appreciates the hard and detailed work of the Review Team and welcomes their thorough analyses and constructive recommendations, in particular, the Team's approach to produce fewer, yet more strategic recommendations than the 2015 Review. Hence, recommendations and future directions are divided into four overarching recommendations, each with a series of subsidiary recommendations. These recommendations should be interpreted positively by IUCN stakeholders, particularly senior Secretariat management and IUCN's Framework Partners, and are designed to provide guidance for IUCN to effectively implement the next IUCN Programme 2021-2024, Nature 2030.

A full management response has been prepared below, showing an overall response to each Review Recommendation as well as the actions planned to respond to the sub-recommendations, the person /position responsible for their implementation, and the expected timeframe. This management response matrix will be submitted to IUCN's Framework Partners and stakeholders.

¹ [Baastel](#) consultancy firm was contracted to undertake the Review after a global tender, as specified under IUCN's Procurement Policy.

Review Recommendations and the Management Response

R1. Build a results-based 2021-2024 Programme. *The Review highlights a number of weaknesses regarding the design process of the IUCN Programme 2017-2020, and the level of integration of projects/programmes and Global Thematic Programmes into the Global Programme.*

IUCN agrees with the recommendation of building a results-based Programme, and aims to have a Theory of Change nested into the 2021-2024 IUCN Programme (Nature 2030). A strategic Union-Wide Programme Portal (“outcome to impact”), which aims to capture the Union’s delivery to the Programme, and an upgrade to the existing operational project portal (“outputs to outcome”), in order to better capture the Secretariat’s delivery to the Programme, are being developed. These mechanisms will facilitate the monitoring of contributions as they help to clarify objectives, scope and results.

R2. Transform IUCN into a learning organization. *In order for IUCN to achieve its overall goals and remain at the forefront of nature conservation, it is crucial for the organization to build on a continuous improvement cycle and learn and grow from experience. This is particularly true for IUCN as a Union that can benefit and consolidate experience from a large number and diversity of Members.*

IUCN largely agrees with the recommendations on transforming IUCN into a learning organization. IUCN is aware of the shortfalls in the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) system and has put this forward as an urgent priority. IUCN will capture lessons learned in a more systematic and conducive way. However, IUCN only partly accepts the recommendation on developing a Programme-level sustainability-for-result strategy, as it is considered relevant yet impractical. Below, IUCN proposes actions and means that could be better embedded within the IUCN Programme.

R3. Clarify Resource mobilization and place innovation at its centre. *There is a need to clarify resource mobilization for Programme delivery. How much should be mobilized to deliver programme objectives? How should these funds be mobilized? By whom? The Secretariat Work Programme set within the 2021-2024 Programme should clearly identify possible sources of funding, set funding targets and assign responsibilities in mobilizing funds, within a 10-year perspective.*

IUCN agrees on the need to clarify resource mobilisation and on the need to put innovation as an institutional priority. A Resource Mobilisation Strategy (RMS) and Action Plan for 2021-2024 will be developed. Innovation is recognized as an enabler to lever economic and social change in the IUCN Programme ‘Nature 2030’. IUCN further acknowledges that the recent focus on a ‘retail to wholesale’ model requires strengthened technical and administrative capacity.

R4. Accompany change. *For the last few years, IUCN Secretariat has gone through a rationalization process which is strongly impacting the organizations’ operations.*

IUCN agrees on the need to provide adequate support and communicate accordingly to staff regarding organisational and business operations and practices. IUCN also agrees on the need for coordination and institutional alignment in the concept and project development process. A sharper and more robust concept and project screening and authorisation process will be put into place.

R1. Build a results-based 2021-2024 Programme.

R1.1 Build the Theory of Change (ToC) of the Programme, clarifying how the Programme intends to contribute to longer term transformative impacts. Such ToC should identify key drivers for change, as well as the underlying assumptions for success and risks that need to be monitored and managed during the next programme implementation phase. The ToC should also be key in helping identify, from an accountability and management perspective, what is realistically under the sphere of control of IUCN and its constituencies during the programming, what is the sphere of influence of IUCN and its partners in implementation in terms of end-of-Programme results/outcomes, and what is in IUCN's and its constituencies sphere of interest with respect to longer term results/impacts.

Management Response: AGREE

It is acknowledged that the current Programme ToC has certain shortcomings, including a disconnect between the overarching Programme, and thematic and regional action plans. To complement the actions under R2.1, IUCN will develop a “nested” ToC, whereby the strategic “outcome to impact” level will capture how the Union as a whole delivers the IUCN 2021-2024 Programme, and nested within this will be a second operational ToC (“outputs to outcome”) that outlines how the Secretariat, based on its project portfolio, will directly contribute to Programme implementation.

Main Recommendation R1.1 → Actions + Responsible and Timeline

1.1 Prepare a high-level strategic (outcome to impact) ToC for the overall IUCN 2021-2024 Programme, and submit for review by Members, as well as an operational (output-to-outcome) ToC to accompany the IUCN portfolio results framework that nests within and is consistent with the high-level strategic ToC and can be used to effectively guide the development of projects and other initiatives. *Global Director Policy and Programme Group. By February 2021.*

R1.2 For these different spheres of control/influence and interest, clearly differentiate between (i) which part of the Programme results are expected to be delivered/supported by the IUCN Secretariat, and (ii) which ones are expected from other Union constituencies. This will not only clarify the objectives, scope and results of the Programme, but also facilitate the monitoring of the contributions of the IUCN constituencies towards the Programme during its implementation and assist in both financial and human resource allocation in terms of types and quantity of resources.

Management Response: AGREE

The 2021-2024 Programme includes a series of impact targets and associated “tier 1” indicators (drawn ostensibly from globally available indicator sets such as the SDGs), which are framed for the Union. The programme will be accompanied by a robust and coherent “results framework” that helps direct, align and integrate project-based delivery with “signature” outputs, programme outcomes and impact targets. This will not only lead to greater accountability to donors and the IUCN Council for delivery of the IUCN project portfolio but will also serve as a vehicle for greater programmatic coherence within the Secretariat. In addition, a Union-wide Programme platform is provisioned (see R2.1.3) to facilitate the capturing and monitoring of the contributions of the different IUCN constituencies to the IUCN Programme, and to enable the respective impact narratives to be built.

Main Recommendation R1.2 → Actions + Responsible and Timeline

1.2 Develop a single results framework for use by the entire organization that allows for planning, alignment and reporting (output-to-outcome) by the IUCN project portfolio, and provide a sub-set of common Programme indicators that can be incorporated into most IUCN projects. *Global Director Policy and Programme. By February 2021.*

R1.3 Update guidelines for project development to ensure that IUCN project/program results frameworks are clearly linked to the global quadrennial Programme, with clearly defined expected impacts, outcomes and outputs, which will enable to better monitor how projects contribute on their own and as a whole, to the aggregated achievement of the Programme's sub-results and targets. This would help for example aggregate achievements of the projects/programs portfolio in terms of gender responsiveness and social inclusion, among other aspects.

Management Response: AGREE

The need to update the IUCN Secretariat's project guidelines is recognised, together with actions for their dissemination. The revised guidelines should enable better aggregation and monitoring of project achievements at the thematic /regional portfolio level, and consistency when reporting against the quadrennial Programme's results framework. Building these requirements into project design and M&E will, over time, allow the Secretariat to better capture and measure its contributions to the IUCN Programme globally, and account for gender responsiveness and social inclusion.

Main Recommendation R1.3 → Actions + Responsible and Timeline

1.3.a) Update the IUCN Project Guidelines and Standards (PGS) and available project development tools to enable project and portfolio managers to:

- Attain high relevance and quality, and pass go /no-go decisions on their development
- Make use, as relevant, of the strategic information presented in the "Country Profiles" during project development (refer to 4.3).
- Ascribe their intended results (outputs and outcomes) to the relevant 2021-2024 Programme outcomes and impact targets during project development.
- Achieve the required levels of cost recovery.

Head of Programme Performance, Monitoring & Evaluation. By end of 2021. (linked to 2.2.a)

1.3.b) Update the Programme & Project Portal to be in line with the new 2021-2024 Programme results framework. *Head of Programme Performance, Monitoring & Evaluation (PPME). By March 2021. (first step of 2.2.b)*

R2. Transform IUCN into a learning organization.

R2.1 Strengthen the IUCN M&E and reporting system for the 2021-2024 Programme. As highlighted in this Review, IUCN's M&E system remains a significant accountability and credibility risk for the organization and requires additional improvement to robustly measure the achievements of the Programme and help support IUCN as a learning organization. Several sub-steps are recommended to do so.

Management Response: AGREE

This recommendation addresses several long-standing and well-documented shortcomings in IUCN's Programme results accountability and management system. Attending to this will require an across the board effort, accompanied with strategic decisions (including on how resources are allocated to M&E) as well as shifts in behaviour and accountability at the thematic programme management level. This Recommendation is linked to actions under Recommendation 1.2. While several senior managers will be involved in implementing this Recommendation, the overall responsibility for progress and oversight lies with the Deputy Director General.

The bottom line for strengthening Programme M&E, reporting and learning (MEL) is that without a purposeful resourcing model, the required changes will either remain out of reach or be delivered in an ad-hoc and sub-optimal manner. IUCN will consider an approach (including a transition phase) to systematically recover the costs of MEL functions from a mixture of direct and indirect charging to the project portfolio, in combination with the use of core funding.

By the end of the 2021-2024 quadrennium, IUCN will have an additional M&E Officer at HQ, a Programme results framework (as per R1.2) and a MEL system that is capable of: i) coherently and credibly accounting for Programme outcomes (including quality of delivery); ii) capturing and internalising lessons into future planning cycles; iii) be capable of building robust Union-wide impact narrative; and iv) fulfil ongoing project-level contractual reporting requirements. This will be implemented through a revised funding model that is capable of supporting and providing good standards and quality assurance for the institutional MEL system, while also offering sufficient and aligned MEL capacity at the regional and thematic group level.

Main Recommendation R2.1 → Actions + Responsible and Timeline

- 2.1.a)** Recruit a new M&E Officer and undertake MEL training across regions and thematic programmes. *Head of PPME. By December 2021*
- 2.1.b)** Implement a mandatory cost recovery procedure from all projects to cover MEL costs. *Chief Financial Officer. By January 2022*
- 2.1.c)** Reinforce dual reporting lines to the Head of PPME for officers and programme managers involved in MEL at the thematic or regional level. *Director General. By April 2021*

Sub-Recommendations for R2.1

Actions + Responsible and Timeline

2.1.1 Develop a list of SMART indicators for each Programme's expected results and impacts. This list should be limited to a manageable number of indicators, a maximum of 20 would seem reasonable.

2.1.2 Develop a robust performance management framework (PMF) setting for each indicator a baseline, a target, as well as the responsible entity and data source.

2.1.4 Ensure that each newly developed project selects a few indicators from the list of SMART indicators at the impact and outcome levels that should flow from their own internal logic as a part of the Programme. (To be included in project result frameworks and reported on regularly). (To be specified in the Project guidelines).

2.1.3 Develop a platform where IUCN Members and commissions can easily input their contribution towards the indicators measuring progress towards results at the Union level.

2.1.5 Ensure that at the beginning of the intersessional period, Commissions also select a few Programmatic indicators that are relevant to their work. These indicators should be integrated in their strategic planning/workplan and reported on yearly.

2.1.6 Ensure the timing of project/programme evaluations is adequate, making sure evaluations conducted not only provide an assessment of results achieved but also capture lessons learned to inform future project/programme design.

2.1.7 Ensure financial reporting at project/programme level is aligned to results achievement, and ensure that co-financing and leveraging effect across the portfolio are properly tracked.

2.1.1, 2.1.2 & 2.1.4. These are addressed as part of R1.2 (Programme results framework) and R1.3 (project development guidelines and Programme and Project Portal). When establishing a common set of metrics for the quadrennial Programme results Framework, it should be possible for indicators to be: disaggregated, spatially tagged, tracked against a common baseline, and built into all projects.

2.1.3. Develop a Union-wide Programme platform, following consultations with Members and Commissions. *Deputy Director General. By June 2022*

2.1.5. Support Commission Chairs to position selected indicators within their annual workplans for better alignment and output reporting against the IUCN Programme. *Deputy Director General. By September 2021*

2.1.6. Re-establish regular thematic programme /sub-programme evaluation cycles to integrate learnings into Programme and institutional planning, and independently assess the implementation of key policies (gender mainstreaming, ESMS) as well as the application of key knowledge products. *(linked to 2.3.1) Head of PPME and Deputy Director General. By December 2021*

2.1.7. Establish a co-finance tracking system (likely through the Programme and Project Portal) to link expenditures by result with results achievement at the project and portfolio levels. *Chief Financial Officer. By September 2021*

R2.2 Develop a Programme-level sustainability-for-result strategy. *The sustainability and exit strategies at project level would need to be better tracked to ensure that the enabling conditions and building blocks that IUCN is able to create are effectively put in place across the portfolio, in a more systematic manner. This information should then be consolidated at the Global Programme level, which would provide useful insight on the overall sustainability of the Programme results, and their contribution to the paradigm change that IUCN is aiming to achieve.*

Management Response: PARTIALLY AGREE

Ensuring that the enabling conditions and building blocks that IUCN creates through its projects remain in place once those projects finalise is indeed important. However, project teams do not always remain in IUCN once projects finalise, and tend to have limited capacity to track project-level ‘sustainability and exit strategies’ and consolidate information globally. Such tasks may be best carried out by programmatic staff, who have a portfolio-level perspective and whose position is not dependent on single projects.

IUCN therefore considers that a ‘Programme-level sustainability-for-result strategy’ is relevant yet impractical and may not be necessary in order to capture the sustainability and exit strategies of projects. Instead, the actions here proposed aim to respond to the overall Recommendation vis-à-vis capturing how project-level sustainability contributes to the sustainability of Programme results, and ultimately their longer-term impacts, and improve the way project learning and exit information is derived from project closure processes, and used for further planning and project design cycles.

Main Recommendation R2.2 → Actions + Responsible and Timeline

2.2.a) Update the IUCN Project Guidelines and Standards (PGS) and available project closure tools to enable project and portfolio managers to:

- better capture lessons learnt during project implementation;
- account for /provide evidence of the sustainability and potential impact of project results at the time of project closure.
- take note of key project exit information, i.e. enabling conditions in place at the time of project closure, and specific conditions/ actions needed for project results to remain self-sustaining;
- internalise lessons learnt and project exit information into future project design and planning (e.g. in project baselines).

Head of PPME. By June 2022. (linked to 1.3.a)

2.2.b) Periodically review and update the functionality of the Programme and Project Portal (PPP), ensuring that resources for such an exercise are provisioned in each annual budget, and that the PPP is increasingly used to meet corporate M&E and Learning objectives. *Head of PPME. By end of 2022. (early step: 1.3.b)*

R2.3 Develop a mechanism to systematically capture lessons learned at the project, regional, Programme, unit, and IUCN Global Programme level.

Management Response: AGREE

Many lessons learned at the project level are already being captured, yet gaps do remain to mainstream this in a systematic way that is conducive to learning at the regional or programmatic level, and ultimately at the quadrennial Programme level. As explained in R2.1 and R2.2, IUCN has committed to strengthening its M&E system, and recognised the need to develop better learning mechanisms. A phased or stepwise approach is needed if M&E and Learning (MEL) is to stretch across the entire organisation.

The actions outlined here complement or extend those specified in R2.1 and R2.2. IUCN's grant-making mechanisms, as well as platforms such as PANORAMA, certainly offer opportunities for operational and technical learning. In addition, publishing in scientific journals is another practice that can assist in consolidating a learning culture.

Main Recommendation R2.3 → Actions + Responsible and Timeline

2.3. Establish MEL requirements (e.g. in annual workplans) for senior regional, programmatic and portfolio managers to undertake periodic programme meetings that enhance coordination and consider lessons learnt, success factors, enabling conditions and sustainability-for-results, for all projects in implementation. *Deputy Director General. By June 2021.*

Sub-Recommendations for R2.3	Actions + Responsible and Timeline
2.3.1 For example, considering the high-relevance of the grant-making mechanism delivery model for IUCN, it could be worth considering conducting a stock-taking exercise from IUCN's experience in grant-making.	2.3.1 This is addressed in 2.1.6 (re-establish regular thematic programme/ sub-programme evaluation cycles). Particular attention shall be paid to grant-making programmes/ mechanisms, both to derive lessons learnt (internal and external) and propose improvements for future grant-making. <i>Head of PPME and Deputy Director General. By end of 2021.</i>
2.3.2 While such mechanism would largely build on the M&E system described above, it is recommended to explore possible technical solutions to capture lessons learned through the project portal, and/or platforms such as PANORAMA.	2.3.2 Incentivise staff to share key data, results, analyses, and lessons learnt by publishing findings in scientific journals or on platforms such as PANORAMA, and encourage IUCN Members and Commissions to do the same. <i>Head of PPME and Deputy Director General. By end of 2021.</i>

R3. Clarify Resource mobilization and place innovation at its centre

R3.1 Develop a robust resource mobilization strategy tailored to the IUCN Programme objectives.

Management Response: AGREE

Key elements for successful resource mobilisation are institutional efficiency, effectiveness and impact, which link back to R1.2 and R2.1. The IUCN Programme -with a ToC and results framework- and the Financial Plan for the next quadrennium will form the basis for a more structured, institution-wide and corporate-driven Resource Mobilisation Strategy (RMS). The RMS will ensure a balance between unrestricted and Programme funding in a way that covers Programme delivery and institutional needs. Ultimately, this relates to IUCN's financial sustainability and the Union's ability to maintain its unique role and comparative advantage. The RMS will envisage ways to position IUCN according to its added value/niche, keeping in mind different fundraising and delivery models, including the "retail to wholesale" model, which comprises IUCN's role as a GEF and GCF Implementing Agency.

Main Recommendation R3.1 → Actions + Responsible and Timeline

- 3.1.a)** Identify resource requirements, gaps and priorities for the delivery of the 2021-2024 Programme, including the core institutional costs and establish clear targets. *Director Strategic Partnerships. By May 2021.*
- 3.1.b)** Develop a global Resource Mobilization Strategy (RMS) for 2021-2024, including regional/country level strategies and outlining the unique role and positioning of IUCN. *Director Strategic Partnerships. By September 2021.*

Sub-Recommendations for R.3.1

Actions + Responsible and Timeline

3.1.1 Such a strategy should explain which type of resources should be mobilized, from which source, and how, to achieve the IUCN Programme overall objective and expected results. The strategy should help shape the agenda and dialogue on funding for conservation, based on the key strategic areas identified in the Programme's ToC referred to under R1.

3.1.1 These elements will be taken on board in the RMS (3.1)

3.1.2 The strategy should also identify roles and responsibilities for its implementation, as well as the resources and staff time required to raise funding and develop the portfolio accordingly, in order to achieve the Programme higher impacts in the long term. The strategic exercises undertaken in that regard by the GEF/GCF unit could be explored further and eventually replicated to develop a resource mobilization strategy for the entire organization.

3.1.2.a) Assess current skills needs/gaps in resource mobilisation within the IUCN Secretariat and propose a new staffing structure. *Director Strategic Partnerships. By February 2021.*

3.1.2.b) Define the differentiated roles in fundraising within the organisation, and in the RMS include roles for different elements of the Secretariat to support delivery of the strategy. *Director Strategic Partnerships. By June 2021*

3.1.3 The strategy should help IUCN's resource mobilization shift from being reactive and opportunistic to being strategic. It should clearly present the unique role and positioning of IUCN, as well as the specific tasks related to this role that need to be funded, in particular as regards non-project functions.

3.1.3. This will be addressed in 3.1.a) and b).

R3.2 Boost Innovation

Management Response: **AGREE**

IUCN agrees with the importance of putting innovation as an institutional/corporate priority. Building on recent innovative partnerships developed through IUCN's implementing role with the GEF and the GCF, IUCN will explore new ways of delivering projects and programmes, with new partners and new technologies. IUCN's Nature 2030 Programme recognizes innovation as an enabler to lever economic and social change and therefore key to supporting the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. IUCN will explore whether to embed innovation skills and activities in a specialized unit or team or rather to mainstream innovation across the Secretariat (programmes, regions and corporate units). IUCN will also explore the option of setting up an innovation fund.

Sub-Recommendations for R.3.2	Actions + Responsible and Timeline
<p>3.2.1 <i>Resource mobilization is far from being neutral: the type of funds mobilized shape the organization's positioning and intervention types. How we try to mobilize resources impacts the organization. Putting innovation at the centre of resource mobilization would enhance IUCN's leading position and reinforce its legitimacy - i.e. attract donors based on the organization's capacity to innovate, to be cutting edge, and to remain relevant to its mission and members.</i></p>	<p>3.2.1 (a) Determine the extent to which IUCN is optimally positioned (fit for purpose) to implement innovation as a strategy and how innovation can be built into IUCN's organisational values, structures and systems. <i>Deputy Director General. By June 2021</i></p> <p>3.2.1 (b) Develop a shared strategic vision and approach that addresses current constraints and structural changes needed to advance innovation in programme planning/ portfolio management. <i>Deputy Director General. By June 2021.</i></p>
<p>3.2.2 <i>The resource mobilization strategy would for instance closely analyze the added value of GEF/GCF projects for IUCN. The growth of the GEF/GCF project portfolio will require close monitoring and adequate resource allocation, in particular taking into consideration the investment needed for proposal development (especially GCF proposals). This to ensure that the GEF/GCF IUCN portfolio is financially sustainable for the organization, remains relevant to IUCN's mission, enables innovation and brings value in IUCN's core areas of work.</i></p>	<p>3.2.2 This is already addressed in 3.1 (3.1.2).</p>
<p>3.2.3 <i>The IUCN Secretariat could consider forming a strategic innovation unit of 2-3 people, directly under the Director General, that would be dedicated to monitoring the quickly changing international context to continuously identify and map out key emerging and cutting-edge issues of interest for IUCN. This unit should remain small, flexible and immune to organizational mandate creeping. It could help the Secretariat in affirming its niche, staying relevant in the conservation community and to its members, as well as its mission, and at the forefront of innovation to better meet evolving international needs in its core areas of focus. Alternatively or as a complement, the establishment of an Innovation working group gathering Commissions' members with diverse profiles, could be explored.</i></p>	<p>3.2.3 Establish an Innovation Advisory Group to the Director General, or an Innovation Working Group. <i>Director General. By February 2021.</i></p>

R4. Accompany change.

R4.1 Providing adequate support and improving internal communication to help staff understand and build ownership over the organizational changes introduced in the past years to professionalize the Secretariat and increase overall efficiency. This is key for the Union to move forward as a whole towards common objectives.

Management Response: AGREE

This recommendation addresses the effectiveness and acceptance of certain rationalization measures. Attending to this will require building ownership over the organizational changes, practices and standards already introduced, and those to come. Internal communications will be improved to help staff better understand IUCN's programme delivery and keep them abreast of their colleagues' work and achievements. In cooperation with Human Resources Management Group, internal communications will also be used to keep staff informed of relevant organizational changes, new business practices, and important news.

Main Recommendation R4.1 → Actions + Responsible and Timeline

- 4.1.a)** Develop an internal communications strategy that includes clear, realistic and measurable objectives and supports the communication of organisational and business practice changes and important programmatic achievements. *Director Global Communication Unit. By June 2021.*
- 4.1.b)** Initiate implementation of the internal communications strategy through the use of a newsletter, Town Halls and other readily available channels, including online platforms. *Director Global Communication Unit. By end of 2021.*

R4.2 Developing a project analysis tool to help IUCN identify the most relevant interventions to implement. This is key in recognizing the importance of executing projects on the ground (for technical, financial and positioning reasons), as well as the limits of this delivery model and the distinct expectations from the different categories of membership (diverging views between State and NGO members). This project analysis tool could take the form of an online questionnaire to test the relevance of future projects to be executed by IUCN. Such tool would include several questions to answer (e.g. why is IUCN relevant to execute this project? Will there be any IUCN members involved in project execution? Are IUCN members aware of this project? Have they expressed interest? How is this project strategic to IUCN? etc.) and provide an average rating to the project with a go/no go advice. Supported by clear guidelines detailing which projects IUCN should allow itself to execute, or not, such tool – to be developed and agreed with members – would help frame IUCN's portfolio of projects in the future and clarify IUCN position as regards project execution on the ground.

Management Response: PARTIALLY AGREE

This recommendation addresses the importance of good coordination and institutional alignment in the concept and project development process.

IUCN already has a series of project planning and screening tools / procedures including the Project Appraisal and Approval System (PAAS). It also introduced a series of review and decision support meetings at both the concept and project development stage, though these could be made more effective. Therefore, by boosting its project screening and appraisal process, IUCN intends to develop a stronger, better aligned Programme portfolio that is compliant with key Programme delivery policies (ESMS, Gender, M&E, etc.), is country-responsive and socio-politically contextualised, optimises effective engagement of IUCN constituencies and is underpinned by elevated quality assurance and senior management accountability. Ensuring ownership by Regional Programme Coordinators and Global Directors, as those responsible for implementation, will be key.

Main Recommendation R4.2 → Actions + Responsible and Timeline

- 4.2.a)** Re-establish a mandatory, multidisciplinary, internal project review mechanism as part of the PAAS to advise on programmatic coherence, alignment and quality assurance at the project design (concept) and development (full proposal) stage, and to facilitate decisions on the projects that IUCN shall and shall not execute. *Head of PPME. By end of 2021*
- 4.2.b)** Improve scorecard metrics used for programme managers and directors, as a means to enhance accountability in terms of oversight on the quality of project design and decision-making. *Head of PPME with Deputy Director General. By end of 2021*

R4.3 Acknowledging and addressing the required changes in competencies induced by the recent evolutions of IUCN organizational structure and portfolio. *The increase number of GEF/GCF projects as an implementing agency, of grant-making programs, and the rationalization process of the Secretariat, have modified the qualifications needed in the organization. For some projects/programs, strong project management competencies are required, including financial and human resource management. To respond to this shift in competency requirements, the Secretariat must adapt the types of profiles recruited and ensure that training of human resources is strongly linked to ongoing and future changes in the organization, so that IUCN staff is adequately positioned to perform effectively, as well as adequately equipped in terms of knowledge, skills and expertise to adapt to this changing organization and its changing portfolio.*

Management Response: AGREE

IUCN acknowledges that skills sets and competencies have shifted with recent organisational and portfolio changes (e.g. 'retail to wholesale' approach). The right skills sets need to be emphasised in new recruitments, but also in the training of existing staff. In 2021 and 2022, IUCN will complete an assessment of its current leadership and performance management programs and further develop opportunities to grow the skills and talents required for the future internally. IUCN will also clarify the core skills required for programme management and adapt its recruitment tools to identify those skills.

Main Recommendation R4.3 → Actions + Responsible and Timeline

- 4.3.a)** Enhance the use of performance appraisals and talent reviews to identify skills/capacity building needs and define annual training priorities. *Chief Human Resources Officer. By July 2022.*
- 4.3.b)** Develop and roll-out customized courses on project management and people management, open to mid-career professionals of the IUCN Secretariat. *Chief Human Resources Officer. By September 2022.*
- 4.3.c)** Assess current leadership development programmes (HPP and ELP) and propose a redesigned programme customized for IUCN's future leadership needs. *Chief Human Resources Officer. By September 2021.*
- 4.3.d)** Review and revise the competency framework and definition of core responsibilities and skills in job descriptions. *Chief Human Resources Officer. By June 2022.*