**IUCN – The World Conservation Union**

# EXTERNAL REVIEW OF IUCN COMMISSIONS

**FINAL REPORT**

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**May 2004**

# Acknowledgements

This review of the Commissions of IUCN has been a challenge and an opportunity. A challenge because each Commission is almost a world in itself with different types of expertise organized around groups of specialists that are dedicated to carry out specific tasks for the Mission of IUCN. An opportunity because the Commissions, for all their diversity share a common purpose and face some common challenges in a changing internal and external environment.

This Review has been dependent on the support and enthusiasm of many people, both inside and outside IUCN. It is a testimony to the dedication that IUCN inspires that all the people we interviewed gave their time generously to inform us and share their experiences of the Commissions' work and operations. They are listed in Annex 3. We were also impressed by the response we received from members of the Commissions, many of whom contacted us directly to thank us for seeking their input through the web survey.

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We hope that the Review will be a useful input to the discussions and decisions of Council as they consider the future shape and mandates of the Commissions.

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# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| 3I-C | Fund for Innovation, Integration, Information, Communication |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CBNRM | Community-based natural resources management |
| CEC | Commission on Education and Communication |
| CEESP | Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy |
| CEL | Commission on Environmental Law |
| CEM | Commission on Ecosystem Management |
| CEPA | Communication, education and public awareness |
| CITES | Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species |
| CMWG | Collaborative Management Working Group |
| COF | Commission operating fund |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| ELC | Environmental Law Centre |
| EMP | Ecosystem Management Programme |
| ESD | Education for Sustainable Development |
| FAO | Food and Agricultural Organization |
| FTE | Full-time equivalent |
| GEF | Global Environment Fund |
| GETI | Group on Environment, Trade and Investment |
| ICSU | International Council for Science |
| ICTs | Information and communications technologies |
| ICTSD | International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development |
| IUCN | The World Conservation Union |
| KPS | Knowledge products and services |
| KRA | Key results area |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation Unit |
| MAB | Man and the Biosphere Programme |
| MEA | Millennium Ecosystem Assessment |
| MEAs | Multilateral Environmental Agreements |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| SC | Steering Committee |
| SCOPE | Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment |
| SERI | Society for Ecological Restoration International |
| SG | Specialist Group |
| SIS | Species Information Service |
| SSC | Species Survival Commission |
| SUR | Regional Office for South America |
| TILCEPA | Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities, Equity and Protected Areas |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| WAMIP | World Alliance of Mobile and Indigenous Peoples |
| WCC | World Conservation Congress |
| WCPA | World Commission on Protected Areas |
| WESCANA | West/Central Asia and North Africa |
| WGSL | Working Group on Sustainable Livelihoods |
| WPC | World Parks Congress |

| | |
|---|---|
| WRI | World Resources International |
| WSSD | World Summit on Sustainable Development |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |

# Summary

The Commissions have played a key role in IUCN throughout its history. Despite changes to their mandates at different times, the original six Commissions continue today:

Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)
Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)
Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)
Commission on Environmental Law (CEL)
Species Survival Commission (SSC)
World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)

This continuity in the long term hides considerable turmoil and discontinuity over shorter periods in their history. Thus as we look at the Commissions now, two of them are in the early stages of rebuilding their networks (CEM and CEESP); one has recently undergone a major renewal process (CEC); and three can be said to be at a mature stage (CEL, SSC and WCPA).

***Purpose of Review***

This Review responds to the IUCN Statutes (Article 46e) which require Council to review the work of the Commissions in order to propose any changes to their mandates, and to the renewed commitment of the Commissions themselves to become more accountable to and integrated with the work of the other two pillars of the Union.

The purpose of the Review is to look at the six Commissions within a single comparative framework in order to draw conclusions about the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Commissions as a group, and their positioning in relation to the initiatives that are shaping the global environmental conservation agenda. Although they are each very different, the Commissions operate in the same changing internal and external environment and they share common problems, such as increased competition for the resources that the Commissions need – experts' volunteer time, financial support from donors and the attention of governments and civil society to what they produce and what they say.

This report presents the conclusions of the overall review process including the knowledge products and services, together with the findings of the organizational and performance aspects of the Review. A more detailed discussion of the review component relating to the knowledge products and services of the Commissions is available as an Addendum to this report.

The Review conducted interviews with 93 people inside and outside the Commissions for the organizational assessment and surveyed the opinions of 587 Commission members through a web survey. A further 331 people were interviewed (110) or surveyed (174) specifically on the use and assessment of the Commissions' knowledge products and services, and 47 people involved in producing the products and services were interviewed. Thus a total of 250 interviews were conducted and 761 responses to two surveys were received as input to the Review findings.

The Review is an **organizational** assessment and is not an in-depth evaluation of any Commission. It takes as its starting point the view that organizational performance is dependent on the *capacity* of the organization (its leadership, management, human and

financial resources and its structure), its *motivation and incentives* and its *external environment*, which can facilitate or inhibit performance.

***Nature and functions of Commissions***

Part VIII of the IUCN Statutes lays out the nature, composition and function of the Commissions:

> 73. The Commissions shall be networks of expert volunteers entrusted to develop and advance the institutional knowledge and experience and objectives of IUCN
>
> 75. The functions of the Commission shall be to fulfill their missions as defined in their mandates, including:
>
> (a) to analyze issues and prepare assessments, reports, action plans, criteria and methodology and undertake research and other scientific and technical work;
> (b) to undertake tasks assigned to them within the integrated programme of IUCN;
> (c) to provide advice on any matter within their fields of competence;
> (d) to broaden knowledge and competence on matters relating to their mandates;
> (e) to work with members and the Secretariat to develop activities within the various Regions, and to support members and components of IUCN with necessary expertise; and
> (f) to undertake such other responsibilities as may be assigned to them by the World Congress and the Council.

Commissions are not organizations in the normal sense. They are expert networks that fall into the category of *formal knowledge networks*. As such they are volunteer networks that are task and purpose driven which add value rather than just exchange information and produce outputs, and are built on expertise as well as common interest. The lifeblood of knowledge networks is effective communications between members of the working components of the network in order for them to aggregate knowledge, produce outputs and engage with external bodies.

The criteria first enunciated for Commissions by the General Assembly of IUCN in 1990 parallel the operating principles for good expert knowledge networks:

1. It must be able to meet a clearly defined need;
2. There must be a widespread demand for the products of its work which must be central to the mission of the Union;
3. A Commission should not be a minor player in its field; it should be the main source of the knowledge it provides;
4. It should be possible to give its work a clear and limited focus so that Commission members clearly understand what is expected of them;
5. There is a strong and active network supported by a community of interest among the members;
6. A critical mass of members exists with some homogeneity of interest and commitment to common objectives;
7. It should balance diversity of expertise with a significant community of professional interest.

***Mandates of Commissions***

The mandates for the Commissions derive from Regulation 69 of the IUCN Statutes which states that the mandate should include the Commission name, mission and terms of reference. Since 1994 this has been generally limited to the setting out of longer term goals for the Commissions rather than also defining objectives for the Intersessional Period. The mandates are more in the nature of organizational charters than giving clear direction for the work of the Commissions. Without more focused and term-limited objectives and expected results, together with reporting back to Council by objectives and results, it does not seem possible for Council to fulfill its own statutory duty to review the work of the Commissions.

The Review recommends that the mandates for the Intersessional Period 2005-2008 be restructured to include programme objectives and expected results for the four year period, and that these should be linked to targets and indicators in the Commissions' Strategic Plans for the Intersessional Period.

The Review also recommends that Commission Chairs report to Council and Congress using a common written reporting framework that responds to the need to report on results obtained against the four-year objectives. Council may wish to consider if in addition, the annual reports from the Commissions going to Congress should be consolidated and accompanied by an overview document from Council on the work of all the Commissions for the Intersessional Period.

***Commission Leadership***

The selection of a Commission Chair is a very important decision for IUCN as it is the Chair who nominates the rest of the leadership, selects the Specialist Group Chairs and gives overall direction to the Commission. The Chair alone is entitled to act in the name of the Commission. Thus the Chair has sweeping powers. This has caused problems when Chairs have followed a personal agenda, or have been unable to carry out their duties for whatever reason. Some Commissions have gone leaderless for long periods of time and almost all activities have ground to a halt. The performance review of Chairs by the President will go some way to respond to these situations but in addition there is a need to ensure that the Deputy Chair can be given the authority to take over, that the Steering Committee have a responsibility to continue to manage the Commission and that the Council ensures that there is a functional leadership in place.

The work of a Chair is very demanding and requires 30-50% of his/her time or more. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find outstanding and willing candidates who fulfill the requirements and have the time available from their other commitments, as well as the financial and administrative support of their institutions. This is particularly the case for candidates from the South. While all the Chairs are volunteers from the perspective of IUCN, in practice some are paid by other institutions for at least some of the time that they spend on Commission work, while others are not. The Review recommends that IUCN should help those Chairs who need such assistance to find financial support from a donor or member organization to cover their work for the Commission.

More generally we would recommend that the role of Chairs be re-examined in the light of new ideas about how knowledge networks work. In some respects, the top-down power structure of the Commissions seems the antithesis of networks that are innovative and maximizing the creativity of the members rather than just maximizing the work. When well performing models of innovative knowledge networks are going in the direction of more open systems, the Commissions have the look of a model from the past.

The Regional Vice-Chairs play a number of important roles. They act as a regional focal point for communications and liaison with regional members of the Commissions; they

represent the work of the Commission in the region and mainstream relations with IUCN member organizations; and they identify opportunities and needs for volunteer involvement in conservation and sustainable development efforts on the ground. Depending on the Commission, they may also have a role to play in regional programming.

The Regional Vice-Chairs face two problems in carrying out their roles effectively. One is that most do not have efficient or updated databases on the Commission membership in their regions. The second is that they lack the resources to travel in their regions to organize members or to ensure necessary linkages with the IUCN Regional Programmes. Thus they lack the tools to make the links between member expertise, programme and projects, and the needs of IUCN member organizations and the Regional Offices.

***Communications***

Networks run on good communications flowing from the leadership to the members; feedback from the members back up the system and horizontal communications crisscrossing networks with ideas and information. The Commissions are not as effective as they should be in managing communications, particularly at the level above the Sub Groups. While it is true that much of the work of the Commissions is done within the Sub Groups, there could be more value-added at the level of the Commission as a whole.

More communication of ideas and sharing of work should take place between Commissions since much of the repositioning of IUCN to carry out its one Programme implies collaborative work across the expertise and mandates of the Commissions. The trend to add to the membership of each Commission to respond to the need for interdisciplinary work rather than to establish joint Task Forces has led to a growth in the size of Commissions and the danger of duplication rather than cooperation.

Commission members are an important means by which the Commissions are linked to other knowledge networks since many are members of several international networks. Most still owe their main allegiance to their Commission.

***Finances***

The Commissions receive core support from IUCN to pay for costs relating to the running and operations of the network through the Commission Operating Fund (COF). In addition they are actively raising funds for the programmes and projects of their Sub Groups. Some Commissions and some Sub Groups are better able to raise these programme funds than are others.

What should be a matter of concern for Council is that no one has a good overview of the donor funds being raised by the Sub Groups in the name of IUCN or the Commissions – not the amounts, from what donors, or what institutions are administering them. This represents a reputational risk for IUCN that while it cannot be reduced to zero should be actively managed by a “due diligence” reporting process to systematically collate information from Sub Groups. Knowing what funds are being implemented for the Mission of IUCN by its Sub Groups would also provide a better measure of the total value of the Commissions to the Union.

***Volunteer members***

The volunteer resources of the Commissions have long been recognised as one of their greatest strengths and quality of expertise has been a prime determinant of the decision to invite members to join a Commission. The increasing size of the Commissions and an apparent urge to increase membership raises questions about the selection process. For a knowledge network, size is less important than quality. It is important to maintain the

Commissions as "major players in their field" and to ensure that the most outstanding experts do not migrate elsewhere.

Volunteer members value their Commission mainly for their access to new ideas and other experts, as well as enabling them to contribute to a larger enterprise that may also bring personal recognition. This is the value-proposition that the Commissions represent to their members and thus is what the Commissions must strive to provide. There are danger signals in the numbers of members who express frustration about lack of consultation from the leadership and a lack of opportunities to get more involved.

***Programme Planning and Management***

The difficulties that the Review encountered in trying to assess how far the Commissions had carried out their workplans and delivered on their strategic plans reveal major inconsistencies between Commissions in their planning processes. At one level, this makes comparative analysis impossible. More seriously, it undermines the ability of Council and Congress to carry out their governance oversight of the Commissions. The Review recommends that there be put in place a more uniform and consistent approach to programme planning across all Commissions and that this process should be firmly anchored to the reporting process to Council.

Following the one Programme decision all Commissions are aligning their programmes and projects more firmly with the IUCN Programme and are trying to respond to the challenge of regionalization. However, in addition to the difficulties and resource constraints faced by the Regional Vice-Chairs, regional programming makes more sense for some Commissions than for others.

With the integration of the Commissions' work more formally into the IUCN Programme, it may now be an appropriate time for the Commissions to become part of the IUCN Monitoring and Evaluation System. This would provide for a systemic monitoring process and regular cycle of evaluations of both activities and outputs as well as the technical support of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit to help the Commissions learn from experience and identify successes.

The Commissions generally have not been very responsive to the IUCN Gender Policy although the implementation of gender perspectives is important to the work that the Commissions do, especially as they mainstream sustainable development and poverty reduction in their programmes. It is recommended that they take a more pro-active stance on developing tools and guidelines as well as developing their capacity to implement the IUCN Gender Policy.

***Knowledge products and services***

The Commissions have made major contributions to the worldwide credibility and visibility of IUCN through the production and dissemination of their knowledge products and services, of which the best known is the SSC Red List. The Review found that the main drivers for producing these products and services are the motivations of the Commissions themselves. While this must be respected in a volunteer network, the views of the leadership should be complemented by more systematic processes for scanning the field - and the competition - and undertaking situation analyses, so that every product and service that IUCN invests in has a market that is well understood and accurately targeted. In other words, the Commissions are generally producing good products and services but they could be more strategic about when, where and how to produce and deliver them. More attention should also be paid to the value that can be added to new or existing products and services by adapting their format for strategic purposes and by collaborating with other IUCN components that can add to the

*knowledge value chain*, and assist in regionalization and improving the articulation of knowledge management work with Members.

The need to be more strategic and purposeful in prioritizing which products and services to produce relates also to giving more consideration to the cost-effectiveness of individual products, especially for the general distribution of hard copies to all members and in bulk to conferences and to IUCN Regional Offices. Dissemination strategies should be developed in conjunction with IUCN thematic programmes and Regional Offices to make more use of electronic formats, target influential user groups more deliberately and minimize waste.

While some Commissions have in place very good quality control mechanisms, this is not universally the case. Peer review and editorial control procedures differ from Commission to Commission and from product to product. At the same time, all products and services are produced by the Commissions are seen by users to be backed by the IUCN "warranty" for quality and relevance. To make this public perception closer to reality, IUCN should reinstate systematic quality control and editorial review processes; and should provide guidelines for the Commissions to follow.

Commission strategic plans and workplans should pay greater attention to the whole planning cycle for products and services. Commissions can map their intended knowledge products and services, assess their place on the knowledge value chain, assign priorities based on known criteria and integrate their outputs into their overall strategic frameworks. A systematic monitoring process to inform planning should include tracking the use, influence and impact of outputs to determine whether their use actually lead to the intended changes.

***A new social contract***

The agreement of the Commission Chairs to work together with the Secretariat on one IUCN Programme should be based on a clear understanding of the real comparative advantage of each party and a greater mutual respect for one another. Assuming that the Commissions do add value to the delivery of the Programme, they should not find that they must "fit into" a Programme that is largely drawn up by the Secretariat and driven by donors for the Secretariat to implement. This will mean that the timing of planning processes will need to be developed collaboratively with the Commissions and that Advisory Committees to Programme also include or intersect with the relevant Commissions.

Going further, we see the need for a **new social contract** between IUCN and the Commissions that builds on the Son Loup Accords (1995, 1998) and the Bossey Agreement (2003). For increased accountability and greater commitment to work with the Secretariat to deliver the one Programme, the Commissions could expect more support from the Secretariat. In addition, one of the important roles for Commissions that is articulated both in the Statutes and in the operating principles of knowledge networks is that they should provide wise counsel and new ideas to IUCN within their areas of expertise. Thus the Commissions should not become simply another arm for delivering the Programme but should also both lead and challenge the directions in which it is heading.

***Future action***

The Review does not recommend that any Commission be subject to an in-depth review before the World Conservation Congress in Bangkok.

Instead it proposes that over 2004-2005 the Commissions work with the Secretariat to undertake three cross-cutting reviews on:

(1) What inputs IUCN needs from the social and economic sciences to mainstream poverty-environment;
(2) How to develop more effective communications and knowledge management systems; and
(3) How to position IUCN as the world leader in integrated assessments on ecosystems for human wellbeing.

These Reviews should build on the current initiatives underway in IUCN including the follow-up to the 3I-C Poverty and Livelihoods work, the Capacity Building Study, and the Knowledge Management Study.

## Main Recommendations

1. **More focused mandate**: The statutory requirement for "terms of reference" in Commission mandates should be further elaborated to include:

    i. Mission statement
    ii. Goals for the Commission over the longer term
    iii. Priority areas or themes
    iv. Objectives for the Intersessional Period
    v. Expected results for the Intersessional Period
    vi. Structure and Organization

2. **Common reporting format**: The Commission Chairs should report to Council and Congress using a common written reporting framework and format that includes reporting results and achievements against objectives set in their mandates and as elaborated in their Intersessional Plans and Annual Workplans.

3. **Support for Commission Chairs**: The inputs of present and past Chairs and the Director General should be sought to propose to Council a policy to provide adequate support to Commission Chairs to release their time from their work and provide administrative support as needed in particular circumstances. This should be linked to clear accountability for such funds. The purpose of the policy would be to help enlarge the pool of potential outstanding candidates willing and able to stand for election and should help improve geographic balance.

    A policy paper should provide the rationale and sufficient background to the policy (including the role, functions and time requirements of the Chair's role) so that donors might be encouraged to "endow" or otherwise support a Chair for the Intersessional Period.

4. **Role of the Deputy Chair**: The statutory role of Deputy Chair of Commissions should be reviewed to clarify his/her role in the absence, incapacitation or non-performance of the Chair.

5. **Communications**: Commissions should examine the effectiveness and limitations of their current systems and technology for communications within and between Commissions, including their websites, in order to develop a new strategy and identify with the Secretariat the technology needed to strengthen their role as knowledge providers for IUCN, to increase the participation of individual members, and to further innovation, interdisciplinary work and cross-Commission collaboration.

6. **Fundraising**: Following an initial scoping exercise, a mechanism should be put in place within the Secretariat to support fundraising efforts by Commissions, to share and collate information, and to provide an annual overview of donor funds for all Commission activities, including all Sub Groups. This mechanism might include a staff person to serve all Commissions as a Commission Resources Focal Point.

7. **Measurable results**: Commissions should be asked to produce an Intersessional Plan that sets measurable objectives and/or targets for the four year period, and the results expected for each year. The Intersessional Plan and subsequent reports to Council and Congress on how it was implemented should identify the contributions of the Commissions both to the IUCN Programme, the Regional Programmes and to other aspects of IUCN's mission.

8. **Monitoring and Evaluation**: The Commissions establish a more formal process for monitoring and evaluation that is part of the overall framework of IUCN's monitoring and evaluation system. For its part, the Secretariat would be asked to provide support to the Commissions to develop appropriate methods and criteria for assessing the Commissions as knowledge networks.

9. **Gender dimensions**: Commissions should include in their Intersessional Plans and Annual Workplans specific objectives and expected results for strengthening the gender dimension in their programmes during the Intersessional Period 2005-2008 in order to implement the IUCN Gender Policy on Gender adopted by Council in April 1998.

10. **Review three areas of work**: IUCN should undertake three reviews in 2004-2005 to strengthen its capacity for integrated work on poverty and the environment:

    **Review of the social and economic sciences input needed for the IUCN Programme 2005-2008**. To report to Congress in November 2004

    **Review of the role of communications in knowledge management**. To be undertaken early in 2005.

    **Review of integrated approaches to ecosystems and human well-being**. To be undertaken by December 2005.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Mandate and terms of reference for the Review

The IUCN Commissions form one of the three pillars of the Union, together with the IUCN Membership and the Secretariat. The Commissions bring into the Union the knowledge, expertise, and work of volunteer experts from around the world to help implement the Programme of IUCN, to bring to the Union state of the art thinking and practice in the fields of conservation and sustainable development, and to link the Union to wider networks of expertise and knowledge (knowledge networks).

The Commissions are governed by the IUCN Statutes and Regulations, respond to Congress mandates and resolutions and are guided by the Son Loup Accords (1995, 1998). The Son Loup Accords identified the need for improved accountability and evaluation of the Commissions, a view that was echoed by the Consultative Group on Commissions convened at the Chateau de Bossey in April 2003. This Review builds upon the constructive relationship between the Commissions and IUCN and new ways of working and governance for the Commissions that are reflected in the agreements reached in the Son Loup Accords and the findings of the Bossey Report.

The IUCN Statutes empower the World Conservation Congress (WCC) to establish the Commissions and determine their mandates. Prior to each ordinary session of the WCC, the Council is required to review the terms and reference and the activities of each Commission. At the IUCN General Assembly in Buenos Aries in 1994, members requested that reviews of Commissions should be undertaken periodically and that these should identify the minimum resources needed for efficient operation. Resolution 19.2 on the Role of the Commissions states that:

> c.. Each Commission should be subject to a triennial end-term review, to be prepared by an independent evaluator, nominated by the Director General and confirmed by Council and undertaken in consultation with the Chair or his/her nominee; regular mid-term reviews should not be required but Council may commission a mid-term review of any Commission if special circumstances require it;
>
> d. There should in future be an in-depth review every six years of the role, structure, mandate and operation of each Commission, carried out according to a schedule providing for three Commissions to be reviewed during each three-year period;
>
> e. The conclusions of the reviews under (c) and (d) should be reported to each succeeding session of the General Assembly;
>
> d. High priority should be given to defining performance indicators and ensuring that the mission statements and objectives are drafted in terms that enable such definition;

This review responds to the IUCN Statutes (Article 46e) which requires the Council to review the work of the Commissions and Article 74 which indicates that the Council may propose to the Congress the creation, abolition, or subdivision of a Commission, or amendment of a Commission's mandate, to Resolution 19.2 (1994) and to the renewed commitment of the

Commissions themselves to become more accountable to and integrated with the work of the other two pillars of the Union.

Beyond its formal mandate, the purpose of this review is to look at the six Commissions within a single comparative framework in order to draw some overall conclusions about the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the IUCN's Commissions as a group, particularly in today's context of increased competition for the key resources that the Commissions need – people's volunteer time, financial support from donors and the attention of governments and civil society to their knowledge products and services.

The Review is **not** an in-depth review of any Commission but is charged to focus its attention on the ***organizational level*** of the Commissions rather than examine the results of specific projects and programmes carried by them. The Review is also asked to look forward to see how well positioned the Commissions are to meet the challenges driving the conservation and development agenda as reflected in the global situation analysis of the IUCN Programme.

The full terms of reference are given in Annex 1. The five objectives of the Review are:

> 1. To assess the relevance of each Commission to IUCN's constituency (members, partners, donors), and to the IUCN Policy and Programme.
>
> 2. To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of each Commission in fulfilling its mandate and achieving its objectives. In particular, the Review will focus on the use of the specific knowledge products and services of the Commissions in their area of expertise;
>
> 3. To assess the effects of the Commissions knowledge products and services on intended users. To determine the extent to which the knowledge product effects are aligned with the new intended outcomes of the Intersessional Programme.
>
> 4. To review the positioning of the Commissions in relation to the initiatives that are shaping the global environmental conservation agenda, such as the Millennium Development Goals, PRSPs, the WSSD Plan of Action and other major poverty-environment related initiatives.
>
> 5. Based on the conclusions of the Review 1) recommend the key issues affecting performance to which Commissions should respond; 2) recommend whether or not a more in-depth review of any Commission is warranted.

These objectives were agreed with the Commission Chairs prior to the Review and an evaluation matrix summarizing the key questions to be addressed was shared with them by the IUCN Monitoring and Evaluation Unit at an early stage in the process. The initial evaluation matrix is presented in Annex 2.

All six Commissions were reviewed in the last Intersessional period and the results were presented to Congress in Amman 2000. However these reviews were conducted at different times and by different reviewers using varying terms of reference[1]. The Review by Gabor Bruszt and Stephen Turner in June 2000 used a common framework for four Commissions (SSC, CEM, WCPA and CEESP) and this Review builds on that experience.

[1] WCPA, May 1998 (R. Crofts and E. Lahmann); CEC, October 1999 (B. Romjin); SSC, CEM, CEL and CEESP, June 2000 (G. Bruszt and S. Turner)

## 1.2 Review approach

The Review is an **organizational** assessment not an in-depth evaluation. It takes as its starting point the view that organizational performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency is dependent on the ***capacity*** of the organization (its leadership, management, human and financial resources and its structure), its ***motivation and incentives*** and its ***external environment,*** which can facilitate or inhibit performance[2]. The key elements in the assessment framework are shown in Table 1 and are elaborated in Annex 2 (the evaluation matrix).

**Table 1 Framework for Commission Review**

| ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY | ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE | ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT | ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategic leadership<br>Management<br>Governance<br>Roles and responsibilities<br>Human resources<br>Program management<br>Process management<br>Inter-organizational linkages | History<br>Culture – values, norms<br>Mission and objectives<br>Incentives and rewards<br>Sanctions<br>Trust<br>Volunteerism | Mandate and legal framework<br>Opportunities – risks<br>Stakeholders, Partners<br>Clients- target groups<br>Competitors<br>Changing technology<br>Values and attitudes for conservation and sustainable development | *Effectiveness of major program activities*<br>*Effectiveness in meeting objectives*<br>*Effectiveness in meeting client expectations*<br>*Efficiency in using resources*<br>*Financial viability*<br>*Relevance over time* |

One of the challenges for this Review is that the Commissions are not organizations in the normal sense. They are part of a much larger and more complex organization – IUCN, which constitutes a dominant element in their operating environment. At the same time, they can sometimes act as relatively independent entities in relation to other organizations - donors, partner organizations, key target groups and audiences. These relationships are not necessarily mediated through the other parts of IUCN, and indeed are not always reported to it.

Commissions are expert networks which fall into the category of what are now called *formal knowledge networks*. There is a burgeoning literature on knowledge networks and their allies, *communities of practice*, but methods on how to evaluate them are only slowly being developed[3]. One of the distinctions about *formal knowledge networks* is that they are networks of experts, whose members are usually invited to join based on their reputations and expertise. For the purposes of this report, we define them as:

[2] IUCN M&E Unit is using the organizational evaluation framework developed by IDRC and Universalia (see Lusthaus et al, 2002) and this Review has broadly adopted the same framework.
[3] One of the few we have found is the work by Creech (2001) and Creech and Ramji (2004).

> Formal knowledge networks are networks of individuals and organizations that are working together for a defined purpose and whose membership is selected on the basis of their knowledge, expertise and other skills and resources they can bring to the network. They share knowledge and produce outputs while at the same time building the capacity of their members and of the network itself. Formal knowledge networks can have convening power and influence on those outside their networks and usually intersect with both organizations and other knowledge networks in their operating environment. Although they are networks rather than formal organizations, they share some of the characteristics of both.

Creech (2001) has developed seven principles that characterize formal knowledge networks. These are:

1. They are task or purpose driven and thematic or regionally focused or both;
2. They are working networks information – with the emphasis on the "work" rather than the "net". They are adding more value than either just exchanging information and/or producing outputs;
3. They require the commitment and resources of the institutions as well as the participation of individuals;
4. They are built on expertise not just interest alone and thus membership is based on merit and is often by invitation;
5. They are characteristically internally diverse while focused on a common cause. They may be cross-sectoral, cross-regional, cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary;
6. Capacity development is one of the benefits that the knowledge network should deliver for individual members, for virtual teams within the network, for the leaders and managers and for the capacity of the network as a whole;
7. Knowledge networks are ***communication*** networks. Effective communications are essential to the network to enable it to aggregate knowledge, produce outputs, and engage with external target groups, clients and audiences. Communications have implications for resources and for managing the networks.

All of these characteristics have implications for what resources *formal knowledge networks* need to perform well, how they should organize themselves and be accountable for those resources.

This discussion of knowledge networks is not esoteric in the context of the review of Commissions because some of the measures commonly used for evaluating performance of organizations may not be as applicable to networks. For example, the Commissions exhibit *organizational* attributes like formal procedures and hierarchical management structures directly abutting *network* attributes like independent and entrepreneurial sub-networks, volunteer human resources and less rather than more reporting back up the system. Probably by virtue of their statutory status, the Commissions have also outlasted many formal organizations by many decades in terms of their life cycles. While we have adopted an overall framework that has proved valuable for organizational review, we have also had to adapt it to take account of the fact that the Commissions have some characteristics of organizations and some of networks.

Our strategic approach to the Review is framed by the limited time frame available to us (27 January-21 March 2004) combined with the challenge of reviewing all six Commissions within one comparative review. These two factors limit the depth of analysis that we have been able to do and have determined our focus mainly at the level of the Commission rather than that of the Sub Groups. We were not able to interview some of the key people we tried to reach in the time available – a situation exacerbated by COP7 of the Convention on Biodiversity taking place during the time of the Review.

The overall sampling strategy was to ensure that balance was maintained in the information collected on each Commission, as well as balancing interviews with people inside and outside IUCN about the role and performance of Commissions as a whole. Within the Commissions, we sampled Specialist Group leaders and Regional Vice-Chairs.

Two aspects of the Review deserve special mention. The first is the *Knowledge Product and Services* component on tracking the Commissions' knowledge products and services. We believe that this component of the Review is exploring new avenues that will be important to how IUCN positions its outputs for different user groups in the future. In the Knowledge Product and Services component, we have tracked nine selected outputs of the Commissions from producers to users, both to see if it could be done and how to do it; and to obtain some preliminary results from the case studies. The main findings are summarized in section 6 of this report and the full report on the Knowledge Product and Services component is given in a separate Addendum to this report.

A second methodological innovation for IUCN is a web survey in English, French and Spanish of members of all Commissions. Members were invited by an e-mail message to fill in the questionnaire on the IUCN website. In the month that the survey was posted on the web, it garnered 587 responses. This was experimental but it has yielded some interesting results as well as some lessons for how IUCN can better apply this tool in the future.

## 1.3 Methods

The Review was conducted using three main methods: interviews with key individuals; a survey of Commission members; and analysis of documentation. The purpose of using several methods is to reach different types of information and groups of people and to use the time-honoured survey approach of triangulation – to provide cross-checks of one data source on another. There are limitations on what cross-checking can be achieved within any one review. This is true for the documents that were made available to us and for the people who were able to speak to us. The different instruments that were used in the interviews and surveys are given in Annex 4 and 5.

Table 2 provides a summary of the numbers of people who contributed to the Review through interviews (in person and by telephone) and through responding to the web and e-mail surveys. In total, some 93 interviews were conducted on the performance of the Commissions plus a further 157 interviews with producers, key informants and users on the Commissions' knowledge products and services. Two surveys were conducted – of Commission members through the IUCN website, to which 587 responses were obtained and of users of the selected knowledge products and services (174 respondents)[4]. While the instruments are different, the total observations (interviews and survey responses) obtained for the Review was over 1000.

[4] Response rates are not given for the web survey as the number of Commission members receiving the e-mail is not known in most cases, but the large size of the SSC membership means that the web survey sample size for SSC is considerably smaller than for the other Commissions, and any interpretation should take account of this. Response rates for the user survey ranged from 5-14% for the different knowledge products.

**Table 2 Summary of interviews and survey respondents**

| MODULE | COMMISSION FOCUS | | | | | | NOT SPECIFIC TO ONE COMMISSION | | | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | CEM | CEC | CEESP | CEL | SSC | WCPA | IUCN Council | IUCN Secret. | Other | |
| Interviews on Commissions | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 12 | 8 | 5 | 20 | 19[5] | 93 |
| Survey of Commission members | 52 | 130 | 71 | 128 | 156 | 50 | - | - | - | 587 |
| KPS Informant / producer Interviews | 8 | 7 | 11 | 6 | 9 | 6 | - | - | - | 47 |
| KPS User Interviews | 13 | 14 | 24 | 24 | 22 | 13 | - | - | - | 110 |
| Survey of KPS users | 21 | - | 61 | 14 | - | 62 | - | 16 | - | 174 |
| TOTAL Observations[6] | 101 | 159 | 174 | 169 | 199 | 139 | 5 | 36 | 19 | 1011 |

**2) Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews about the role, operations and performance of the Commissions in person and by telephone were conducted January 27-March 11 2004 with key people in:

i) Commissions including the Commission Chairs, selected Specialist or Working Group Chairs and Regional Vice Chairs;
ii) Members of IUCN Council;
iii) IUCN Secretariat including senior management at headquarters, Regional Directors, Programme Coordinators, Senior Policy Advisors and the Commission Focal Points;
iv) Selected Member organizations and National Committees of IUCN, key partner agencies such as Convention Secretariats and a few external experts.

In all 93 persons were interviewed for this component of the Review (Annex 3). The sample was purposive and identified with the help of Commission Chairs and Focal Points among others. In a few cases, members responding to the web survey contacted the Review Team and were subsequently interviewed.

A second set of interviews focused on the knowledge products and services of the Commissions was held with key informants who were either people who had extensive insight into the work of the Commissions or who were the *knowledge producers* for the selected case studies. A third set of structured interviews were conducted with 10-14 *users* per knowledge product[7]. These informants were selected from recommendations by Commission Chairs and Focal points.

[5] Three of these informants were also members of SSC
[6] Observations include interviews and survey respondents. Some people were interviewed twice.
[7] The term '*users*' refers to potential rather than known actual users of a particular product or service.

### 3) Surveys

A survey of members of Commissions was placed on a hidden link on the IUCN website February 16 – March 15 2004 (Annex 5). Commission members were invited to complete the survey in English, French or Spanish through the Commission Focal Points or Secretariats using the usual e-mail distribution system for information to members. One of the difficulties is that it has not been possible for the reviewers to calculate exactly how many members received the invitation and so to determine the response rate[8]. However 587 members answered the survey including some who were notified only a few days before the survey was finished. Since we cannot calculate the sample size, the responses are to be taken as indicative rather than predictive, especially for SSC where the sample size was much smaller than for the other Commissions.

The regional distribution of the respondents to the web survey is the same as the regional distribution of Commissions' membership so that there should be no response bias on the basis of region. This was almost certainly helped by providing the possibility to respond to the survey in French and Spanish as well as in English.

The survey covered members' views of the relevance and performance of their Commission, its leadership, the value to them as volunteers of being a member of the Commissions and the other knowledge networks to which they belong. It is our understanding that this is the first such survey of members across all Commissions to be used in a review process.

For six of the seven knowledge products, surveys were conducted among users to increase the sample size of users. The surveys were distributed by e-mail in English with letters in English, French and Spanish indicating that the questionnaires were also available in Spanish and French. The regional distribution of the users surveyed was similar to the regional distribution of Commission members, with some overweighting towards respondents in Western Europe (31% of users surveyed compared to 24% of Commission members) and underweighting for respondents from North America and the Caribbean (17% compared to 23%) and South and East Asia (11% compared to 16%).

### 4) Analysis of documentation

a) Documents such as Commission mandates, strategic and other work plans, Commission reports to Council, evaluations, financial reports, membership lists and other relevant documentation provided to the Review Team by IUCN Secretariat and the Commissions were reviewed. The selected knowledge products and services were studied in greater detail.

b) A list of 109 products produced in this Intersessional Period was compiled and were analysed for their language of production, geographic focus of their content, theme and their potential contribution to the IUCN 2005-2008 Programme and to the emerging global environmental agenda as expressed in the WSSD Plan of Implementation.

c) Websites of the Commissions were used as a source of documentation and information. The statistics available on the visitors and visits to the websites were analysed.

[8] We comment on this problem in the report in relation to communications to members within the Commissions. While we do not have response rates for all Commissions, we do know that CEC had the highest response rate of at least 22%, indicating a high level of member engagement.

d) Membership lists for Commissions were analysed to determine the regional distribution of members.

The main documents included in the Review are listed in Annex 6. This does not include all the material reviewed on the Commission websites.

**5) Panel of experts on development – environment:**

In the Terms of Reference (5.5 Methodology) it was proposed that IUCN would convene a high level panel of development – environment experts to comment on key global issues and trends, and how to better position the work of the Commissions in order to improve IUCN's global influence. Given the tight time frame to complete the data collection and analysis by the time of Council, and given that the panel would need the results of the Review to study and consider before the panel was convened, this has not been possible to do before the March 2004 Council meeting. However, we agree that this would still be useful to do as part of the next steps in implementing the recommendations of the Review.

# 2 Role, Mandates and Leadership of the Commissions

The Commissions are a statutory component of IUCN. They are formally established or abolished by the World Congress which at each session approves their continued existence for the next Intersessional period. The Congress has the authority to determine the number of Commissions and their individual mandates. Congress also elects the Chairs of Commissions for four year terms from one ordinary session of Congress to the next. Commission Chairs are members of Council and are required to present a report at each ordinary or extraordinary session of the World Congress and each year to Council.

Part VIII of the IUCN Statutes lays out the nature, composition and function of the Commissions:

> 74. The Commissions shall be networks of expert volunteers entrusted to develop and advance the institutional knowledge and experience and objectives of IUCN
>
> 76. The functions of the Commission shall be to fulfill their missions as defined in their mandates, including:
>
> (a) to analyse issues and prepare assessments, reports, action plans, criteria and methodology and undertake research and other scientific and technical work;
> (b) to undertake tasks assigned to them within the integrated programme of IUCN;
> (c) to provide advice on any matter within their fields of competence;
> (d) to broaden knowledge and competence on matters relating to their mandates;
> (e) to work with members and the Secretariat to develop activities within the various Regions, and to support members and components of IUCN with necessary expertise; and
> (f) to undertake such other responsibilities as may be assigned to them by the World Congress and the Council.

In addition to these statutory functions, the Commissions play other important roles for the Union:

- They involve individuals from other relevant scientific, professional and expert networks in IUCN's activities; that is, they are a key means for IUCN to tap into other knowledge networks;

- They provide members with an important means of communicating with one another and working together within a more or less common vision and for the mission of IUCN. They thus enlarge the reach of the membership of IUCN and are a chief mechanism for bringing individuals into the Union as well as organizational and state members;

- Their reputation and convening power as networks enhances IUCN's reputation and convening power and the perceived value of the knowledge products and services of IUCN and the influence it can bring to bear on national governments and international agreements.

At its 18th Session in Perth, Australia in 1990, the General Assembly of IUCN set out some conclusions on what conditions are required for a Commission to be an effective instrument for bringing volunteer expertise to the Union. These conclusions were developed into criteria by Munro and Bruszt in their review of the Commissions in 1994:

1. It must be able to meet a clearly defined need;
2. There must be a widespread demand for the products of its work which must be central to the mission of the Union;
3. A Commission should not be a minor player in its field; it should be the main source of the knowledge it provides;
4. It should be possible to give its work a clear and limited focus so that Commission members clearly understand what is expected of them;
5. There is a strong and active network supported by a community of interest among the members;
6. A critical mass of members exists with some homogeneity of interest and commitment to common objectives;
7. It should balance diversity of expertise with a significant community of professional interest.

These criteria are still relevant to the Commissions and to their mandates. The criteria also parallel those that are generally accepted as valid for a well-functioning formal knowledge network.

## 2.1 Commission Mandates

The IUCN Statutes (Regulation 69) state that the mandate of each Commission, as established by the World Congress shall include the name, mission and *terms of reference* for the Commission. The mandates 2001-2004 for the Commissions follow a common structure:

(1) Mission (some also add a vision, goal or purpose);
(2) Objectives,
(3) Priorities for this Intersessional period, and
(4) Structure and organization of the Commission.

The approval of the mandates of Commissions and the statutory obligation of the Chairs to report to Council and to Congress are the main governance mechanisms linking the Commissions to the Union, and the means by which the Congress and Council may determine how well the Commissions have carried out their functions and delivered on their mandates.

We have examined the mandates of each Commission for 2001-2004 and the reports that the Chairs have made to Council in that period. In this section we review the individual Commission mandates followed by some general comments on the mandates as a whole. How well the Commissions have fulfilled their mandates and workplans in this Intersessional Period is discussed in sections 5 and 6.

**Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)**

CEM's mission is to provide expert guidance on integrated approaches to the management of natural and modified ecosystems to further the IUCN Mission.

It has three objectives:

1. Facilitating the implementation of integrated ecosystem management by assisting stakeholders to identify crucial issues and develop solutions to management problems;
2. Advising decision-makers on priority issues, new developments and strategies for implementing the ecosystem approach to conservation and sustainable natural resource management;
3. Improving understanding of the ecosystem approach to management by distilling key developments in ecosystem science and communicating it in an accessible form.

In meeting its objectives, CEM identified seven priority areas of work which emphasize *integrated* approaches to ecosystem management and *regional*-based understanding of ecosystem status and management. It identifies two key target groups as the international conventions, especially the CBD, and policy makers and managers. The objectives are clearly expressed; the questions relate more to what is now meant by the ecosystem approach.

Ecosystems lie at the core of IUCN's mission and its history. The present CEM is just rebuilding under new leadership. The current mandate focuses on the *management* of ecosystems and how to take the ecosystem approach from concept to action – in other words, how to develop strategies and policies for ecosystem managers that are based on the best available scientific concepts about ecosystem functioning. There are other networks that are currently undertaking major assessments of ecosystems, and the applied emphasis in the Commission's current mandate would seem well placed to benefit from the outputs of their work. We return to this in section 7.

The current mandate focuses on ecosystems without identifying *people* as part of ecosystem management, and human behaviour as a key driver in ecosystem change. Although interdisciplinary approaches are mentioned, the only discipline specifically mentioned in the mandate is ecosystem science. Since the mandate was written, the vision of CEM has evolved significantly and people are now placed at the heart of CEM's work in ecosystem management. In order to foster interdisciplinary work, the new CEM mandate places even greater emphasis on creating new partnerships with other scientific organizations, and members of IUCN.

For the next Intersessional Period, it will be important to not only implement the new CEM mandate that places ecosystem and human well-being within a single framework, but also encourage the Commission to be a fertile ground for interdisciplinary work embracing the

natural and social sciences, either within its own Sub Groups or through collaboration with other Commissions, including SSC and WCPA.

**Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)**

CEC's mission is to champion the strategic use of communication and education to promote learning and empower stakeholders to participate in achieving IUCN's mission.

It has six objectives which are aimed at *strengthening the capacity of IUCN members, Commissions and staff*:[9]

1. Recognize the need to manage and integrate education and communication in programmes, projects and policies;
2. Effectively manage and integrate education and communication to influence perceptions, engage stakeholders, build skills, undertake marketing, and manage networks and relations in their work;
3. Are advised on the basis of managing knowledge in appropriate ways to meet the needs of learning in IUCN including the development of skills;
4. Are advised on how to manage learning within organizations and in communities;
5. Support major conventions and international agreements relevant to IUCN's Programme through advocacy for and training in effective management of communications and education;
6. Support the development of educational programmes for and with influential sectors towards implementing IUCN's Programme.

CEC has an important and far reaching mission to champion communication and education as a means of changing human behaviour, specifically for biodiversity and for sustainable development. Its six objectives are broadly defined to cover the fields of education and communication as applied to IUCN's mission. Among the priorities given in the mandate are training programmes, the development of an IUCN policy for learning, knowledge management, communication and education, as well as undertaking market research on the design of educational programmes to mobilize society. Each of these is a major undertaking and it is not clear how CEC, with its present membership and resources could be expected to deliver fully on all six objectives of its mandate.

CEC's broad objectives identify the Union itself as a main target audience – IUCN members, other Commissions and staff. This sets it apart from the other Commissions. The six objectives foresee CEC working in the areas of education and communication, and community and organizational learning, involving skill building, stakeholder relations, marketing, and network management. On the one hand, the mandate of CEC is very broad and ambitious. On the other, four of the six objectives are instrumental in that they propose that the Commission's expertise will be engaged to assist *other parts* of the IUCN family to implement communications and education strategies, rather than the Commission per se. Only the last two objectives – advocacy and training for CEPA within the context of the major conventions and international agreements; and development of educational programmes to help implement IUCN's Programme are clearly framed as substantive programme activities of the Commission itself.

The way the mandate is framed seems to set up CEC more as a service provider to IUCN than might be expected for an international knowledge network in communications and education. The difficulty with positioning CEC as a service provider, especially for IUCN Members and

[9] CEC's mandate sets out six objectives. In CEC workplans for 2001-2004, these have been generally recombined into three objectives.

Secretariat is whether a volunteer network can adequately respond to all the demands for service that might be made – not so much in terms of expertise but in terms of rapid response when and where the client needs it. Is this the role of a knowledge network? Judging from the various review and planning meetings held by CEC during the Intersessional Period, this question has been raised more than once within the Commission and the ongoing debate shows that CEC is somewhat internally conflicted about it. Nor could we find any clear direction to CEC on the part of IUCN Council or management to assist them in resolving this role dilemma.

Objectives 5 and 6 are more clearly related to CEC's substantive area of knowledge and are less instrumental. They are very important areas for IUCN and raise fewer questions about the service role and whether training or supporting IUCN staff in doing a better job of communications in their workshops, programme or corporate outreach is really the role of a Commission.

**Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)**

CEESP's mission is to contribute to the IUCN Mission by providing expertise on the crucial economic, social and cultural factors affecting natural resources and biological diversity, and guidance and support towards effective polices and practices in environmental conservation and sustainable development.

CEESP has three objectives:

1. To lead and facilitate IUCN's critical thinking and learning and inter-disciplinary efforts towards more equitable, viable and sustainable action for natural resource management and conservation**;**
2. To develop, articulate and provide effective advice in support of IUCN's efforts (e.g. on approaches, lessons learned, methods and tools) towards more equitable, viable and sustainable action for natural resource management and conservation;
3. To foster, support and learn from a variety of community-based experiences and initiatives towards more equitable, viable and sustainable action for natural resource management and conservation.

According to its objectives, CEESP should play a leading role in the Union's interdisciplinary efforts towards equitable and sustainable action for natural resource management and conservation, and to learn from community based experience. CEESP's mandate also includes a Purpose section that identifies the Commission's rationale as stemming from the fact that conservation and degradation arise from human action and need to be dealt with through social, cultural and economic insight and action. It goes on to say that CEESP will provide a critical and open space for developing such insight and planning such action. This role of the Commission to be a leading edge for bringing new ideas and knowledge into the Union is what is needed of CEESP. This is one of the key roles of a Commission.

However, the mandate of CEESP is weak in not being more focused. The mandates of the Commissions tend to be expressed in broad terms, but CEESP's is the most open-ended. Traditionally, CEESP has inherited the mantle of being the "social science" Commission and it has always been a challenge for its leadership to focus the membership's efforts towards clear, achievable goals. Although one of the roles of Commissions is to provide cutting edge thinking and learning and an intellectual space for insight and action, CEESP's is the only mandate for the current Intersessional Period that has this explicitly as one of its objectives – in principle, this is to be welcomed. Another important role of the Commission is to harness specific areas of expertise and knowledge to support IUCN's One Programme, and here the mandate of CEESP is less explicit.

In its new incarnation, CEESP has added to its disciplinary heterogeneity by seeking new members on the basis of their expertise as community development practitioners.[10] While local and tacit knowledge are legitimate and valuable forms of knowledge, the mix of expertise and forms of knowledge that CEESP is proactively bringing into its membership makes it the least homogenous of the six Commissions, and thus the most difficult to "task" and organize its efforts to support IUCN's Programme.

CEESP's mandate identifies four priority areas (Collaborative Management; Sustainable Livelihood, Environment and Security; Trade and Environment) as the main areas of activity for the Intersessional Period.

**Commission on Environmental Law (CEL)**

CEL's mission is to advance environmental law, both through the development of new legal concepts and instruments and through building the capacity of societies to employ environmental law, in furtherance of IUCN's Mission.

It has four objectives that will be primarily achieved through engaging its environmental legal expertise to:

1. Advise governments at international, national and local levels about how to establish and employ environmental law to further sustainability;
2. Innovate and promote new or reformed legal concepts and instruments that conserve nature and natural resources and reform patterns of unsustainable development;
3. Build the capacity in all regions to encourage, establish, implement and enforce environmental law effectively; and
4. Provide education and information about environmental law, to the end that its remedial purposes may be more effectively achieved.

CEL identifies eight priorities through which its objectives will be achieved. These include working with the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements and other bodies to support synergies between the MEAs; fostering new international legal instruments, working with the judiciary and establishing centres of excellence within the framework of the IUCN International Academy of Environmental Law.

While the objectives of CEL are broad, they are clearly expressed and the relationship between the objectives and the priorities within the mandate are clear. What are harder to determine are the relative contributions of the Commission and the IUCN Environmental Law Centre to meet the objectives because the programme of CEL and ELC have in this Intersessional Period 2001-2004 moved closer to being an integrated whole – the Environmental Law Programme (ELP).

**Species Survival Commission (SSC)**

SSC's mission is to advance the mission of IUCN by serving as the principal source of advice to the Union and its members on the technical aspects of species conservation. It seeks to mobilize action by the world conservation community for species conservation, in particular

[10] CEESP' mandate identifies its membership as "*the world's foremost conservation and sustainable development practitioners, relevant social scientists, economists and top experts in conservation and development organizations with a keen interest in community-based as well as macro-level sustainable development*".

for those species threatened with extinction and those of importance for human welfare. SSC also has a vision of a *world that values and conserves present levels of biodiversity, within species, between species and of ecosystems* and sets itself the goal that the extinction crisis and loss of biodiversity are accepted as a shared responsibility and lead to action.

SSC has four objectives:

1. To influence decisions and policies affecting biodiversity by providing recommendations and guidelines based on sound interdisciplinary scientific information;
2. To encourage users of natural resources to adopt modes of production and consumption that promote the conservation of biodiversity;
3. To promote among the scientific community a greater commitment to the conservation, sustainable use and management of biodiversity and increased integration of findings across disciplines;
4. To increase the capacity to provide timely, innovative and practical solutions to conservation problems.

SSC has six programme priorities by which its objectives will be reached: Species Information Service (SIS), Red List Programme, Sustainable Use Initiative, Wildlife trade Programme, Plant Conservation Programme and the Invasive Species Programme. SSC's mandate clearly defines its role as a source of technical advice on species conservation with the objectives of influencing decisions and policies based on sound scientific information. Its first objective most closely matches its programme priorities.

However, in its second objective, SSC parallels the overall thrust of CEESP's mandate – to change the current modes of production and consumption to promote the conservation of biodiversity. This objective is not only much broader than the first objective but also overlaps with CEM's mandate on ecosystem management and requires expertise in social sciences. Where the mandates of one Commission overlaps or abuts another, the mandates should also say how the interface will be managed.

**World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)**

The mission of WCPA is to promote the establishment and effective management of a worldwide representative network of terrestrial and marine protected areas, as an integral contribution to the IUCN Mission. WCPA has four objectives:

1. To help governments and others plan protected areas and integrate them into all sectors, by strategic advice to policy makers;
2. To strengthen capacity and effectiveness of protected area managers, through provision of guidance, tools and information and a vehicle for networking;
3. To increase investment in protected areas, by persuading public and corporate donors of their value; and
4. To enhance WCPA's capacity to implement its programme, including cooperation with IUCN members and partners.

WCPA's mandate sets out seven priority areas in its action plan. These include the planning and implementation of the Vth World Congress on Protected Areas, *Benefits Beyond Boundaries*, in Durban, South Africa in September 2003; a focus on marine, forest and mountain biomes; implementing IUCN's role under the World Heritage Convention, trans-boundary protected areas; convening a World Protected Areas Leadership Forum for building capacity and regional action plans and programmes. WCPA also has a priority programme on

involving local communities in protected area management that it carries out in part through a joint Theme Programme with CEESP (TILCEPA).

WCPA's mandate is clear and focused. Its target groups are identified and it clearly shows in its objectives what it plans to do. It is also the shortest of the mandate statements.

**The Commission Mandates as a group**

The mandates of the Commissions share some common problems. They are more in the nature of organizational charters for the long haul than documents that give clear direction for the next Intersessional Period. Their current format also means that the mandates are not a good basis for judging how well Commission have performed, yet presumably it is on the basis of their performance, together with their continued relevance to the mission of IUCN that is the measure of whether a Commission should continue for another Intersessional Period.

One of the observations that have been made many times about the Commissions is that through the decades, the same number of Commissions has survived with more or less the same core constellations of expertise and overall goals. We think that the open-ended "charter" nature of the mandates without also including a set of marching orders from Congress for the next four years probably contributes to this longevity, together with a reluctance on the part of Congress to actually close any Commission down. It also leaves the Commissions vulnerable to not knowing what their tasks are (a major inhibitor of effectiveness in knowledge networks) and to being at the mercy of its leadership. When differences of opinion emerge, a well defined mandate can act as a rudder to direct the enterprise towards its goal.

Although the mandates include a set of goals called objectives, these are not objectives for the Intersessional Period that are deliverable or measurable. The "objectives" are generally organizational goals that go beyond four years. **Thus the mandates as currently formulated do not provide an objective basis on which to arrive at decisions on the continuance or not of the Commissions – or even if a repositioning is required.** Four years is after all a fairly short time frame and some clearer statements about the work to be undertaken and results to be achieved is both reasonable and would bring the Commissions more in line with good practice, and with the Programme, notwithstanding that the Commissions are volunteer networks. This practice was followed for the Commission mandates in 1991-1993 where specific programme activities were spelled out in the mandates together with their links to the IUCN Programme. For some reason, the practice was abandoned in 1994 and has not been resumed. We would recommend that it should be.

The draft mandates for 2005-2008 follow the same structure and share many of the same problems as the mandates for the current Intersessional Period. Within the current structure for mandates, the mandates of CEL and WCPA come closest to that of good practice in spelling out clearly what they will do to reach what objectives. An additional requirement for the new mandates should be to show clearly how the Commissions will contribute to the one IUCN Programme – to which areas they will contribute, in what ways, and for what expected results. This will be easier for some Commissions (CEM, CEL, SSC, WCPA) that have already integrated Commission and Secretariat implemented programmes than it is for CEC and CEESP that are only partially integrated and to some extent are still looking for their home in the Programme.

One of the difficulties facing the Commissions in being more specific about the programme objectives for the next Intersessional Period is that the mandate is prepared by the outgoing

Chair and Steering Committee for implementation by the incoming leadership, which may not be the same. However in the context of the one IUCN Programme decision and the integration of the Commissions' work into the Programme, the degrees of freedom available to a new Chair to radically depart from agreed directions for the Commission programme are already reduced.

To allow the new leadership to set the specific objectives to be achieved during his/her term of office, the mandates could require each Commission to develop a four year Strategic Plan with programme objectives, targets and performance indicators during the first year of the mandate. The logic of setting objectives and targets either in the mandate or required by the mandate would require that at the next World Congress, the Commission Chairs report on progress and achievements.

The purpose of the proposed changes to the Commission mandates is to allow Congress to better judge how the Commissions have met their objectives and what results have been achieved. The mandates should also show how the Commissions are going to work with the one Programme and with each other. There should be explicit reference to what the expectations are for inter-Commission collaboration at global and regional levels and some indication of proposed topics for collaboration. At the same time, the mandates should allow space for the Commissions to provide the critical thinking and new ideas that IUCN seeks from them. They should not be so constrained by the one Programme that they lose their advisory and leading edge roles.

The mandates should include measurable objectives and expected results for the four-year Intersessional Period that are clearly linked to the targets and indicators spelled out in the Commissions' Intersessional Plans and Annual Workplans.

**It is recommended that the statutory requirement for "terms of reference" in Commission mandates be further elaborated to include:**

**(1) Mission statement**
**(2) Goals for the Commission over the longer term**
**(3) Priority areas or themes**
**(4) Objectives for the Intersessional Period**
**(5) Expected results for the Intersessional Period**
**(6) Structure and Organization**

## 2.2 Reporting to Council

The Chair of each Commission is required to present a report at each World Congress and each year to Council (Article 77). There were no Commission reports at the 53rd (October 2000) and 54th meetings of Council (February 2001). All six Commission Chairs reported to the 55th Meeting of Council in October 2001. At the 56th Meeting of Council in May 2002, it was agreed among the Commission Chairs that three Commission Chairs would present substantive reports at each meeting of Council. At the 56th Meeting, CEC, CEESP and SSC reported and at the following meeting in December 2002, it was the turn of CEM, CEL and WCPA. At the 58th Meeting of Council (June 2003) time constraints meant that no Commission reports were received and they were deferred to the 59th Meeting in December 2003.

We have reviewed the minutes of the Council Meetings and the Reports of Commissions to them. They vary considerably in the detail presented in written form and some appear to be oral reports accompanied by printouts of slide presentations. The most detailed report is a 47 page document from CEESP presented to Council in December 2003.

What the reports present to Council is a list of Commission activities with the emphasis on their achievements. They do not present problems or challenges encountered along the way and how the challenges were met, or indicate what emerging issues on the horizon that IUCN should be aware of. Neither do they present the annual progress against the Commission's objectives and targets even where the Commission has such milestones in its own workplans and strategic plans. The reports appear to have given rise to little or no discussion in Council in this Intersessional Period[11] which may be a factor of too little time but also, we were told, is because a listing of achievements outside of any accountability framework does not provide a basis for asking why certain actions were taken or why some actions have priority over others.

**The reports that we have seen do not allow Council to get a good handle on what the Commissions are doing in order to provide sufficient oversight and guidance.** They give the details but not the framework. We would propose a common reporting format which includes *inter alia* how the Commissions' work is achieving their objectives, including contributing to the IUCN Programme, what response the Commissions are making to regional priorities, and what emerging issues within their fields relevant to the mission of IUCN are on the horizon. Council and the Chairs could agree on what perspectives would be highlighted each year so that over the four years Council has a fuller picture. Thus the accountability framework would "roll up" over the period of the Intersessional Period so that the next Congress gets a consolidated picture of successes and constraints, over the four years.

A more structured and common approach to reporting by the Chairs within a clearer accountability framework of objectives and results would enable Council and Congress to better understand what the Commissions are doing, and why. In this regard, Council might wish to consider if the annual reports from the Commissions going to Congress should be consolidated and accompanied by an overview document from Council on the Commissions as a whole.

> **It is recommended that the Commission Chairs report to Council and Congress using a common written reporting framework and format that includes reporting results and achievements against objectives set in their mandates and as elaborated in their Intersessional Plans and Annual Workplans.**

## 2.3 Leadership

The Chairs of the Commissions are elected by the World Congress from candidates recommended by the Council. As a group, they should reflect diversity of regions as well as gender balance. The responsibilities of the Commission Chairs are onerous and include financial, managerial and ambassadorial responsibilities. They include:

- Providing creative, dynamic and visionary **leadership** to the Commission;

[11] We did not see the minutes of the 59th Meeting of Council in December 2003.

- **Managing** an international volunteer network organized around specialist groups and regions, including putting in place a management system through the appointment of Specialist Group Chairs and Regional Chairs, and a system for appointing Commission members;

- Having overall **responsibility** for Commission activities to ensure that they are of the highest standards, are relevant to further the mission of IUCN, align with the IUCN Programme, and enhance rather than put at risk the reputation of IUCN;

- **Fund raising** for the operations of the network and for project activities, together with the Sub Groups and Regional Chairs;

- Being **accountable for financial expenditures** from funds provided by IUCN to the Commission; and ensuring that there is proper accounting for all funds received by the Commission;

- Playing a **representative and ambassadorial** role for IUCN and the Commission at various national and international meetings within and outside IUCN;

- Being a **Member of Council** and reporting to Council and to the World Congress.

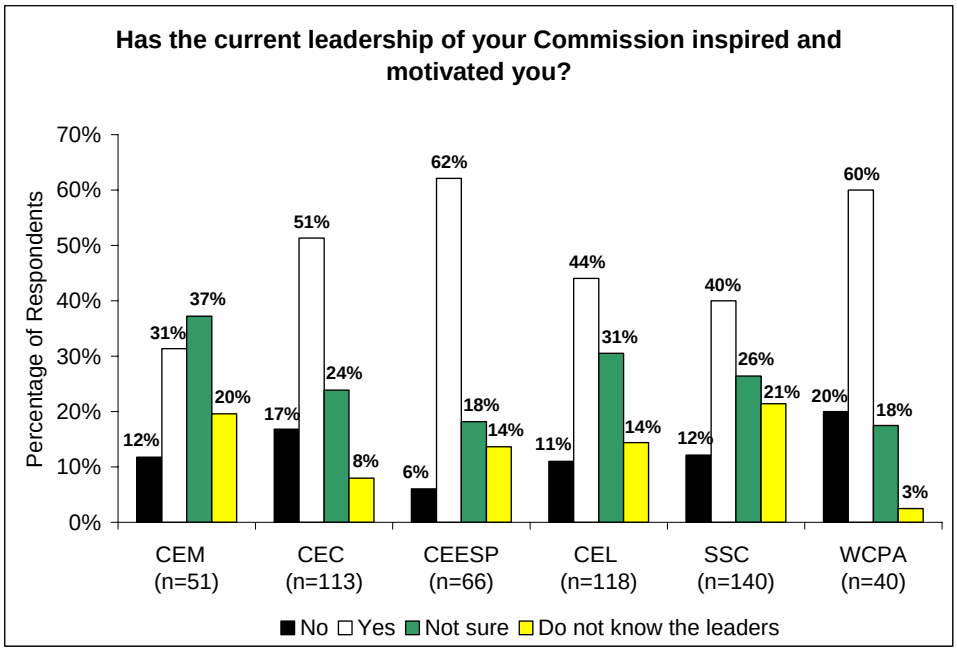
To fulfill this important role for IUCN, the Commission Chairs should combine the attributes of:

- Outstanding, widely respected expert
- A leader able to give vision, inspiration and direction
- An international network of contacts
- Networking skills, including the ability to work across cultures, disciplines and regions
- A good manager with strategic planning, organizational skills and able to chair meetings
- A good communicator, able to work in English and at least one other official language
- Good knowledge of IUCN and experience with the Commission
- Time available and adequate institutional support to do the job

The selection of a Commission Chair is a very important decision for IUCN, as it is the Chair who nominates the rest of the leadership, selects the Specialist Group Chairs and gives direction to the Commission. At the same time Commission Chairs are a remote figure for most of the membership. For the great majority, their contacts are with their Specialist Group Chairs.

Our survey data show that for some Commissions about 20% of the members do not know the leaders of their Commission (CEM and SSC) compared to WCPA where only 2% say they do not know the leaders (Figure 1). The survey also asked if the leadership of their Commission inspired and motivated them and found some differences between the Commissions. The leadership of WCPA CEC and CEESP are known to, and are motivating a higher proportion of their members. The members of CEM, CEL and SSC are least likely to be sure whether their leaders have inspired and motivated them. The proportion of members who felt they were not motivated by their leadership varied from only 6% in CEESP to 20% in WCPA.

**Figure 1 Commission Members' Perceptions of their Leadership**




It is becoming increasingly difficult to find outstanding and willing candidates who fulfill all the requirements in terms of personal attributes, and have the time available and financial and institutional backing to carry out the responsibilities of a Commission Chair. The issue of succession of the Chair is very much a concern for some of the present Commission Chairs and it was reported to us that when outstanding persons are approached, they decline because of the time and financial commitment involved. Although there is a notional understanding that Commission Chairs spend 30% of their time on Commission work, the Chairs themselves tell us that it can be much more – from 50-100%.

This major time commitment and overwhelming range of responsibilities for a "volunteer" chair has several implications. IUCN loses some outstanding expert leaders who cannot take on such an onerous managerial and fundraising role. There is a bias particularly against those potential leaders who are working in institutions that cannot support them financially by giving them time off from their duties to be Commission Chairs – and this is particularly the situation for those from the South.[12] There is also a bias against mid-career leaders who are less able to negotiate 30-50% time off for 4-8 years. A separate but related issue is that outstanding experts with international networks are not necessarily skilled in *managing* networks, which is recognized as one of the most difficult types of organization to manage – especially without good support.

Some Chairs have managed to get the backing from their own institution or from other supportive partner institutions in their country to enable them to cover their own salary for time spent on IUCN work and/or to hire additional staff that works directly for them. Others struggle to carry out their duties as Commission Chairs at nights and weekends while maintaining their other fulltime commitments. Thus, while all the Chairs are volunteers from the perspective of IUCN, in practice some are paid by other institutions for at least some of their time spent on Commission work while others are not.

[12] The geographic balance has improved in this Intersessional Period but the arrangements to find support for Chairs working in institutions that cannot afford to provide their time free to IUCN are still ad hoc rather than systematically in place.

We heard several proposed partial solutions to this problem of attracting strong candidates to lead the Commissions. One is that some Commission Chairs have to spend too much time on administrative matters that could be handled by others if they had adequate administrative support. The valuable time of the Chairs is being spent on tasks that they should not have to do themselves but which is essential to running the network.

Another suggestion is that IUCN should help those Chairs who need such assistance to find financial support outside their own institution to cover their own time working for the Commission, such as from a donor or a member organization. This might level the playing field for potential candidates to be Commission Chairs and would not substantially change the volunteer nature of the position from what it currently is. We are not suggesting a topping up of salaries, which most donors do not support, but compensation paid to the Chair's organization to give him or her time off to lead the Commission that recognizes that this burden should not be shouldered by either the Chair personally or his/her institution unless they are able to do so.

> **It is recommended that the inputs of present and past Chairs and the Director General be sought to develop and propose a policy to Council to provide adequate support to Commission Chairs to release their time from their work and provide administrative support as needed in particular circumstances. This should be linked to clear accountability for such funds. The purpose of the policy would be to help enlarge the pool of potential outstanding candidates willing and able to stand for election and should help improve geographic balance.**
>
> **A policy paper should provide the rationale and sufficient background to the policy (including the role, functions and time requirements of the Chair's role) so that donors might be encouraged to "endow" or otherwise support a Chair for the Intersessional Period.**

The Chair of a Commission not only has onerous duties but has sweeping powers. The Chair is entitled to act in the name of the Commission. He/she is responsible for the recommendation to Council of the Commission Steering Committee including Deputy Chair, Specialist Group Chairs and Regional Chairs. The Chair also appoints or re-appoints the members of Commissions, although in practice this is commonly delegated to Specialist Group Chairs. Thus the make-up of the leadership and membership of the Commission flows from the Chair.

This has caused problems when Chairs followed a personal agenda. There have also been problems when Chairs have been unable to carry out their duties; some Commissions have been left virtually leaderless for long periods of time and almost all activities of the Commission ground to a halt. These situations are neither hypothetical nor rare judging from the past and current Intersessional Periods. Therefore there should be some mechanism to replace Chairs who cannot or have not performed their duties satisfactorily. The performance review by the President of the Chairs will help to identify where these situations occur. It should also be a collective responsibility of the Steering Committee to continue to lead the Commission, and the duty of Council to ensure that effective arrangements for leadership of the Commissions are in place.

There also needs to be an approved governance process for transferring authority of the Chair. In practice, some Commissions, such as WCPA, have had the benefit of very effective Deputy Chairs who have been able to take over in the illness of the Chair. But at present, the Regulations specify that the Deputy Chair assumes only those functions that are specifically delegated to him/her by the Chair, other than the ability to vote at Council Meetings in the Chair's absence. This delegation of authority may not allow the Deputy Chair to fill a void if the Chair is no longer performing for any reason. One solution that has been proposed is that the Deputy Chair should be elected as a Chair-elect. Another is that the Deputy Chair is empowered to act in the Chair's stead where the Chair is absent or incapacitated. In either case, the functions of the Deputy Chair might be examined with these issues in mind so that the statutory delegation of authority might more clearly address them.

**It is recommended that the statutory role of Deputy Chair of Commissions be reviewed to clarify his/her role in the absence, incapacitation or non-performance of the Chair.**

# 3 Structure and Management of the Commissions

## 3.1 Life cycle of the Commissions

One of the factors in the present structures, management and membership in the Commissions is their history. Although all six Commissions have been in existence in some form or other since 1969, in their present incarnations they are at different stages in their life-cycles. This is significant for their functioning as knowledge networks.

Three of the Commissions are in the early stages of rebuilding their knowledge networks. Two of these Commissions, CEM and CEESP have undergone considerable turmoil in the recent past with their leadership and their mandates, which had been recommended by earlier external reviews not to be renewed. CEM had been virtually inactive between October 2000 and March 2002 and has had only two years to build up its membership from the ground up. CEESP, whose mandate was approved at the last World Congress by Resolution, has been rebuilding its membership and Sub Groups within the current Intersessional Period.

The third Commission, CEC, has undergone a major process of renewal since 1993. Although it had 600 members in October 2000 and 684 members in December 2003, CEC underwent a 30% change in its membership to focus its expertise on its new thematic areas. CEC has therefore also a high proportion of new members and new sub-groups.

Three of the Commissions can be said to be at a mature stage in their growth; CEL, SSC and WCPA. Their membership is growing steadily (CEL) or very slowly (WCPA). Their Sub Groups have largely continued from the previous Intersessional Period, with the addition of new initiatives, such as the Indigenous Peoples Group (CEL) and Developing the Capacity to Manage Theme (WCPA). A number of new Thematic Programmes were added for WCPA after the adoption of the Strategic Plan in September 2002

One Commission, SSC faces particular problems of size and complexity where its growth has reached a stage where the Commission network is difficult to manage and communicate with effectively. It is the problem than comes with success since Specialist Groups want to stay within SSC rather than migrate elsewhere and new Specialist Groups want to set up shop under its umbrella. SSC has 128 sub-groups, about 8,000 members and has had to put a quasi-moratorium on new groups unless they are able to self-organize, and for some sub-groups, there are restrictions on new members. In addition to its 117 species Specialist Groups, SSC has five disciplinary Specialist Groups, which take a different cut at the problem of loss of biodiversity (such as Conservation Breeding and Invasive Species) and 6 Task Forces or Committees.

## 3.2 Management

The IUCN Regulations[13] require that the Commission Chairs propose their candidates for the members of the Commission Steering Committees to Council for approval no later than the second Council meeting after the World Congress. These, together with the Chair and Deputy Chair are appointed as officers of the Commission and they are required to adopt by-laws for the Commission for each Intersessional Period. The Commissions may also establish Sub Groups of their members as they deem appropriate. The Director General is asked to ensure that the Secretariat provides reasonable support to the work of each Commission.

In addition to these requirements emanating from the IUCN Regulations, the mandates of the Commissions identify to varying degrees of specificity what the organizational and management structure of the Commission will be for the Intersessional Period. Beyond this, it is really up to the Chairs and Steering Committees to decide on the most efficient and effective organizational structure for the Commission. The structure of the Commissions into their various sub-groups is described in section 5.1 in relation to their programmes.

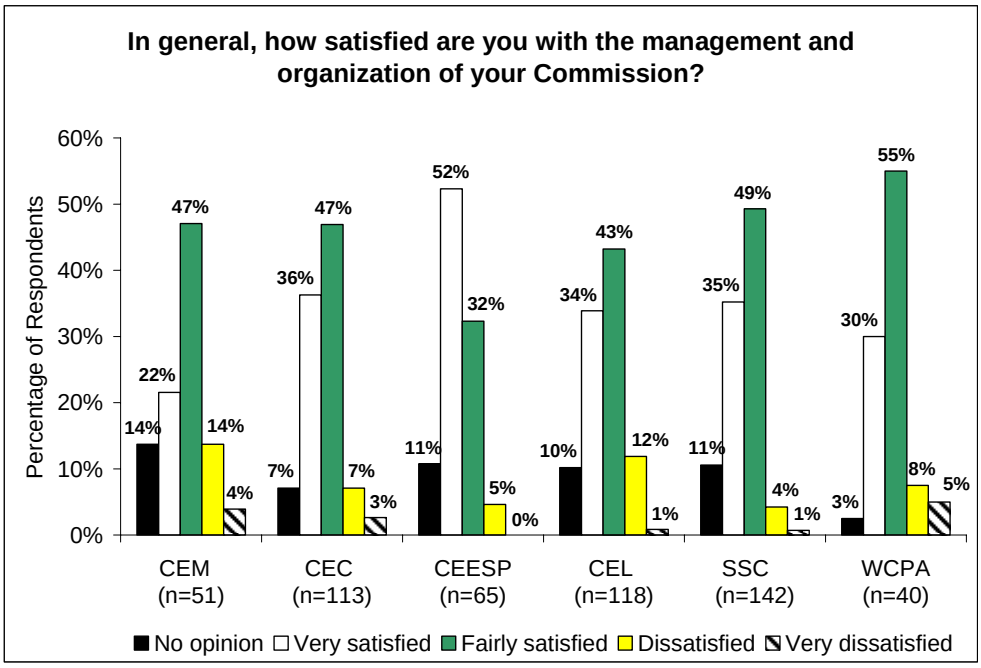
### 3.2.1 Steering Committees

The Steering Committees of the Commissions reflect a reasonably good representation of the Commission in terms of areas of specialization and region. They also include the Secretariat Focal Points so that there is a clear link with the IUCN Programme and the Secretariat.

The downside of being a good representative body is that the Steering Committees are so large they are not able to meet often. Most Steering Committees meet only once per year so that a smaller Executive Committee carries out management functions in between Steering Committee meetings. SSC's 128 Specialist Group Chairs rarely meet as a group. We heard no particular concerns about any Commission Steering Committee in our interviews although some members who responded to the web survey see them as part of an inner circle that excludes others and is not democratic.

[13] As revised on 29 May 2002

**Figure 2 Members' Satisfaction with the Management and Organization of their Commission**




As far as we are able to assess, the Steering Committee and Executive Committee structures of the Commissions are operating efficiently within the considerable constraints of their size and the need for regional representation that is part of their mandates from Congress. The majority of members surveyed in all Commissions responded that they were very or fairly satisfied with the management and organization of their Commissions (> 80% for all Commissions except CEM and CEL: Figure 2).

### 3.2.2 Sub Group Chairs

The Commission by-laws describe the role of the Sub Group Chairs[14]. CEL has also prepared draft Operating Protocols for its Specialist Groups (March 2004) which will be considered by its Steering Committee. The functions of Sub Group Chairs are presently most detailed in the SSC by-laws, which are largely followed by CEM. CEC, CEL and WCPA by-laws do not spell out the role of Sub Group Chairs in any detail. CEESP has not yet issued by-laws, although its working group GETI has and these are being used as a model to develop the CEESP by-laws. Generalizing from the SSC by-laws, the Sub Group (SG) Chairs have three main areas of responsibility in managing the work of the Commission: Programme, Administration and Finance, and Networking and Reporting:

*Programme*

- Establish the goals and program objectives of the SG
- Plan and implement an agreed programme of work
- Establish mechanisms for responding to requests for expertise and advice

[14] The Commissions vary in their nomenclature for their Sub-Groups. CEM uses *Priority Areas;* CEC uses *Product Groups*, CEL and SSC use *Specialist Groups*, CEESP uses *Working Groups;* and WCPA uses *Theme Programmes* and *Task Forces*.

- Make interventions to appropriate bodies and fora in the name of the SG (after vetting by the Commission Chair and IUCN)

*Administration and Finance*
- Maintain SG Membership data
- Raise funds for project activities and for SG meetings

*Networking and Reporting*
- Act as Focal Point for the SG network
- Liaise with IUCN staff
- Liaise with the Commission Steering Committee
- Report to Commission leadership on the work and status of the SG

The main challenges reported for the Sub Group Chairs in terms of being effective are that they must raise funds for the activities and meetings of their SGs and for other networking activities such as Newsletters. In practice, some Sub Groups can piggy-back their SG meetings more easily onto other meetings than can other Sub Groups. The question of funding the Sub Groups and the shadow resources of the Commissions is discussed in section 4.

### 3.2.3 Regional Chairs and Regional Committees

To varying degrees the Commissions have all responded to the call for more emphasis on regionalization in their programme activities and in working more closely with IUCN members in the regions. One key mechanism has been to appoint Regional Vice-Chairs. Geographic balance has long been a consideration in constituting the Commission Steering Committees but in this Intersessional Period, more emphasis has been placed on the role of Regional Vice-Chairs.

We heard much more concern about the role of Regional-Vice Chairs from the Commissions, including from Regional Vice-Chairs themselves, and from the IUCN Regional Offices than we did about the role of Specialist Group Chairs.

SSC has given considerable thought to the role of Regional Vice-Chairs as reflected in their Terms of Reference for the SSC Steering Committee. For SSC, these do not include a responsibility for either programme implementation or recruiting new members. The main roles SSC foresees for its Regional Vice-Chairs are:

- *Regional focal point* and liaison for regional members of the Commission
- *Ambassador* – representing the work of SSC in the region and maintaining relations with member organizations
- *Entrepreneur* – seeking out opportunities for volunteer involvement in conservation efforts and fostering initiatives for capacity building

CEM by-laws state that the Regional Vice-Chairs guide the development and implementation of CEM's work in the region. WCPA by-laws state that Regional Vice-Chairs are responsible for putting names forward to the Commission Chair for WCPA membership. They do not envisage a Regional Steering Committee structure but the Regional Vice-Chairs can establish such a Committee if they so decide and several have already been established.

CEL and CEC have provided in their by-laws for the creation of Regional Committees so that each Regional Vice-Chair is in charge of a Regional Committee. CEL expects the Regional Committee to promote membership in the region and to hold workshops and seminar as well

as issue a quarterly regional newsletter. We are not aware if such Committees have been constituted for CEL and CEC in the regions and we do not know the situation for CEESP.

The Regional Vice-Chairs have a role regarding communication with membership of the Commissions in the region. Except for SSC they also have a role in identifying new members or they are consulted on the names of potential members in their region. Regional Vice-Chairs are also becoming more involved in the regional programme planning process (again with the possible exception of SSC), a role that can be expected to increase in the future with the One IUCN Programme decision.

**The main problems relating to the role and effectiveness of the Regional Vice-Chairs are two: inadequate information on the regional membership and inadequate resources to mobilize them.** To do their job, Regional Vice-Chairs need to know who the members are in their region. It appears that for many of them, it has been difficult to obtain up to date lists of regional members. This relates to the larger problem for the Commissions of keeping their membership lists up to date. The problem with the membership lists also affects communication with regional members of IUCN. There is the added confusion of some Commission having regions that are different from administrative regions as far as the IUCN Regional Offices are concerned and the IUCN statutory regions for the members.

The other problem inhibiting the effectiveness of the Regional Vice-Chairs is the lack of sufficient resources to enable them to travel in their regions to promote the work of the Commission, to organize meetings of regional members or to attend regional meetings to represent the Commission. Where the funds are forthcoming, the Regional Vice-Chairs can play an effective role, such as has been reported to us for South and Central America. Another good example was the participation of Commission Regional Vice-Chairs in the meeting of IUCN members in the South and East Asia Region at the Asia Regional Conservation Forum in 2003. Commission meetings have been linked to IUCN Regional Members meetings in some regions over the 2000-2004 period and this is a positive trend which that should be encouraged

Some Regional Chairs are supported by their organizations to carry out their functions for IUCN but others reported that they were not, particularly those in the South. The issues mentioned previously in relation to support for Commission Chairs are also relevant to support for Regional Vice Chairs. The two factors of inadequate data on the regional membership and insufficient funds to communicate with members, organize meetings or represent them in regional meetings has, according to some informants reduced the ability of Commissions to provide input to IUCN regional programmes or to link the expertise of Commission members to IUCN members.

## 3.3 Communications

Effective communications are the lifeblood of any network, especially a formal knowledge network. Horizontal communications between members to carry out their work; vertical communications from the leadership to the members to give direction and organize the work; and communications up from the membership through the Commission hierarchy to aggregate observations, produce outputs and provide the value-added of the network process. Equally critical to performance is effective communication outside the network and interaction with partner organizations, IUCN members, convention secretariats, governments and other bodies, and other relevant knowledge networks.

Communications have several different components that affect whether they will be successfully realized. Put simply, for a message to be passed from sender to receiver – the technology has to work; the people and organizations have to want to communicate; and there

has to be a message relevant to both. While we have not been able to look at the situation in detail for each Commission, we have some general comments to make about some systemic communication problems that we find in the Commissions.

Through our interviews, the web survey of members, and the examination of documents, the Review has looked at how effectively the Commissions manage their communications from several different perspectives:

- Vertical communication
  - From the leadership to the members
  - From the members to the leadership
- Networking communication
  - Within Sub Groups
  - Within regions
  - Within Commissions – across sub-groups
- Communication within IUCN
  - With other Commissions
  - With IUCN Members
  - With the Secretariat
- Communication with other organizations
  - With key target organizations
  - With other knowledge networks

### 3.3.1 Vertical communications within Commissions

Commissions generally have effective vertical communications from their leadership to their members mainly through e-mail and through Newsletters, with two caveats. One is that for some Commissions, the membership lists have not been in good order for much of this Intersessional Period. Membership lists for CEESP and CEM have been largely rebuilt since 2000 and for most of this Intersessional they have not been up-to-date. The lists for CEL and WCPA appear to be in better order and have been maintained even through membership has steadily grown throughout the Intersessional Period.[15] SSC has invested much effort in developing a searchable data base of its large number of members, but the database reportedly includes several thousand more entries than there are current members.

There are two obstacles facing all the Commissions in having the basic tools for effective communication with their members. One is that the membership is disbanded each four years and has to be re-established – an administrative burden for a volunteer network despite the statutory requirement and the programme logic behind it. It is particularly an issue for the largest Commissions, SSC and WCPA. This means that some members who are no longer members think that they are and conversely, some people who are not members are included on the Commission membership lists. There is some confusion about the membership lists that appears to reign for a good part of the Intersessional Period. This should be addressed by IUCN as it causes unnecessary administrative headaches for a volunteer network.

The second obstacle is the communication channel – specifically the technology (e-mail and Internet); and the language (predominantly English) that are used for communications. As far as we could ascertain for this Intersessional Period, of the 109 knowledge outputs from the Commissions, 104 are in English only, two are in French (CEC) and 9 are in Spanish (CEC and CEESP[16]). The Cartagena Guide produced by CEL is available in English, French,

[15] For example, CEL membership has expanded by a third; from less than 600 to more than 900 2001-2004

[16] The CEESP Newsletter *Policy Matters* also includes a few articles in French and Spanish

Spanish and Russian. Some websites include Spanish sections and some Commission newsletters are translated into Spanish illustrating that the Commissions are making an effort with their limited resources.

However, the bottom line is that the predominance of material in English only clearly disenfranchises some current and potential members as we heard from both interviews and the web survey[17] . It is a resource issue for which we have no ready solution except to point out that Commissions need to be ever more sensitive to the problem. One suggestion is that the Commissions work with the Secretariat and members in the regions (and also certain donors) to develop an action plan to make the Commissions more multi-lingual in their operations and outputs, including their web sites. It is a problem in all non-English speaking countries but was expressed to us mainly in terms of inhibiting Latin American and francophone African participation in the work of the Commissions.

There is a special problem of communication across SSC's sub-groups because its membership is so large (nearly 8,000 members[18]) and is sub-divided into 128 sub-groups. We understand that there is a cascading system for information sent from the SSC Chair's Office or from the Focal Point. Information is sent to the Chairs of sub-groups and then relayed on to the members.

However, this system has some built-in human factors that determine whether or not a message gets passed on. Thus any message may not be assumed to reach all members. We were told that some Specialist Group Chairs filter messages to their members according to the tolerance they believe that volunteer members have for receiving such messages. Thus the Specialist Group Chairs may relay a message to all the SG members, to some of them or to none of them. No one knows therefore how many members receive any particular message. This was brought home very clearly to the Review Team when we used the normal Commission e-mail information distribution system to send the invitation to members to respond to the web survey. We do not know the number of members that were actually reached but of those who responded, a number contacted us to thank us for seeking their input to the Review.

### 3.3.2 Networking communications within Commissions

Communications are most effective within the Sub Groups, Task Forces and Committee structures of the Commissions. Most of these use listservs, electronic newsletters, and e-mail to keep their members informed and to allow members to communicate with one another. CEC has experimented with on-line discussion forums. In addition there are less frequent hard-copy mail-outs. However, as we pointed out in section 3.2.3 these communications have historically been less effective within the regions because of problems with the membership lists.

One limitation to opening up communications within or even between Commissions is the current technology for handling information about members. Commissions report spending days or weeks trying to keep the membership lists up to date.[19] Some new technological approaches are needed that can provide web-based searchable data bases accessible to all members where privacy issues are appropriately dealt with. For example, Commission

[17] The web survey was available in English, French and Spanish.
[18] There are about 10,000 names on the SSC member database but the Focal Point has provided a figure of 7,905 members in March 2004. Some of the uncertainty relates to members belonging to more than one Specialist Group.
[19] One Regional Vice-Chair reported that he spent two weeks of his own time at the end of his term trying to update the membership list before handing over the reins.

members could have write access to their own entries in the database and read-only access to others. Thus what contact information is available to other members and the updating of their profile would be the members' individual responsibility and preference.

Beyond their sub-groups, it would appear from the survey data and interviews that many members are not in direct communication either with the leadership of the Commission or with other sub-groups and this is mostly a problem with the larger Commissions. Does this matter? Yes, if you believe that in addition to their role of providing inputs to larger assessment exercises, the Commissions are knowledge networks that should be generating new ideas for IUCN. The traditional concept that knowledge can be aggregated along established communication channels may work for tasks like the Red List, but for other tasks requiring integration of knowledge in innovative patterns that cut across organizational structures (such as sub-groups), or even across the Commissions themselves, a hierarchical template for communications is an inhibitor rather than a facilitator.

There should also be a better system for members to be able to subscribe to listservs of other sub-groups so that cross-fertilization of ideas is made easy rather than difficult. We are not suggesting a free-for-all but a more enlightened approach to the sharing of ideas that is not so controlled from above (and hence subject to bottlenecks and time delays) and does not require a person to be a formal member of a sub-group before they can learn what the nature of the on-going discussions are. Nor should members of Commissions have to access the groups except through the over-burdened Chairs. We certainly don't have the all answers but we see a need for a major rethinking of communications within Commissions and a new look at their potential as knowledge networks for greater innovation and interdisciplinary work. These are problems that are also applicable to other Knowledge Networks and IUCN could learn how others address this problem.

### 3.3.3 Communications within IUCN

Our comments about the hierarchical nature of communications within Commissions through the control of the membership lists also have resonance about communications between Commissions, which some have described as communication silos.

One strategy on the part of individuals is to become a member of several Commissions. From the responses to the web survey, it would appear that some Commissions are much more cross- linked in their membership than are others. Both CEESP and WCPA have a significant number of members reporting allegiances to the other Commissions (28% of CEESP members and 33% of WCPA members), most of whom belong to both CEESP and WCPA through their membership in the Joint Theme TILCEPA. SSC is the network apparently least linked to other Commissions with only 2% of its members surveyed indicating they also belong to another Commission (mainly CEM). Comparable multiple membership figures for CEC are 10%, for CEL 16% and for CEM 17%.[20]

Another strategy to encourage better communication between Commissions is to establish more formal inter-Commission activity, along the lines of the WCPA-CEESP *People and Equity Theme Programme* and also informal inter-Commission activity, such as the CEL-WCPA work on Peace Parks (transboundary protected areas)

[20] While the SSC sample is small, the difference between 2% of SSC members reporting other Commission memberships and 10-17% for other Commissions is large enough for this inference to be a reasonable one.

Being a member of more than one Commission is one way to link the different knowledge networks. Wearing several hats also links Commission members with IUCN member organizations, since many organization members have staff members who are individual members of the Commissions but this is somewhat *ad hoc*. Mechanisms such as Regional Conservation Forums provide opportunities for IUCN member organizations to interact with Regional Vice-Chairs and the regional members of Commissions. Another way to link the Commissions is through their Chairs and interactions between their Steering Committees but this is probably more useful for strategy and organizational matters rather than knowledge building or interdisciplinary innovation.

A key driver for linking members in a knowledge network is a common purpose. From a networking perspective, a Commission appears to be less a single knowledge network than an overarching structure containing enclaves at the sub-group level where the real knowledge networking takes place. What then is the added value of the Commission structure? One answer would be the management structure that can interact more efficiently with the world outside the Commission on behalf of the sub-groups and provides the organizational stability and "brand" recognition that allows the Sub Groups to be more fluid in their boundaries. The Commission superstructure can also protect the sub-groups from unwanted distractions and the need to respond to external demands that reduce their work efficiency. Finally, of course, the Commission represents the interface with the Secretariat. These are organizational and managerial roles rather than intellectual ones.

Perceptual and attitudinal matters come into play in communications between the Commissions and the Secretariat. It was apparent to the Review Team that there are problems of mutual respect and trust between the Commissions on the one hand and the Secretariat on the other that need attention. It is not universal but it is a significant problem in working relationships with some Commissions. Members by and large are not familiar with the Secretariat – its staff or its work Programme. The Commissions that already have integrated programmes of work with the one Programme report much more effective work relationships and communications with the Secretariat. These are SSC, CEL and WCPA and to some extent CEM.

The Commissions that report more difficulty in being understood by the Secretariat and in receiving help from it – CEC and CEESP – are the two that have least integration between their programme activities and the IUCN Programme. Significantly they also have among the least staff support from the Secretariat. CEC has a special role to play with respect to communications and they have made valiant efforts to provide support to the Secretariat at both corporate and programme levels through their expertise in communications.

### 3.3.4 External communications

The Review was not able to examine the effectiveness of the Commissions' external communications in any detail. However, there are three areas on which we can comment:

- Satisfaction with contacts with Commissions of key partners such as the Convention Secretariats, UNESCO World Heritage, UNEP etc. as reported in interviews;
- Links with other knowledge networks through Commission members participating in other international, regional and national networks;
- The web sites of the Commissions.

*Communications with key partners*

In our interviews with key partner agencies, we heard no negative comment from anyone about problems with the external communications of any Commission. All reports were of effective and highly valued contact with the Commissions. Most of the people interviewed in these agencies dealt mainly with SSC and WCPA.

*Links with other knowledge networks*

Commission members are also members of other knowledge networks within their countries, regions and at the international level. This is one way that IUCN links to the larger world of ideas and practice through its Commissions. It was not possible for this survey to do any quantitative analysis of these overlapping networks but the members responding to the web survey indicated the different kinds of networks to which they also belonged and some illustrative examples are given in Table 3. CEL members are likely to be members of a smaller set of other international networks than others surveyed. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment appears on the list of almost all Commissions, suggesting that this is a key knowledge network for IUCN. It is further discussed in section 7.3 as an important opportunity for IUCN to strengthen CEM in the coming Intersessional Period.

**Table 3 Selected Commission linkages with other knowledge networks through members**

| | INTERNATIONAL | REGIONAL |
|---|---|---|
| CEM | Millennium Ecosystem Assessment<br>Int. Society for Ecological Economics<br>Int. Union of Forest Research Orgs.<br>Int. Coral Reef Action Network<br>Int. Assoc. on Landscape Ecology<br>ICSU-SCOR<br>Society for Ecological Restoration International | South Asian Network for Dev. and Environmental. Economics<br>Consortium of Sustainable Development of Andean Ecoregion (CONDESAN) |
| CEC | Int. Assoc. for Public Participation<br>UNESCO MAB Programme<br>Int. Human Dimensions Programme on Global Env. Change (IHDP) | Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa<br>Council for Env. Educ. In Europe<br>European Network of Communication-Experts of Ministries of the Environment<br>Mediterranean Ecological Media Network<br>North American Association for Environmental Education |
| CEESP | Community-Based Natural Resources Network<br>Int. Assoc. for the Study of Common Property<br>Int. Human Dimensions Programme on Global Env. Change (IHDP)<br>Millennium Ecosystem Assessment<br>CGIAR – Program on Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRI) | GTZ Sectoral Groups for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| CEL | Environmental Law Network International<br>International Council on Environmental Law<br>IUCN Academy of Environmental Law<br>Millennium Environmental Assessment<br>World Academy of Arts and Sciences | Asociación Latinoamericana de Derecho Ambiental<br>Association Africaince des jurists de l'environnement<br>European Environmental Law Association |
| SSC | Int. Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS)<br>Society for Conservation of Biology<br>World Sturgeon Conservation Society | European Invertebrate Survey<br>European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategies |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | World Association of Zoos<br>Flora and Fauna International<br>Diversitas<br>Millennium Ecosystem Assessment | SE Asian Zoos Network<br>SADC Rhino Management Group<br>Red de formacion ambiental para America Latina y el Caribe |
| WCPA | Mountain Forum<br>Biodiversity Information Networks Water Dialogue<br>Int. Ass. for Study of Common Property<br>Int. Geographic Union<br>UNESCO-MAB<br>World Heritage Centre Network | Indigenous People Asia<br>Réseau alpin des espaces protégés<br>The European Council of Town Planners |

*Commission websites*

Each of the Commissions has a main website, all of which are hosted on the IUCN site. In addition most Sub Groups have web sites that may be on the Commission site but are often hosted by different organizations. There are many hyperlinks between these sites but it can be a bewildering task to find your way around them. The websites differ in technical quality, in their legibility and navigability. It is also difficult to identify some of them as part of IUCN because the sites all have a different look and do not always have the IUCN logo or identify themselves with IUCN. In many ways, these websites are shared areas between the host organizations and IUCN. There are questions of identity, use of logo, risk management with respect to credibility of the information and association with IUCN that almost defy any notion of standardization or regulation. But increasingly the websites are the public face of IUCN and are important portals through which the public enter IUCN's sphere of influence.

In addition to visiting as many of the websites as we could, we obtained the statistics for 2003 for all the Commission websites except CEC whose site was not operational within the IUCN system until later[21]. Table 4 gives the number of website visits in 2003 from each region.

**Table 4 Regional distribution of visits to Commission websites 2003**

| **Geographic region** | **Visits to Commission Websites Percentages of total visits (all portals)** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **CEM %** | **CEESP %** | **CEL %** | **SSC %** | **WCPA %** |
| Asia | 8.2 | 9.0 | 7.6 | 6.5 | 7.9 |
| Europe | 21.9 | 18.6 | 23.9 | 25.4 | 25.3 |
| Middle East & North Africa | 1.7 | 2.4 | 1.8 | 1.6 | 2.4 |
| North America | 53.0 | 55.3 | 48.5 | 51.7 | 44.5 |
| Oceania | 3.0 | 2.7 | 3.8 | 4.0 | 4.6 |
| South & Central America | 2.4 | 3.2 | 6.3 | 3.7 | 6.4 |
| Sub Saharan Africa | 2.2 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 1.5 | 3.9 |
| Unspecified | 7.7 | 6.7 | 6.3 | 5.5 | 5.1 |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| *Total Visits* | *26,203* | *41,041* | *82,518* | *487,834* | *277,369* |
| | | | | | |
| Total Unique Visits | 12,892 | 22,786 | 42,285 | 256,357 | 141,759 |
| Unique Visits Monthly Average | 1,074 | 1,898 | 3,523 | 21,363 | 11,813 |

[21] CEC's website was redesigned to provide more services to IUCN and came on line within the IUCN system in late 2003.

SSC's site is the most visited (54% of all unique visitors to the Commission websites) followed by WCPA (30%). WCPA also operated another website over 2000-3: the web site for the World Parks Congress. In 2003 this site had 380,000 visitors. Thus the SSC and WCPA websites account for 84% of all visits to the Commissions' websites – more if the WPC site is also included. This is an indication of the important visibility that SSC and WCPA bring to IUCN.

The other three sites are much less visited (CEM 3%; CEESP 5% and CEL 8% of all unique visitors in 2003). The number of unique visitors and the number of visits (about 80% of visitors to the sites made only one visit) is generally seen by organizations as a measure of their eminence (or prominence) in their field and scores are kept of how sites measure up on the "Google scale".

**It is recommended that Commissions examine the effectiveness and limitations of their current systems and technology for communications within and between Commissions, including their websites, in order to develop a new strategy and identify with the Secretariat the technology needed to strengthen their role as knowledge providers for IUCN, to increase the participation of individual members, and to further innovation, interdisciplinary work and cross-Commission collaboration.**

# 4 Commission Resources

Commissions have three main resources in addition to their leadership: financial resources, staff, and volunteer members. The Review was asked to assess how efficiently and effectively they have used these resources during this Intersessional Period.

## 4.1 Financial resources

### 4.1.1 Commission Operating Fund (COF)

IUCN provides financial support to the Commissions through the *Commission Operating Fund (COF).* The total amount transferred for the use of Commissions was 5,355,000 Swiss Francs throughout the entire Intersessional Period. This amount is shared between the different Commissions on the recommendation of the Chair of Chairs after consultation with the Commission Chairs. The rationale for larger amounts going to some Commissions is related to the number of Commission members, the Commission's productivity and, finally, historical factors. Beginning in 2002, the COF includes a 5.5% 'central overhead' charge which is deducted from the amount transferred to the Commissions but is offset by a 5% increase in the amounts allocated. Table 5 shows the distribution of the COF by year and by Commission for 2001-2004.

**Table 5 Distribution of the Commission Operating Fund by Commission 2001-2004**

| COF to Commissions 2001-2004 (in thousands of Swiss Francs) | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2001** | **2002** | **2003** | **2004** | **Total** | % of Total |
| **CEM** | 170 | 169 | 180 | 180 | 699 | *13%* |
| **CEC** | 185 | 195 | 208 | 208 | 796 | *15%* |
| **CEESP**[22] | 150 | 169 | 180 | 180 | 679 | *13%* |
| **CEL** | 250 | 264 | 281 | 281 | 1076 | *20%* |
| **SSC** | 270 | 285 | 303 | 303 | 1,161 | *22%* |
| **WCPA** | 185 | 243 | 258 | 258 | 944 | *18%* |

The purpose of the COF is to support the running and operations of the Commission rather than for Programme activities. These costs include the meetings of the Steering Committee, administrative support to the Chair, participation in Council meetings, support to Regional Vice-Chairs and to the organization of activities. For example, WCPA and CEM each gave 5,000 Swiss Francs from their COF funds to allow the Mountain Task Force to meet in January 2004.

The funds may be transferred to the Commissions in different ways. Depending on the wish of the Chair, the annual COF is transferred through four quarterly payments to the Chair or to an account designated by the Chair. Alternatively, the amount stays in IUCN headquarters and is expended throughout the year in accordance with instructions given through the Commission Focal Point, based on the annual budget agreed by the Chair.

We examined the financial reports on the COF expenditures, and held discussions with the IUCN Budget Head and the Internal Auditor. It would appear that all Commissions are using the funds for their appropriate purposes. Without undertaking a proper accountability or value for money audit, it is not possible to determine whether the COF funds could be used more efficiently; e.g. that the most economical route or fares were used for travel. We did note that reporting from CEESP is very late. It was also suggested in our interviews that there might be more transparency with the Commission Steering Committees about how the COF is expended but we have no information on what transparency already exists in different Commissions.

### 4.1.2 Funds raised by the Commissions

In addition to the COF, Commissions are able to raise funds for their programme activities and other costs depending on the donor. During the course of the Review we were given many examples of such donor funds. A few are reported to be passed to IUCN to administer. One example is a Dutch funded project for €1.5 million to promote the application of the ecosystem approach through case study analyses and to build the capacity of CEM. This supports 1.5 FTE[23] staff in the Secretariat. CEC has raised funds from UNEP (US$220,000) for an Environmental Citizenship project in Latin America that is being administered by IUCN/SUR.

We were told that many more funds raised by Commission members for activities are administered by organizations other than IUCN. Commissions are not legal entities so it is usually the member's own institution or another that administers the grant and is legally

[22] CEESP reports that its budget is 160,000CHF each year 2001-2004 and that figures here include carry-over funds not spent in preceding years.
[23] FTE: full-time equivalent or the person-years that add up to the equivalent of X full time persons

accountable to the donor. Concerns voiced about the overhead charged by IUCN for administering grant funds was given as the reason why Commission members find other organizations to work with as grantees.

We understand that there is a renewed effort on the part of Commissions to find out what the magnitude is of the funds raised by Commission members to carry out the work of the Commissions. SSC has undertaken one study of its 'shadow resources' in 2002. Shadow resources include:

- Funds raised and administered by the Sub Groups for themselves
- In-kind support to office expenses and staff time
- Volunteer time donated by the Specialist Group Chairs and members.

Not including one of SSC's Specialist Groups that is a legal entity with an annual budget of US$3 million and a fulltime staff of 40 people, SSC estimated that in 2002 its Specialist Groups raised approximately US$5.9 million in funds of which US3.5 million was used for operations and US$2.4 million for programme activities.

We also heard in our interviews that Specialist Group members are actively trying to raise funds and to place them outside of IUCN as the official recipient. In some cases not even the Commission Chair is informed about these funds. The situation with the shadow funds raises a number of questions:

- **No one seems to know the total magnitude of the donor funds raised by individual Commission members or Sub Groups or who the donors are or for what purposes – not the Commission Chair, nor the Director General**;

- The amount of external funds raised and available to Commissions obviously varies greatly between them so that the relative importance of the COF and staff support from the Secretariat for their operations also varies;

- There is confusion about the way these shadow funds are counted. If other organizations are the legal recipients, then the grants are strictly speaking not IUCN funds even if they are being used to further the Commission mandates or IUCN mission by Commission members who are presumably wearing two institutional hats. There is clearly some "double counting" in terms of these grants for both the legal recipient organization and the Commission, as Sub Groups are eager to include these funds as an indicator of the Commission's achievement whatever institution is administering them;

- A more serious issue is competition between the Commissions (and their Sub Groups) and the Secretariat for donor funds. We heard many accounts of this in our interviews – some of which were reportedly "won" by the Secretariat and some by the Commissions;

- **Another concern is the potential risk to the reputation of either a Commission or IUCN or both in situations where individuals or groups obtain funds using the name (and credibility) of their connection with the Commission and "park" these funds in a third institution.** While the recipient organization is legally accountable for the funds, IUCN's reputation is potentially at risk if there is either a poor performance technically or financially. These problems may never come to the attention of the Chair or Director General unless they talk to the responsible officer in the donor agency – and possibly not even then. The most risky ventures are the least likely to be reported.

Our conclusions are that Commissions are very active in trying to raise funds for their operations and programmes and that the Commission Chairs and the Director General need to have much better understanding of the magnitude and sources of these shadow funds than they appear to have at present. Such information can obviously be valuable in making the case for the total economic value of Commissions to the Union as well as being necessary to manage risk.

A first step is probably a rapid assessment to scope the dimensions of the shadow resources in order to design an effective and not too onerous reporting framework. It would be important not to dampen enthusiasm but to find ways to be more supportive to individual efforts and encourage sharing of information at early stages. There is an urgent need to change the current sense of competition between the Secretariat and the Commissions regarding the search for donor grants. The need is to develop more joint proposals, targeted at agreed donors and focused on IUCN Programme objectives, between Commissions and between Commissions and the Secretariat. It is important for both raising funds and also for working as partners rather than competitors in relation to the issue of fundraising.

While not being able to reduce reputational risk to zero, IUCN needs to be able to show that it has done its due diligence in requiring Sub Groups operating within its Commissions to report to it on funds raised for what purpose and to achieve what objectives. It needs a much more complete picture of the activities undertaken and the financial investments made in pursuit of its Mission and in its name.

> **It is recommended that following an initial scoping exercise, a mechanism be put in place within the Secretariat to support fundraising efforts by Commissions, to share and collate information, and to provide an annual overview of donor funds for all Commission activities, including all Sub Groups. This mechanism might include a staff person to serve all Commissions as a Commission Resources Focal Point.**

## 4.2 Staff resources

Each Commission is supported by staff members working in the Secretariat, one of whom is normally designated as the Focal Point for the Commission and is a member of the Commission Steering Committee. The number of staff members varies considerably by Commission depending on the degree of integration with Programme. Our understanding is that in 2004 it is approximately the following situation including professional and support staff:[24]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| o CEM | 4 positions | (Ecosystem Management Programme) |
| o CEC | 2.5 positions | (Global Communication Unit) |
| o CEESP | 4 positions | (Social and Economic Policy Advisors) |
| o CEL | 13 positions | (Environmental Law Centre: 1 Director, 5 legal staff, one of whom is the liaison person with CEL, 4 library staff and 3 support staff) |
| o SSC | 17 positions | (Species Programme, including Red List staff, Cambridge) |
| o WCPA | 7 positions | (Programme on Protected Areas) |

[24] These figures were provided by Global Program management and include the total of all staff working full or part time to support the Commissions. Some of the Commissions believe the actual staff support is lower than these figures suggest.

However the situation is not as clear cut as these figures might suggest since these staff members have duties other than to serve the Commissions exclusively, and other staff members from the technical thematic programmes provide additional support to Commissions. Some staff members serving the Commissions are on project funds and therefore must deliver on those projects. This has led to their having less time to work for the Commissions. CEESP is the only Commission who has no Programme implemented by the Secretariat that parallels the work of the Commission; and it is the only Commission that has no dedicated Focal Point but rather can draw on the part-time support of two Senior Policy Advisors. Not having a dedicated Focal Point is a disadvantage for CEESP which might be reconsidered.

Concerns were raised by Commission leaders about staff support to the three Commissions with minimal support – CEM, CEC and CEESP. The present level of support is clearly geared to the work of the Commissions and their degree of integration with the IUCN Programme. CEESP and CEC are the least well integrated with the Programme administered by the Secretariat and CEM is just starting up again. If these Commissions demonstrate that they can perform well and that their work adds value to and is integrated into the IUCN Programme, they should be able to make the case for more staff support within the Secretariat.

## 4.3 Volunteer members

The most valuable resource that the Commissions have is their volunteer members. It is the work of members, led and coordinated by the Specialist Group Chairs and Commission leadership that is the basis of the Commissions' main added value to IUCN. Attempts have been made to attach a monetary value to the contribution of volunteers in the Commissions. The study of shadow resources done by SSC estimated the value of the voluntary time contributed by SSC volunteer members as US$29.5 million in 2002. This is a significant amount in the context of the annual budget of IUCN and is only for one Commission – albeit the largest. A consistent and credible framework for assessing the monetary contributions of the Commissions should be developed and applied across all six Commissions. Such figures indicate the cost effectiveness and multiplier effects of using the Commission networks and could provide a valuable tool in relation to encouraging greater donor investment in IUCN.

However, the monetary value of donated hours of labour is only one aspect of the value of the Commission members. They also act as ambassadors for the Commissions and IUCN and they serve as links to other organizations and knowledge networks. The degree to which they have stature as individual experts and expert groups representing the cutting edge of their respective fields underpins the authority and respect in which IUCN is widely held, and if it is unsure, the credibility of IUCN is vulnerable. The role of the Commissions in both managing and nurturing leagues of volunteer experts, while maintaining a through-flow of work and outputs is no easy task. It is particularly challenging when the leadership itself is volunteer. One cannot but be in awe of what the Commissions have already achieved with their volunteers.

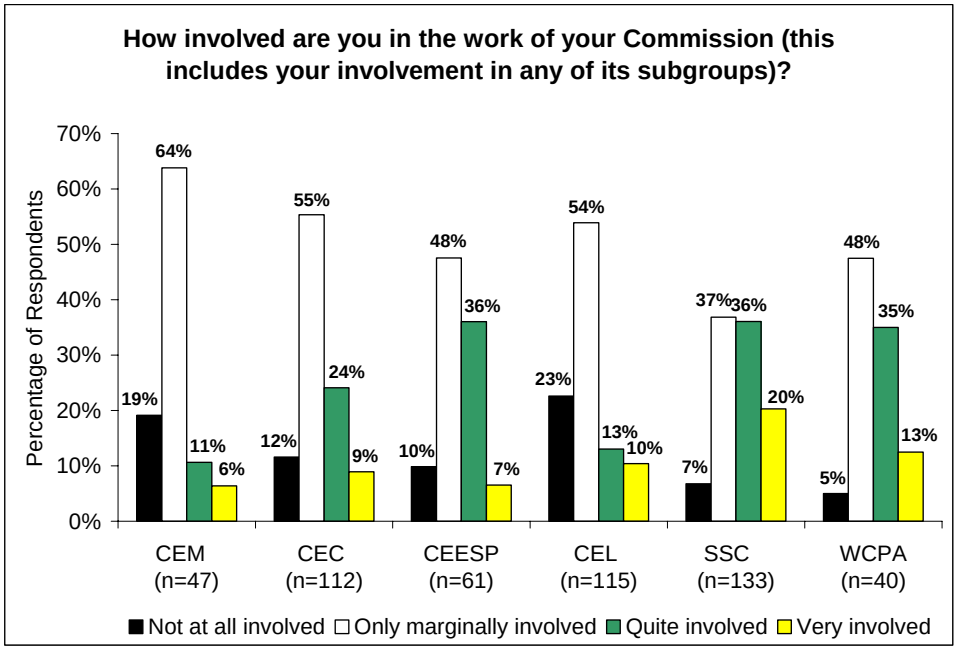
At the same time there are clearly challenges for the Commissions in engaging the best and the brightest, in weeding out the ineffective and the weakest, in animating the networks and keeping costs down and quality up. The 2001 study on *Voluntarism in SSC* represents an important initiative on the part of SSC to better understand the motivation and concerns of its volunteers.[25] To a large extent our own survey of members of all Commissions supports the

[25] Mark Stanley Price, 2001, *Voluntarism in the Species Survival Commission*; unpublished.

findings of the SSC study and extends it to the other five Commissions. We find that there are some important differences between Commissions as well as some common patterns.

As others have found, the web survey results show that most members of Commissions are not very active in the work of the Commissions (Figure 3). The results in Figure 3 probably overestimate the numbers actively involved since these are people at least involved enough to answer the web survey. Overall, 62% of members surveyed report that they are only marginally or not at all involved in the work of their Commission. This varies from 83% inactive members in CEM and 76% inactive in CEL to only 43% inactive in SSC and 52% inactive in WCPA. SSC also stands out from the other Commissions in having a high proportion of its members surveyed who say that they are very involved in the work of the Commission (20%).

**Figure 3 Members' involvement in the work of their Commission**




The reasons given why members are unable to be more involved in the Commissions are shown in Table 6. Overall the most frequently given reason is lack of time (40% for all Commissions; varying from a high of 57% for CEESP to a low of 32% for CEC). This is much more often mentioned than lack of funds (15% for all Commissions). More important from the standpoint of "nurturing" the members is that the second most important reason given (22% across all Commissions) is that members feel that they are not consulted and do not receive feedback when they make offers to help or ask questions. Some members feel excluded from the inner circle or "old boys club". This lack of consultation is particularly a problem for members surveyed in CEM (36%) and CEL (33%).

In our view, this underscores the importance of effective communications within the Commissions to keep the members informed and engaged and thus to benefit from having them as members in the first place. Risk management for the reputation of a Commission includes avoiding having many disgruntled and complaining members. It is the two largest Commissions, SSC and WCPA that appear to be best meeting the needs of their members for consultation and feedback.

A number of Commission members feel that the work of the Commission is not relevant to their interests or to their work (13% for all Commissions) with the highest percentage reported from WCPA (22%). The reason for the WCPA figure is not clear.

**Table 6 Main reasons preventing members from giving more time to their Commission**

| REASONS GIVEN | CEM % | CEC % | CEESP % | CEL % | SSC % | WCPA % | TOTAL % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lack of time | 34 | 32 | 57 | 39 | 45 | 41 | 40 |
| Lack of funds | 9 | 18 | 8 | 9 | 19 | 25 | 15 |
| Lack of relevance to me | 14 | 13 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 22 | 13 |
| Lack of direction or focus | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 3 |
| Lack of consultation/feedback | 36 | 20 | 17 | 33 | 13 | 12 | 22 |
| Communication problems | 2 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 7 |
| Total percentage | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| *Total responses ( N)* | *56* | *134* | *53* | *127* | *140* | *51* | *561* |

Although it is a small percentage, 7% of responses overall refer to communication problems. These are equally divided between members who find it difficult to communicate in English and those who do not have ready access to ICTs.

In the web survey we probed what value is placed on being a member of a Commission. This value is clearly critical to keeping members engaged and willing to work. Table 7 shows that the responses fell into six categories, of which three predominate: (1) keeping the member informed and up to date with ideas in the field; (2) the opportunity to network with other experts; and (3) being a part of a larger collective effort.

Members in all Commissions are most likely to value their Commission because it keeps them up to date with information and new ideas (30% for all Commissions). Networking is seen as important to members of all the Commissions (28%) except CEM which has a significantly smaller number of responses (14%) mentioning networking with other experts. CEM also has the highest number of responses saying that the Commission has little value for the members (22% compared to an average of 7% for all Commissions). One Commission, SSC stands out in having members who believe that being a member brings personal recognition that they consider an honour. In contrast, members in CEESP and CEM are least likely to feel that being a member of the Commission is a mark of personal recognition. However the reasons behind this may be different for the two Commissions.

**Table 7 Value of being a member of a Commission**

| VALUE PLACED ON BEING A MEMBER | CEM % | CEC % | CEESP % | CEL % | SSC % | WCPA % | TOTAL % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access to new ideas/ information | 28 | 26 | 31 | 37 | 25 | 32 | 30 |
| Networking with other experts | 14 | 34 | 32 | 31 | 25 | 25 | 28 |
| Being part of a larger enterprise | 22 | 15 | 17 | 14 | 18 | 25 | 17 |
| Brings me recognition/honour | 6 | 9 | 4 | 9 | 20 | 11 | 11 |
| Relevant to my work | 8 | 10 | 15 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 7 |
| Is of little value to me | 22 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 7 |
| Total percentage | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| *Total responses (N)* | *64* | *163* | *81* | *153* | *157* | *65* | *683* |

Another question on the web survey asked members whether they believed the work of their Commission was at the cutting edge of its field. Figure 4 shows that for CEESP 38% feel that the Commission is very much at the cutting edge but for CEM only 19% think it is very much so. CEESP members seem to believe that even though they are working at the cutting edge it does not bring them particular honour or recognition to be a member of CEESP. On the other hand, 33% of SSC members surveyed believe that they are working at the cutting edge of their field and 20% think that it is a mark of recognition to be a member of SSC[26]. It suggests that CEESP members are experiencing more dissonance about their place within IUCN than other Commission members, especially those of SSC.

As has been discussed in section 3.3.4, most Commission members are also involved in several other knowledge networks and these serve as an important mechanism for keeping the Commissions open to other programmes and ideas. However, for most members surveyed their IUCN Commission represents their most important network and the one in which they would invest their time in if they had to choose between them. The percentage of members favouring their Commission over all other of their networks ranges from 95% for WCPA, 82% for CEC, 81% for SSC, 77% for CEESP to 58% for CEM.

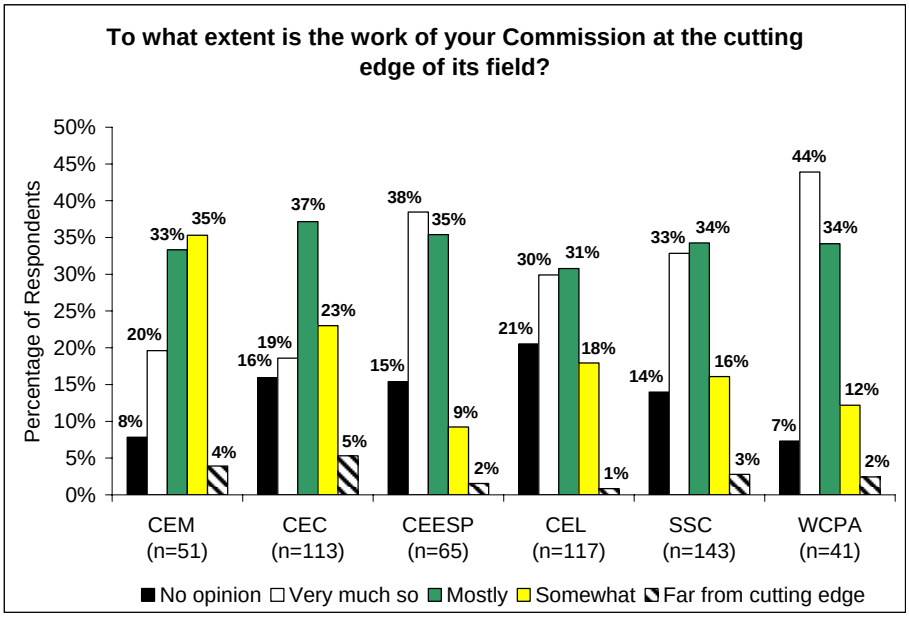
**In conclusion, our survey of members finds that all Commissions present the same value-proposition to individual members – information and new ideas; networking with peers; being part of a larger effort; personal recognition and alignment with professional interests and career. These are the process components of a Commission that need to run smoothly if the members are to continue to serve the Commission.**

At present, all Commissions except CEM appear to be providing that package of benefits to more than 90% of their membership (22% of CEM members surveyed said that the Commission was of little or no value to them). If members are not able to contribute more it is most likely to be because of lack of time rather than a desire for monetary reward or recognition. There is a potential danger signal however in the percentage of members who express feelings of frustration about lack of consultation, feedback or the opportunity to get

[26] It is not known if these respondents overlap although it is likely

more involved. All Commissions appear to be not as well linked at they might be to the intellectual networks operating in French and Spanish, and there are still accessibility problems (both Internet connectivity and cost factors) for those primarily in the South.

**Figure 4 Members' perceptions of their Commission as being at the cutting edge of its field**




# 5 Programme Planning and Implementation

The Review is asked to consider a number of questions relating to the Commissions' programme management including:

- Does the Commission have a strategic plan to guide its work?
- Is the strategy linked to its mandate?
- To what extent has the Commission carried out its workplan?
- To what extent is the programme and projects of the Commissions linked to the IUCN Programme at both global and regional levels?
- To what extent is the Commission collaborating with other Commissions in delivering the programme?
- Are the Commission's monitoring and evaluation processes adequate?
- How are IUCN gender, equity and official language policies addressed?

This part of the Review is largely based on an analysis of the documentation provided to us on the Commissions' programmes, augmented with information and additional insights from our interviews with Commission leaders and Secretariat staff at headquarters and in the Regional Offices. Much of our effort in assessing the outputs of the Commissions' programmes has been focused on our study of their knowledge products and services. This includes case studies of nine knowledge products and services and an analysis of 109 products and services produced by the Commissions in 2001-2004 (section 6 and separate Addendum). Here we provide a very brief overview of the activities and some main achievements of the Commissions in this Intersessional Period to provide the context for the comparative assessments in section 7.

## 5.1 Commission Programmes

**Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)**

After a period of abeyance in the first part of the Intersessional, CEM started under new leadership to rebuild the Commission. In March 2002 a small Steering Committee met to identify the priorities around which a workplan was developed. In 2002, three priority areas were agreed to and a fourth area was added in 2004.

Thus much of this Intersessional Period has been involved in planning rather than in implementation. The planning process and priority setting was done largely by the Steering Committee without canvassing of the membership at large, as the membership was simultaneously being rebuilt. This may account for some of the disaffection with CEM observed in the web survey of members. CEM's work programme is structured within its four sub-groups (Box 1).

In the *Promoting the Ecosystem Approach* area, CEM has been able to attract support from the Dutch Government until 2005 to undertake a series of case studies in different biomes (forest, wetlands and drylands) and field work has been started in Panama and the Mekong River Basin. Workshops were held at the Global Biodiversity Forums on forests, wetlands (2002) and drylands (2003). This component of the work has got off to a good start and the intention is to use the results from the field case studies to provide lessons for the application of the Ecosystem Approach principles.

**Box 1 Priority Areas of CEM**

Promoting the ecosystem approach
Ecosystem restoration
Ecosystem indicators
Ecosystem tools

Mountains Initiative (Joint Task Force with WCPA)

The *Ecosystem Restoration* area is being scientifically and technically supported through a MOU signed with the Society for Ecological Restoration International (SERI) and has held workshops to agree on the criteria for the selection and design of restoration case studies. Here again the scientific groundwork is in place for future applied work in strategically selected ecosystems.

The work in *Ecosystem Indicators* is awaiting the outcome of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in which the CEM Chair is an active participant. Not much has been done in this

area to date. Nothing we are aware of has been done so far in the *Ecosystem Tools* area although a training course on interpreting remote sensing imagery for decision makers and ecosystem managers is in the works with a view to having CEM run such course in the future.

The Chairs of CEM and WCPA have jointly established a *Mountains Initiative Task Force* which has met to discuss programme activities. This initiative is well linked to other international mountain research and development programmes.

**Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)**

The Work Programme for CEC 2000-2004 lays out CEC's vision, its core competencies and the products and services that it will deliver to its markets. It also reorganizes the six objectives in its mandate into three areas (1) advocacy and technical support to IUCN; (2) advocacy and training to support major conventions and international agreements; and (3) support to education and communication programmes for key sectors such as mass media and the corporate sector. CEC's work programme is built around its seven sub-groups, named Product Groups (Box 2).

**Box 2 CEC Product Groups**

Services to IUCN Programme
Advocacy
Capacity-Building
Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
Corporate Communication
Mass media
Knowledge Management

One major task for CEC has been to "re-constitute" the Commission including a 30% change in membership and achieving a good gender balance of 262 women to 391 men in December 2003. It has also made great effort to achieve a better regional distribution of its members although West Asia and North America are still under-represented. This reconstitution of the Commission is an important key result. The Commission leadership has also undertaken several exercises in scoping what CEC's role should be, through a situation analysis[27], consultation with CEC members[28], and an externally commissioned review in 1999. All of these efforts to self define its work are to be commended.

CEC's second mandate objective is *Advocacy for the Conventions* and here they have been successful in bringing CEPA (Communications, Education and Public Awareness) to the attention of the Conventions through the key positioning of CEC members on panels that influenced the agendas. CEPA work programmes were adopted or improved for the CBD as well as for the Ramsar and Climate Change Conventions. Similarly, at the WSSD, the CEC *Education for Sustainable Development* (ESD) group effectively lobbied at PrepComs and used their knowledge networks to have the Summit pay more attention to ESD and was successful in having several references to ESD in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Both of these are success stories.

[27] *Global Perceptions of Conservation and Sustainable Development*
[28] *CEC Members' perceptions on the vision and niche of CEC and motivation and expectations of being a member*; draft Strategic Planning Paper 2003

CEC members have undertaken a number of training activities under its *Capacity Building* programme in different regions. These range from training workshops on strategic communication for National Biodiversity Coordinators in Asia; to regional expert workshops in West Asia and Latin America on the role of communication for protected areas; to a Central European Strategic Communication Project in five countries ending in an international workshop and a presentation at the World Parks Congress.

CEC is working with a network of national environmental educators' association to promote the introduction of environmental education into school curricula. Important initiatives were undertaken in Africa, and through the GEF/UNEP funded Environmental Citizenship Project in Latin America.. The greater attention to ESD through the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014 represents an opportunity for CEC and IUCN to play a leading role in a major global effort to transform the understanding and commitment of civil society for sustainable development.

For the *Media and Corporate Sector* Product Group there is less information available but a study was undertaken to see how CEC might train employees for sustainable development. We are not aware of the follow-up. For the *Corporate Communication* Group, CEC has been active in supporting other Commissions such as SSC and WCPA and has been active in the regions, and at major meetings such as the WPC. CEC produced a workshop manual together with the IUCN Forest Programme on restoration of degraded forests.

A major new initiative for CEC is the *IUCN World Conservation Learning Network* (formerly called the *Virtual University).* The premise underlying the initiative is that there is a demand for short courses for professionals from various sectors on natural resources management. It is proposed to develop a series of virtual teaching modules based on the knowledge accumulated by IUCN that would be made available to educational institutions on a fee for service or subscription basis. A feasibility study for this "business-to-business" model and a pilot module is underway.

**Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)**

CEESP does not appear to have a strategic plan or an Intersessional work programme document for the Commission so our reference document is CEESP's mandate as approved by the Amman Congress in 2000. The mandate sets out three strategic objectives around *equitable, viable and sustainable action for natural resources management and conservation.* These are to lead IUCN's thinking; to support IUCN's efforts; and to engage in community based initiatives. We have no information on how the members participated in the development of the mandate either prior to or after the Amman Congress. An interim Steering Committee was in place for about the first year.

**Box 3 CEESP Working Groups**

Collaborative Management
Sustainable Livelihoods
Environment and Security
Trade and Environment

TILCEPA (Joint Task Force with WCPA)

CEESP structured its Working Groups and focused its energies around the four programme areas described in its mandate, together with its joint Task Force with WCPA – TILCEPA (Box 3). It has used partnerships with others as a key strategy for obtaining resources, doing field projects and producing outputs and impacts.

The *Collaborative Management Working Group (CMWG)* advocates for community based natural resources management to be recognised in national and international policy regimes by focusing their efforts on the management of protected areas. Their advocacy position is that involving indigenous peoples and local communities in natural resources management and allowing them to share in both access and benefits of those resources is a powerful tool for conservation and sustainable development, as well as being fundamental to their rights.

This is not a unique position to CMWG or to CEESP since most groups working on community based natural resources management (CBNRM) and on indigenous knowledge of biodiversity would have similar underlying assumptions. However, the decision to focus on protected areas where there are already international agreements and a particular concern to get the management regimes right is a very strategic one and one that fits well with IUCN's historic and present emphasis on protected areas, especially with the World Parks Congress being held within this Intersessional Period providing a focus for impact.

The practical approach adopted by CEESP is to collaborate with WCPA in a joint *Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities, Equity and Protected Areas (TILCEPA).* Through their joint efforts, concepts of co-management have been adopted in the WSSD Accord and Action Plan, in the recommendations of the World Parks Congress and the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas. CMWG and TILCEPA have also been prolific in producing documents including special issues of *Policy Matters* and Briefing Notes for the CBD and SBSTTA, and tools for participatory evaluation of protected area governance.

The *Sustainable Livelihoods Working Group (WGSL)* has emphasized that sustainable management of natural resources must take a more landscape or seascape approach. The approach is based on a concept of bio-cultural connectivity linking biological, socio-economic and cultural values. This would seem to have resonance with the ecosystem approach in which human well-being is front and centre that is being developed through the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. There may be potential for collaborative work between CEM and WGSL in this area.

A component of the WGSL's work is looking at "non-equilibrium ecosystems" in drylands that are managed by traditional mobile pastoralists. A pilot project for Sustainable Livelihoods for Qashqai Pastoral Nomadic Peoples of southern Iran is being supported by a consortium interested in nomadic pastoralism including FAO and IIED. WGSL has played a role in the formation of the *World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP)* which will work with WGSL to implement the GEF/UNDP project on Global Pastoral Capacity Building Project. A third component for WGSL is collaboration with the Global IPM Facility in FAO to work in the WESCANA Region on sustainable eco-agriculture; and a fourth is work on technology and ecology, including the impact of mining operations on the environment.

The focus of the *Environment and Security* WG is to examine the links between conflict, disaster sensitivity and conservation practice. It is working to develop guidelines on good practice for protected area management in conflict zones and an *Adaptation Toolkit* on using conservation to reduce community vulnerability to climate hazards (and thereby entering the whole adaptation-mitigation debate). Much of the focus of this Working Group appears also to be on protected areas, including transboundary protected areas in conflict situations. CEESP's overall approach in this area has been to create a global network of experts and to promote the use of environmental management as a strategy for reducing insecurity.

The fourth working group is the *Group on Environment, Trade and Investment (GETI).* One of its most visible activities is the production jointly with ICTSD of the fortnightly report *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* on trade and biological resources which includes coverage of key events of interest to the trade and conservation community. It now has 1,200 subscribers (December 2003) including trade delegates, academics, international governmental organizations and NGOs. GETI also produced an issue of *Policy Matters* (Number 11, December 2003 on *Trade, Environment and Investment: Cancun and Beyond).*

CEESP has been very active in this Intersessional Period and has focused much of its work on protected areas and on producing outputs designed *inter alia* to influence international environmental agreements and other policy regimes. They have succeeded in attracting funding for their working groups and for implementing field projects. Much of CEESP's work is implemented through partnerships across their working groups, with WCPA and with other organizations outside of IUCN.

**Commission on Environmental Law (CEL)**

The CEL mandate sets out eight priority areas and clearly defines the four broad objectives of CEL relating to environmental law:

- Advising governments
- Innovating and promoting new concepts and approaches
- Building capacity to establish, implement and enforce
- Education and information

In the Environmental Law (ELP) Quadrennial Programme 2001-2004 the CEL and ELC activities are integrated into a single programme which "implements the legal elements of IUCN's worldwide programme". The Quadrennial Programme sets out the ELP activities under the Key Results Areas (KRAs) and Results of the IUCN Programme. The ELP executes its mission by focusing on the four objectives of CEL's mandate but slightly reworded. CEL has 13 Specialist Groups, several of which were established within this Intersessional Period (Box 4).

**Box 4 CEL Specialist Groups**

Armed Conflict and the Environment
Biodiversity
Capacity Building in the Asia Pacific Region
Energy Law and Climate Change
Enforcement and Compliance
Ethics
Human Rights and the Environment
Indigenous Peoples
Judiciary
Oceans
Sustainable Use of Soils
Trade and the Environment
Water and Wetlands

The Strategic Plan 2002-2003, co-signed by the CEL Chair and the Head of ELP and Director of the ELC, sets out strategic directions for the period but does not add more clarity to the

original mandate of CEL. The Chair of CEL presented a clear written report to Council in October 2001 and a slide presentation in December 2002 but these also report on the integrated ELP Programme rather than on the contributions of CEL. The ELP submits *Progress* and '*Year in Review'* reports annually which cover the combined work of CEL/ELC. On the basis of the reporting therefore it is not possible to distinguish between the work of the Commission and the work of the Secretariat. However, from our interviews we understand that the Commission has led the ELP work in relation to the judiciary, the Academy, Centres of Excellence and energy and the environment.

The *IUCN Academy of Environmental Law* was launched in November 2003 in Shanghai. The Academy is to provide a forum and network for collaboration between participating universities to strengthen the field of environmental law. The programme includes environmental law education, cutting edge research, and coordinated teaching and research. There is an annual colloquium of which the first was held on the occasion of the inauguration of the Academy. Its theme was Energy and Sustainable Development. The second colloquium will be held in Nairobi in 2004 on land use.

The *Centres of Excellence* are law faculties with a strong environmental law curriculum and research capacity. New centres were designated in Brazil, Cost Rica, China, Kuwait, Pakistan, Peru, South Africa and Ukraine leading to more than a doubling of the Centres of Excellence in this Intersessional Period. In addition to training and research, the Centres serve as repositories of relevant laws and information, publish studies and promote information exchange. They are based on Agenda 21.

CEL has established or activated a number of Specialist Groups on soils, water and wetlands, indigenous peoples and the judiciary. The Judiciary Specialist Group is very much concerned with capacity-building for judges and others charged with enforcing environmental law such as inspectors and administrators. These SGs help CEL to more effectively contribute to the IUCN Programme and are a positive direction for CEL to link the Commission's legal expertise to other disciplines focused on particular environmental problems and resources.

There are more opportunities for CEL to use its SGs to build bridges across the Commissions than are currently being used. For example, CEL might work more with WCPA on the governance of protected areas and with CEESP on Trade and Environment since both Commissions have groups working on aspects of trade. As far as we could tell, current interaction between CEL and the other Commissions is more *ad hoc* than strategic and we see more potential to link CEL's legal expertise to the work of other Commissions.

**Species Survival Commission (SSC)**

SSC provides the most detailed information of any Commission both on its planning process and on its strategy. It produced a Strategic Plan 2001-2010 based on a logical framework approach that is a model in terms of identifying clear objectives with targets and timeframes. The Strategic Plan provides a rationale and prioritization for choices made. There are three objectives, 21 outputs and one or several targets with timeframes for each output. Indicators to measure progress are based on outputs to be delivered by a certain date.

Responsibility for delivering on outputs is shared between the Commission Specialist Groups and the Secretariat that coordinates their inputs. There is no discussion of risks or anticipated problems, and no reference in the plan to the specific resources required to implement it although the third objective includes two targets relating to fundraising.

The Strategic Plan was a participatory process with Specialist Group Chairs and members anchored by the Commission leadership and Secretariat. The Strategic Plan is supplemented

with workplans for an integrated SSC Programme (Secretariat and Commission). SSC systematically monitors what it has achieved in relation to the annual targets set in its Strategic Plan. In 2001 it had achieved 73% of its high priority targets and in 2002 it had achieved 87.5%. Delays were reported as due to a lack of funds or a lack of staff. So for SSC as a whole there is both planning and monitoring by objectives and targets.

What is not reflected very well in the SSC Strategic Plan or in other Programme documents we have seen is the scientific activity and vitality of the 128 Specialist Groups and Task Forces that represent the knowledge network of the SSC Commission (Box 5). These SGs have different structures and pursue their own strategic plans and work programmes in addition to collecting information on the status of their species. Many have Newsletters that are more peer-reviewed journals than in-house magazines.

For example, *Pachyderm*, the Journal of the African Elephant, African Rhino and Asian Rhino Specialist Group has issues on-line dating from 1983. The Invasive Species Group publishes a Newsletter *Aliens* bi-annually. Many of the SSC SGs not only have their own websites, but some also have searchable on-line databases and listservs for on-line discussions, some of which are open to anyone who is interested. It has not been possible to do more than visit some of the websites. Thus this review does not even touch the surface of what the Specialist Groups of SSC are doing beyond what is coordinated through the Secretariat.

**Box 5 SSC Specialist Groups**

*Species Specialist Groups 117 groups*
- Plants 35
- Mammals 34
- Birds 22
- Amphibians and reptiles 12
- Fish 6
- Invertebrates 8

*Disciplinary Specialist Groups 5*
- Conservation Breeding
- Invasive Species
- Re-introduction
- Sustainable Use
- Veterinary

*Task Forces or Committees 6*
- Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force
- Declining Pollination Task Force
- Climate Change Task Force
- Plant Conservation Committee
- Red List Committee
- Species Information Services (SIS)

*The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*

There were several significant developments affecting the Red List in this Intersessional Period. In 2002 and 2003 annual updates of the Red List of Threatened Species were released and attracted public attention to the loss of biodiversity and to IUCN. The new Red List made use of the more user-friendly Categories and Criteria that had been four years in preparation. SSC is now working with the *Red List Consortium* (including Birdlife International,

NatureServe and the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science of Conservation International) to help in generating the information and analysis that is needed to produce the Red List. Training materials on using the Red List have been produced and the Red List is now officially recognized as a decision-making tool of the Convention on Migratory Species.

*Global Assessments*
Major assessments of amphibians, freshwater biodiversity, mammals and reptiles have been initiated in this Intersessional Period. The data obtained from these assessments will be analysed to determine the extent to which they can be used to support a new generation of biodiversity assessments that move beyond the existing challenges.

*Influencing the WSSD and CBD/COP Processes*
SSC's own strategic goal has contributed to the international debate around loss of biodiversity and more specifically its goal of "significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010" has influenced the adoption of this target by CBD/COP6 and subsequently by the WSSD. SSC with its partners also were instrumental in CBD/COP6 agreeing to adopt the Global Plant Conservation Strategy.

*Support to CITES*
Based on the contributions from its Specialist Groups, IUCN/SSC provided a statement to the CITES parties that said that CITES had a role in managing important species like mahogany and some marine species but did not take a specific position. SSC's contribution was reportedly influential in that Parties to CITES are now accepting that commercially important species of trees and fish need special protection and will be brought under CITES inclusion in an Annex. CITES has also agreed to work with other conventions to regulate their trade.

*Species Information Service (SIS)*
The SIS is planned to be a searchable on-line database made up of linked database modules including the Red List, population status data, geographic distribution, conservation actions (underway and needed), trade of species, and resource materials. SIS will provide open access to species data sets. It will also provide biodiversity analyses from local to global scales and will customize information for paying clients. SIS is now being used as a desktop application and has been applied in the Global Amphibian Assessment among others but it has not migrated on line – which we heard many people are waiting for it to do.

**World Commission on Protected Areas**

The WCPA underwent a strategic planning process during 2001-2004 that resulted in a ten-year Strategic Plan 2002-2012. The process was led by the Commission Steering Committee which reviewed various drafts and members participated through a questionnaire. The Strategic Plan establishes objectives, clear targets and expected outputs. It is conceived as a rolling plan that in particular will be revised following the World Parks Congress. It also identifies the key implementation and delivery mechanisms and the links with the IUCN Programme. This is a clear and comprehensible strategic plan, developed differently from that of SSC but also a model. It is co-signed by the Commission Chair and the Head of the Programme on Protected Areas. Again, it represents such an integration between Commission and IUCN Programme that it is difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate the contribution of only one.

The structure of WCPA is six theme programmes and two biome programmes, each of which has its own sets of objectives and targets (Box 6):

**Box 6 WCPA Theme Programmes**

*Themes*

1. Adapting and taking advantage of global change
2. Building a comprehensive global system
3. Improving the effectiveness of Protected Areas management
4. Equity, people and Protected Areas
5. Building Management Capacity
6. Sustainable Financing of Protected Areas

*Biomes*

7. Conserving marine and coastal Protected Areas
8. Conserving mountain Protected Areas

*Joint Task Forces*

TILCEPA (with CEESP)
Mountains Initiative (with CEM)

*World Parks Congress (WPC) and CBD/COP7*

This was held in Durban, South Africa in September 2003 and represented the largest and most diverse gathering ever on protected areas with >3000 delegates form 157 countries. It represents a major achievement in fundraising, organization and convening power on the part of WCPA and the IUCN Programme. The WPC produced the Durban Accord and Action Plan and a message to CBD/COP7 that influenced the Parties to adopt a Programme of Work on Protected Areas which is the most ambitious in the history of the Convention. It sets clear targets for a global network of representative and effectively managed protected areas systems. A second input to COP7 was that the cost and benefits of protected areas must be equitably shared.

WCPA continued to work on the evaluation and monitoring of natural *World Heritage* sites and encourage the use of those sites as models for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. The WCPA methodology *Evaluating Effectiveness: a Framework for Assessing the Management of Protected Areas* was implemented in a number of world heritage sites, and was one of the WCPA Knowledge Products assessed for the review (section 6).

The Commission has been active in addressing issues of social and economic equity within and beyond the boundaries of protected areas. One avenue being pursued is the development of corridor and transboundary initiatives especially guidelines for *Transboundary Protected Areas for Peace and Cooperation*. This has involved close cooperation with CEL, particularly in relation to the development of the "Draft Code for Transboundary protected Areas in Times of Peace and Armed Conflict". Another is its collaboration with CEESP in the joint TILCEPA Programme on indigenous peoples and local communities in protected areas.

WCPA has two biome programmes: one focused on Marine Protected Areas that is working with the IUCN Marine Programme to establish representative marine protected area systems that support sustainable fisheries. The other Biome Programme is on Mountains and is now linked to a new Joint CEM-WCPA *Mountains Initiative Task Force*.

Together with WRI, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, WWF/US, UNESCO/MAB and WHC, UNF and UNEP/GEF, the Commission has launched PALNet which will be a web-based knowledge management tool for protected area managers and stakeholders to share lessons and build their capacities. The Programme of Work for CBD

adopted at COP7 includes a reference to PALNet and it is hoped to have it up and running for the World Conservation Congress in 2004.

WCPA has focused its programme following the recommendations of external reviews in 1998 and 2000 and has adopted a strategy of extending its activities through partnerships with other Commissions and organizations. As noted in section 3.3, WCPA members are more likely to also be a member of another Commission (especially CEESP through TILCEPA).

## 5.2 Planning processes

**The difficulties that the review team encountered in trying to assess how far the Commissions had carried out their workplans and delivered on their strategies underscore some major inconsistencies between Commissions in their planning processes. At one level the present state of affairs defies comparative analysis for the review. At the other level, we are concerned that the present haphazard situation may seriously undermine the ability of Council and Congress to carry out their governance oversight of the Commissions.**

- The first problem regarding any comparative assessment of performance of the Commissions' programmes is that the planning processes and planning documents are not consistent across Commissions. SSC and WCPA have developed strategic plans and their planning documents also provide information on the planning process. CEM, ELP and CEC have programmes of work for the Intersessional Period. CEESP appears to have no formal programme of work documents.

- It is not clear which document is the primary document for *programme* accountability for Commissions. Is it the Commission mandates or the various workplans? The question may not seem important until you come to examine the logic behind and consistency of the development of the Commission programmes.

- Except for SSC, the planning documents generally do not assign priorities within their programme areas or indicate how choices are to be made if resources are not forthcoming or other circumstances change.

- The nomenclature used to describe the planning documents is inconsistent. Commissions have produced documents called Strategic Plans that range in timeframes from 16 months to 10 years. We are not convinced that they are all strategic plans.

- The programmes of three of the Commissions (CEL, SSC and WCPA) are integrated with the Programme being implemented by the Secretariat so that for them it is not possible from the workplans and programme reports to isolate what the Commissions did in this Intersessional Period. This problem of objectively assessing *Commission* programme performance will need to be addressed for the next Intersessional Period when the work of all Commissions will be integrated into One Programme 2005-2008.

- Much of the work of the Commissions is undertaken by the Sub-Groups and only highlights of their achievements or those aspects of their work that is coordinated at the Commission level or through the Secretariat usually comes through in the reporting available to us and to Council. This seriously underestimates the work of the Commissions.

- Commissions report annually to Council but as we have observed in section 2.2, this reporting is more a list of achievements without any clear reporting against results or by objective, and thus little or no sense of where progress fell short of expectations. Secretariat reports on *Progress and Assessment* go into more detail but with the exception of SSC do not report on performance against pre-established objectives.

If it is a challenge for a Review Team that has spent some time examining and comparing the documents, we can only imagine how difficult it is for Council or Congress to have any effective basis for their statutory oversight of the Commissions' performance. We believe that the present state of variability across the Commissions represents grounds for urging all Commissions to adopt a more uniform and consistent approach. In future years, a more consistent planning approach should be more practicable as all Commissions' programmes become more firmly established within the framework of the IUCN Programme.

**It is recommended that all Commissions be asked to produce an Intersessional Plan that sets measurable objectives and/or targets for the four year period, and the results expected for each year. The Intersessional Plan and subsequent reports to Council and Congress on how it was implemented should identify the contributions of the Commissions both to the IUCN Programme, the Regional Programmes and to other aspects of IUCN's mission.**

We have compared the reports on implementation of Commissions' programmes with the various planning documents and, with the caveats discussed above and with the strong proviso that these do not include the strategic plans and workplans of the individual Sub Groups, we find that all the Commissions are carrying out their mandates and workplans during this Intersessional Period.

### 5.3 Alignment with IUCN Programme

One of the questions asked of the Review was how far the work of the Commissions is aligned with the IUCN Programme. The Programme 2001-2004 is not a very strict test of relevance since almost anything the Commissions do can fit somewhere within its framework. We reviewed each Commission's Programme for 2001-2004 and assessed how far it appeared to be aligned with the IUCN Programme. For CEM, its focus on ecosystems is so central to IUCN's mission that its activities are all integral to the IUCN Programme. For CEC, its training activities for protected area and natural resources managers clearly fall into KRA1 (*Ecosystems*); advocacy for CEPA and ESD falls within KRA2 (*Agreements*); and the IUCN World Learning Network falls under KRA6 (*Information and Communication*).

CEESP's CMWG and TILCEPA activities fall within the scope of KRA2 (*Agreements*); its GETI Working Group has worked within the *Incentives* (KRA3) component; and the *Equitable sharing of costs and benefits* (KRA4) is the raison d'etre of its Working Groups on Sustainable Livelihoods and Collaborative Management. The CEESP Working Group on Environment and Security is working within KRA5 (*Assessment of biodiversity and related social and economic factors*). Thus CEESP, whose existence was not assured in the construction of the Programme, has implemented a set of activities that fit within the IUCN Programme framework.

The activities of the three Commissions with integrated programmes coordinated from within the Secretariat (CEL, SSC and WCPA) are all well articulated with the IUCN Programme at the level of this analysis. Their Sub Groups however are undertaking additional tasks that in

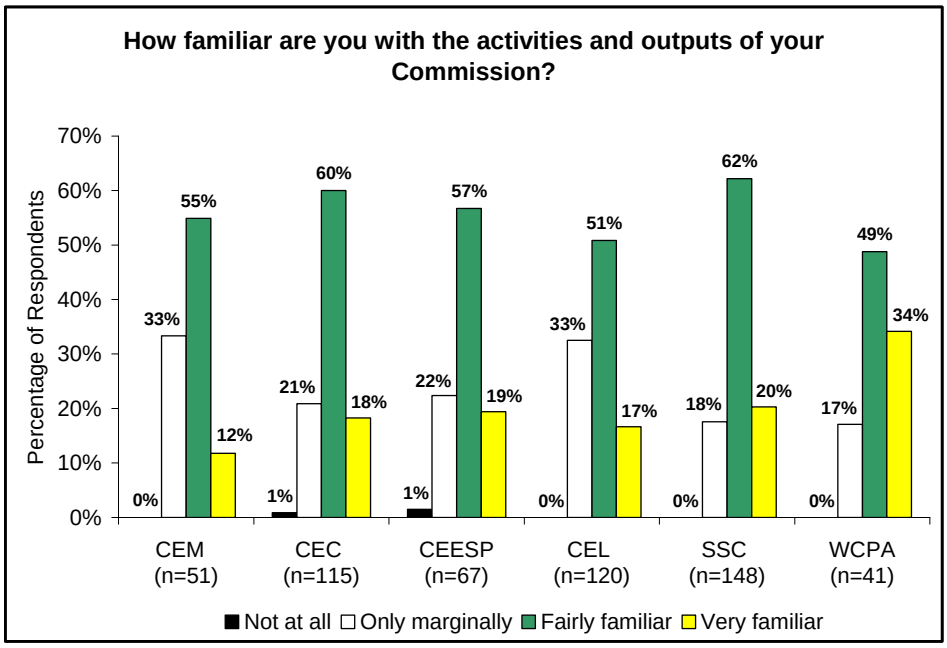
some cases go beyond the IUCN Programme, are often more research and knowledge generation in nature, and beyond our ability to examine them.

Another important role of the Commissions is to influence and shape the IUCN Programme from the perspective of leading edge ideas. If IUCN takes the role of the Commissions as knowledge networks seriously, then the programme planning and conceptualization process should find a balance between asking the Commissions *where* they will contribute to Programme and *what* they think the Programme should be. It raises questions about who is driving the Programme and what role should the Commissions play in shaping it and providing a sound scientific and logical framework for it. We understand that the Commissions were more involved in planning the next Intersessional Programme 2005-2008, but there are also some practical difficulties in doing this, as is discussed in the next section.

Looking forward, we see a number of mechanisms that need to be in place to support a more genuine collaborative programme planning exercise between the Commissions and the Secretariat. One is that the Commission members are somehow more engaged in the process. This can be encouraged by better communication systems across the sub-groups of the Commissions for those that want to be more linked to the activities of the Secretariat. Another is to focus the input of members at the regional level rather than at the level of global programmes. For the global level, a more genuine dialogue is needed for those Commissions who do not have major components of the IUCN Programme about how the Programme should reflect their advice and activities.

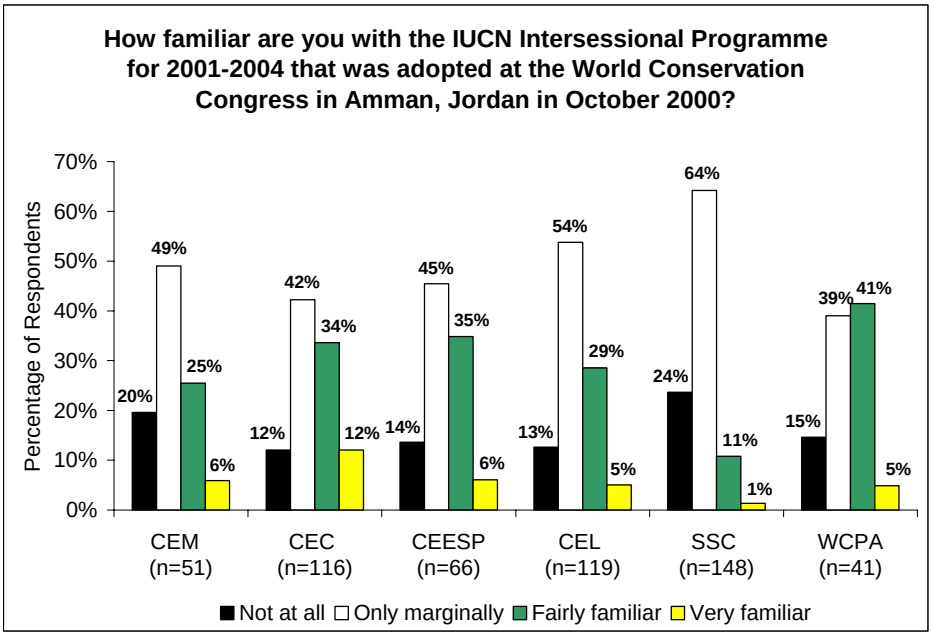
One of the findings of the web survey was that many of the members of the Sub Groups do not know what is going on within the Commission beyond their own Specialist Group and except for CEC members, less than 10% of Commission members are very familiar with the IUCN Programme. Only in WCPA do more than 20% of the Commission members feel very familiar with the activities and outputs of their own Commission (Figure 5).

**Figure 5 Familiarity of Commission members with their own Commission's programme**



In all Commissions more than 50% of those surveyed said that they knew the IUCN Programme either marginally or not at all (Figure 6). This latter figure ranged from 54% for CEC, whose members have been more involved in helping the Secretariat with communications, to 88% of members in SSC who are largely working in ignorance of what the IUCN Programme is all about.

**Figure 6 Familiarity of Commission members with the IUCN Programme 2001-2004**




## 5.4 Regional programming

The review has tried to address the extent to which the Commissions have been able to integrate the regional dimension within their programmes and their structures. This goes beyond the question of how the Commission activities for 2001-2004 were linked to the IUCN Programme within the regions which we cannot answer because we have too little information on the regional activities of the Commissions. We have therefore relied here more on interviews with the IUCN Regional Offices, the Chairs and Regional Vice-Chairs of the Commissions and an analysis that we undertook of the regional distribution of the membership of Commissions.

It is clear that the Commissions are all sensitive to the need to develop activities that meet the needs of the IUCN and Commission members in the regions; enable their own members to be more directly engaged with conservation action on the ground in their countries and regions; and are more interactive with the programmes being managed by the Regional Offices. How far they have been able to take practical steps to respond to that need varies by Commission and by region. An important dimension is how the Commissions plan their programme (top down or more participation with Commission members) and how they interact with the Regional Offices, and through them with IUCN member organizations in the regions.

One can imagine a spectrum of programme planning modalities from highly centrally planned with little or no consultation with members in the region, through a middle ground in which there is considerable consultation and input from the regions, to a situation where regional members define a regional programme and the Commission's programme is the sum of all

regional programmes. The evidence suggests that most of the Commissions fall somewhere in the middle "consultative" modality. SSC and WCPA established explicit strategic planning processes to consult with their members; CEL consulted with its Steering Committee, headquarters staff and the Regional and Country Offices; CEESP consulted with the Regional Vice-Chairs in its Steering Committee; CEC engaged proactively with the Regional Offices; and CEM appears to have been the most top-down, for understandable reasons.

How can Commissions give greater weight to the regionalization of their programmes? First they need a good representation of members in each region to inform the leadership. Second, they need leadership in each region that is empowered and resourced to play an effective role in consulting and engaging the regional Commission members, the Regional Offices and IUCN members. Third, they need the tools to carry out this consultative and regional leadership role – starting with knowing who the members are in the region and the resources to consult with and convene them.

On the first count, Commission membership in the regions is very uneven. Table 8 shows that for all Commissions, current membership is dominated by two regions – West Europe and North America (ranging from 26% for CEC to 51% for SSC). Representation in Africa ranges from 10% for SSC to 22% for CEC, but behind this figure is an uneven distribution between Eastern and Southern Africa compared to West and Central Africa. All Commissions have less than five percent of their members in the West Asia Region and less than 8% from the East Europe, North and Central Asia region. Comparatively, Commissions are well represented in South and East Asia. As we have heard from francophone Africa and Latin America, language barriers add to the difficulty of members from those regions being actively involved in programmes that are largely conducted in English.

**Table 8 Commission membership by region**

| IUCN STATUTORY REGION | CEM | CEC | CEESP | CEL | SSC | WCPA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Africa | 17% | 22% | 17% | 11% | 11% | 12% |
| Meso and South America | 10% | 17% | 13% | 17% | 9% | 11% |
| North America and Caribbean | 14% | 9% | 18% | 20% | 25% | 23% |
| South and East Asia | 18% | 20% | 11% | 18% | 18% | 16% |
| West Asia | 1% | 2% | 4% | 4% | 3% | 2% |
| Oceania | 6% | 5% | 5% | 6% | 6% | 14% |
| East Europe, North and Central Asia | 3% | 7% | 2% | 7% | 6% | 6% |
| West Europe | 30% | 17% | 26% | 18% | 31% | 16% |
| Unknown/Unspecified | 1% | 0% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| *Total Number of members* | *372* | *686* | *589* | *899* | *7,905* | *1,972* |

The role of the leadership of the Commissions is a critical factor in animating the membership and in developing good working relationships with the IUCN Regional Offices. A visit to a Regional Office by the Chair of a Commission is one aspect of this and some Regional

Offices are still waiting for promised visits from Chairs. A second factor is to have an active Regional Vice-Chair. We also looked at the distribution of Commission Steering Committees by region (Table 9). Again the distribution is uneven with some regions having no representation on the Steering Committees. CEESP has no SC representation in three regions (North America and the Caribbean; East Europe, North and Central Asia; Oceania) and CEM has no SC representative in West Asia, Oceania and East Europe, North and Central Asia.

Where a Commission Chair is resident in a region it is related to stronger regional programming for that region. For example, the Chair of CEM was actively engaged in providing technical inputs to projects in Southern Africa and in the development of the ROSA new Intersessional Programme. From our interviews it seems clear that an active Regional Vice-Chair is also a strong mobilizing force for strengthening the regionalization of a Commission Programme. Many examples were provided to us by the Regional Offices and where possible, Regional Offices designate staff members to act as focal points for liaison with the Commissions in the regions.

**Table 9 Steering Committee membership by IUCN statutory regions**

| IUCN STATUTORY REGION | CEM | CEC | CEESP | CEL | SSC | WCPA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Africa | 5 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| Meso/ South America | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| North America and Caribbean | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 21 |
| South and East Asia | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| West Asia | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Oceania | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 8 |
| East Europe, North and Central Asia | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| West Europe | 2 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 14 |
| Unspecified | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 15 | 24 | 16 | 15 | 31 | 62 |

Although the degree of effective interaction varies by region, overall CEC has the best representation in of all Commissions in both its membership and its Steering Committee and its efforts to have a stronger regional input to its activities have been appreciated by the Regional Offices. CEL has a strong presence in South and East Asia and Latin America but much less so for Africa, especially in West Africa where members have tried to organize meetings. WCPA has 17 regions and although there were many regional meetings in the run up to the World Parks Congress, it is not seen as having a strong regional programme identity. The interaction between SSC and the regions seems to be more articulated at the level of the Specialist Groups with some regions describing strong interactions at that level and no formal relations with the Commission. CEESP does not appear to have an effective interaction with most Regional Offices for regional programming.

There appear to be two main issues with respect to regionalization, both regionalization of the Commission activities and more inter-connection between Commission programmes and those implemented by the Regional Offices. One is a resource constraint. Regionalization comes with additional costs for both Commissions and for the Secretariat. Better communications, more meetings, and the ability to travel within the region for the Regional

Vice-Chair and others are needed to facilitate the process. Does IUCN have the resources to support regionalization?

The other issue is that one regional shoe does not fit all Commissions. This is demonstrated in the fact that different Commissions have created different regions and these are different from both the statutory IUCN regions and the administrative IUCN regions. It appears a fact of life that IUCN will have to live with at least for the foreseeable future, but it does imply even higher costs for regionalization of the Commissions' programmes, if there is to be input to regional meetings based on different groupings of countries.

Regional programming and a regional structure makes more sense for some Commissions than for others. SSC is organized by Specialist Group, some of which have geographic foci, but essentially they are structured by taxonomy or theme. Community based resource management on the other hand would seem to be more rooted in specific cultural and regional contexts. The degree to which a regional structure makes sense varies by Commission and by Specialist Group. There are in addition regional aspects of Commissions that Regional Vice-Chairs and Regional Offices can work together to strengthen. These include identifying opportunities for action, linking Commission members with IUCN members, and looking for emerging issues on the regional horizon.

In conclusion, the Commissions are addressing the challenge of regionalization in various ways and to various levels of success. Future progress seems more a factor of resources than other limitations, with the proviso that regionalization of programme structure makes more sense for some Commissions than for others.

### 5.5 Monitoring and evaluation

External Reviews of IUCN (1996, 1999, 2003) have recommended that if IUCN wished to maintain its place as a world respected leader in conservation, it needed to improve its capacity to learn from experience and to be able to demonstrate its impact and influence, and its added value to global and regional conservation efforts.

IUCN has responded to this by putting in place systems and capacities to help the organization demonstrate the influence and impact of its work. Over the past Intersessional Period programming, monitoring and evaluation systems in IUCN have been strengthened to clarify results (deliverables – products, services), and to monitor, evaluate and report on the use of IUCN's products and services to bring about behavioural and institutional changes (outcomes) and ultimately, improvements in the state and condition of ecosystems and people (impacts). IUCN now has in place the basic system at global and regional levels to plan, monitor, evaluate and report on the delivery of results (products and services).

However, the current monitoring and evaluation systems are not yet able to demonstrate the influence and impact of IUCN's work - that is, to determine if the use of these products and services actually lead to the intended changes and impacts. IUCN has agreed to move to a system of monitoring and reporting on outcomes over the next Intersessional Period. First steps toward this are to develop and test a methodology to monitor and evaluate the influence of the key IUCN products and services, and then to put in place the capacity across the organization to systematically integrate this practice into ongoing programmatic and evaluation work. The piloting work has begun over the past few years with the SSC CITES Evaluations which aimed to assess the influence of SSC's technical analyses to the CITES COP (2001, 2003). This first effort has proven useful in improving the targeting and distribution of the Analyses in subsequent years.

The Review was asked to comment on the effectiveness of the Commissions' own monitoring and evaluation systems. In addition to the SSC evaluations mentioned above, we have seen evaluations of SSC Action Plans (2002) and the draft evaluation of the World Parks Congress led by WCPA (2004). CEC and CEM have also undertaken self-assessments of the perceptions of their members. Apart from these specific initiatives, there was little reference in Commission documentation about their monitoring and evaluation systems.

With the integration of Commissions' work more formally into the IUCN Programme, it may now be an appropriate time to think about the Commissions becoming part of the IUCN Monitoring and Evaluation System. This would provide for a systemic process for monitoring the effectiveness of Commissions that could be developed with the input of the Commissions themselves, as well as enabling a more regular scheduling of evaluations.

The experience of this present comparative organizational evaluation has shown the usefulness of a comparative framework for the Commissions to see where their individual strengths and weakness may be. It has also identified the need to adapt the current Organizational Assessment Framework used by IUCN to the particular characteristics of the Commissions as knowledge networks rather than organizations.

In addition, the Review's work on knowledge products and services has demonstrated the value of tracking the use made of IUCN's knowledge products as well as providing some lessons for the future. It is hoped that IUCN can build on this experience to put in place a system for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on outcomes. There are also other institutional initiatives taking place that will support a move to outcome monitoring, including the current initiative to undertake policy evaluation and the ongoing Study on Knowledge Management in IUCN.

There is thus both potential and challenge in going forward. In 2004 the M&E Unit will be further developing evaluation approaches that are better suited to assessing networks and partnerships. For several reasons, including the benefit of technical support from the M&E Unit, we think the time is right to agree on a cycle of evaluations for Commissions within the overall framework of IUCN's evaluation system.

> **It is recommended that the Commissions establish a more formal process for monitoring and evaluation that is part of the overall framework of IUCN's monitoring and evaluation system. For its part, the Secretariat would be asked to provide support to the Commissions to develop appropriate methods and criteria for assessing the Commissions as knowledge networks.**

### 5.6 Gender policy

IUCN adopted a resolution at the 1996 World Conservation Congress to integrate gender perspectives across the IUCN Programme. This has resulted in an IUCN Action Plan on Gender that is to be implemented by Commission Chairs among others and the appointment of a Senior Advisor for Gender. In our review of the documentation and in our interviews, questions of gender equity or gender analysis did not come up except for our discussions with the Senior Gender Advisor.

Gender is not just about women's rights and women's roles. Gender is an entry point for the analysis of social relationships that underpins sustainable development and has particular relevance for understanding conservation, community based natural resources management, and indigenous environmental knowledge. Roles, responsibilities, division of labour, access

to and benefits from resources all have gender dimensions that must be factored into any analysis and any action plan. Many researchers and community workers now see gender analysis as a critical entry point for understanding broader social patterns that encompass class, age, economic status, race and ethnicity.

What are the Commissions doing to promote gender analysis in their programmes of work? In the documentation that we saw, there is little or no reference to implementing gender analysis or the gender policy of IUCN, with a few exceptions. The Senior Advisor on Gender has provided support to CEM to bring the gender perspective into their work on *Gender and Drylands* and support to WCPA to produce a document on *Gender and Protected Areas.* Experience shows that while researchers and managers are usually open to learning how to incorporate gender perspectives into their work, they need the tools and training to do it. The Senior Advisor on Gender has been active in providing this training as far as the limited resources allow and has emphasized that the tools (guidelines, methodology etc.) need to be very situation specific for non-specialist to be comfortable using them.

We are not aware of any work done by SSC or CEL in this area but CEC have incorporated gender into their overall approach to communications and in selecting the Steering Committee and membership of the Commission. We have seen little in CEESP's work that relates to gender *analysis* and how gender influences environmental knowledge, roles, rights and access to natural resources. A review of the CEESP publication *Policy Matters*, Issue 12 (2003) on *Community Empowerment for Conservation* prepared for the World Parks Congress does not appear within its 320 pages to discuss *gender analysis as a dimension of community empowerment for conservation*, although there are descriptions of men and women's roles in the case studies[29]. This is a missed opportunity for CEESP to bring the importance of the gender perspective to the attention of protected area managers.

It is a dimension that all Commissions need to integrate more into their work as well as seek ways to develop the capacity of their members for gender analysis, but from its mandate, more might be expected of CEESP. CEESP's response to this criticism is that the use of the word "gender" could be used as a convenient substitute for taking concrete action to improve the lives of women and girls and that it has demonstrated commitment to gender issues by involving more women in the work of CEESP.

**It is recommended that all Commissions include in their Intersessional Plans and Annual Workplans specific objectives and expected results for strengthening the gender dimension in their programmes during the Intersessional Period 2005-2008 in order to implement the IUCN Gender Policy on Gender adopted by Council in April 1998.**

[29] There is one cursory reference to gender dimension in a book review that includes the topic.

# 6 Commission Knowledge Products and Services

The Commissions have made major contributions to the worldwide credibility and visibility of IUCN through the production and dissemination of their knowledge products and services, of which the best known is the SSC Red List. Therefore the Review paid special attention to the Commissions' knowledge products and services in terms of collecting additional data from knowledge producers and users through a parallel track of interviews and surveys. This component of the review tested an experimental approach to tracking the use and impact of the Commissions' knowledge outputs that it is hoped will be of use to the Commissions and the Secretariat in further developing their monitoring and evaluation systems over the next Intersessional Period. The *Knowledge Product and Services Study* is more fully described in a separate Addendum to the Review Report. This section summarizes the main findings relevant to the evaluation of the Commissions' work during this Intersessional Period.

Knowledge products are the tangible outputs of the Commissions' work that reach Commission members, the Secretariat and external audiences and users. Products include databases and repositories, books and reports, guidelines and action plans, policy briefs, and teaching materials in various formats from print, CD-ROM, videos and web-based. Services include technical advice, advocacy, capacity building and some cases of field project implementation. They also come in various formats and media.

The Review took a two-pronged approach:

- A desk analysis of all the main products (total = 109) of the Commissions for this Intersessional Period on a limited number of dimensions (geographic focus; publication language; alignment with IUCN Programme 2005-2008 and potential contribution to global poverty-environment themes);
- More detailed case studies of nine selected outputs across the Commissions (seven products and two services).

The methods and sample sizes are discussed in section 1.3. Here it is important to note that the criteria for selecting the case studies were designed as much to optimize learning for future monitoring and evaluation as to evaluate past experience (Box 7). Therefore they deliberately included as much diversity as possible, in terms of type of output and where it fell on the value chain between scientific assessment and policy and implementation.

**Box 7 Criteria for Selecting Case Study Products and Services**

- Of primary interest to Commissions
- Provided within Intersessional Period 2001-2004
- Diversity in terms of type of output and when produced
- Ease of tracing use and influence
- Global reach (only limited focus on regional outputs)
- Include example(s) of joint initiative between Commission and Secretariat
- Include example(s ) of services
- Limit policy related products (in view of upcoming policy evaluation initiative)

Box 8 shows the products and services that were examined in the case studies. The products range from guidelines for implementation, a resource book, Commission newsletters and journals, to a communications capacity building programme. The two services examined are the capacity development programme *Nature Management in Partnership* and an on-line database service (SIS).

**Box 8 Knowledge products and services selected for case studies**

| | KNOWLEDGE PRODUCT OR SERVICE | ACRONYM | CATEGORY OF PRODUCT | DATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CEM** | *Using the Ecosystem Approach to Implement the Convention on Biological Diversity – Key Issues and Case Studies*. Ecosystem Management Series No 2. RD Smith and E Maltby | CEM<br>UEA | Book (principles of application based on case studies) | 2003 |
| **CEC** | *Nature Management in Partnership* - A capacity development programme in communication | CEC<br>NMP | Capacity building programme | 1997-2003 |
| **CEESP** | *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* | CEESP<br>BTBR | Fortnightly technical newsletter: Joint GETI/ICTSD initiative | Launch in 2001 |
| | *Policy Matters, Vol. 12. Community Empowerment for Conservation* | CEESP<br>PM12 | Newsletter/journal (articles, case studies) | 2003 |
| **CEL** | *Capacity Building for Environmental Law in the Asian and Pacific Region: Approaches and Resources, Volumes I & II*. Edited by Donna G Craig, N. A Robinson, Kheng-Lian Koh | CEL<br>CBEL | Set of two resource books for Asian and Pacific region | 2002 |
| | *Flow – The Essentials of Environmental Flows.* Edited by Megan Dyson, Ger Bergkamp, John Scanlon | CEL<br>Flow | Book for management and implementation. Joint initiative: Commissions and WANI | 2003 |
| **SSC** | *Red List Criteria and Categories (Version 3.1).* | SSC RLC | Publication (guidelines for application of criteria) | 2001 |
| | *Species Information Service (SIS)* as Applied to the Global Amphibian Assessment | SSC SIS | Information service (database/ information system supported by expert network) | Pilot phase completed 2003 |
| **WCPA** | *Evaluating Effectiveness – A Framework for Assessing the Management of Protected Areas.* Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No 6. Marc Hockings with Sue Stolton & Nigel Dudley | WCPA<br>EE | Book (best practice guidelines for implementation) | 2000<br>Produced at end of previous Intersessional Period |

## 6.1 Main findings

From the perspective of the Review the main questions are:

- What, or who, is driving the production of the outputs?
- Are they produced in a timely manner to have relevance and impact?
- Are they considered to be of high quality and at the cutting edge of their fields?
- Are they targeted at the right audiences?
- Are they disseminated so that they are available and accessible to users?
- Is there evidence of influence and impact as a result of these products and services?
- Are the Commissions' outputs aligned with IUCN's emerging agenda?

*What, or who, is driving the production of the outputs?*

The production of most knowledge products and services is internally driven mainly by the Commissions' own judgment of what is needed, as defined by their members and particularly by their Steering Committees. In some cases, the need is clearly defined by resolutions of the Parties to the International Environmental Agreements or is a response to resolutions taken at IUCN Congresses. One of the ongoing challenges for the Commissions is to juggle the needs for products and services with the expertise and availability of volunteer members to fill them. Some form of systematic situation analysis is performed only for about 20% of Commission outputs. This should be a matter of concern since some systematic assessment of need and potential market beyond the enthusiasm of the authors or producers should be established for all outputs by all Commissions as soon as possible. For the next Intersessional Period, Commission strategic plans and workplans should pay greater attention to the whole planning cycle for products and services and to establishing priorities for them.

*Are they produced in a timely manner to have relevance and impact?*

The potentially slow nature of volunteer work can affect the capacity of Commissions to respond to windows of opportunity for products or services so that their relevance and impact can be lost. The review found that the production of the case study products and services was timely to address the needs for which they were developed. Only in the case of SSC RLC did a significant percentage (33%) of the small sample of users surveyed feel that it was too late since they had already started their assessment work by the time it was released. However it is unlikely that this diminished the eventual impact of the product. Twelve percent of CEL Flow users felt that it was published too late to make a real impact but the reasons for their opinion are unclear. In the case of the CEM Ecosystem book, 9% of users surveyed felt that it was published too late due to the lengthy period of three years that had elapsed between the conceptualization of the book's content at a series of workshops and its eventual publication.

*Are they considered to be of high quality and at the cutting edge of their fields?*

The users of the case study products and services consistently regarded them as credible and reliable (86% of responses). The most frequent reason given by 41% of users is that the products and services are seen as outputs from IUCN – that is, they are backed by the IUCN "brand". Only 10% of users referring to the reputation of the source as a reason for confidence specifically referred to a Commission, even though some of the products do not reflect the corporate identity of IUCN in terms of design or carrying the IUCN logo. Other reasons given for believing that the products and services are of high quality is the reputation

of the authors or producers (27%); the processes by which the product or service was developed (17%) or the user's own judgment about the content of the product (24%).

Thus the Commissions' outputs are closely associated by users with IUCN. The corollary should be that all outputs are subject to rigorous peer review to ensure that IUCN's reputation as a source of credible and high quality information is not put at risk. During the Intersessional Period 2001-2004 the peer review process under the IUCN Publications Strategy has not functioned systematically and quality control has been in the hands of the Commissions rather than coordinated by the Secretariat.

The Review found that quality control mechanisms differ considerably for each product and service. For three of the case study products and services (the Red List Criteria and Categories - SSC; the Resource book on Capacity Building for Environmental Law – CEL; and the Implementation Guidelines for Evaluating Effectiveness – WCPA), the peer review and quality assurance processes were demonstrably of high standards. The joint newsletter of CEESP GETI/ICTSD is subject to quality control by the partner – ICTSD rather than by CEESP. The CEC capacity building programme was monitored by national teams and advisors involved in the activity and had a formal end of term evaluation.

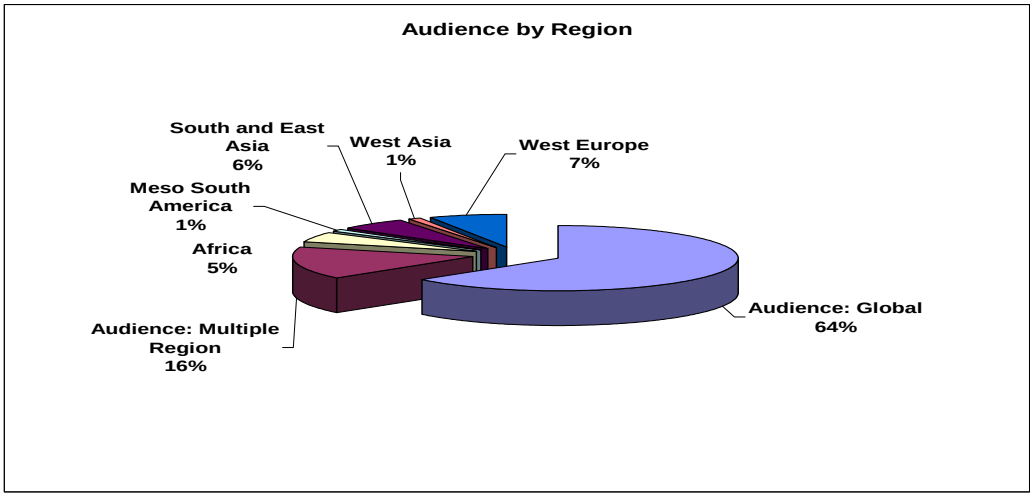
However, the processes for the book on the Ecosystem Approach by CEM; and the Policy Matters Newsletter/Journal (volume 12) by CEESP had less rigorous quality control. Peer review processes were largely informal and involved fewer peers who worked without specific guidelines. These were also the three publications about which some users and key informants had the most critical comments in terms of quality and content.

Except for the book on the CEM Ecosystem Approach and the CEL book on Environmental Flows, all the other outputs examined had a high rating from users as being a cutting edge contribution to their fields. As some of these outputs were far from the research frontier, the definition of "cutting edge" clearly lies in the experience and perception of the user and relates not so much to the breaking of new scientific or policy ground as much as addressing specific user needs and filling gaps in the market.

*Are they targeted at the right audiences?*

Some targeting of key individuals and organizations is done by all Commissions to ensure that their products reach those who can help to influence uptake of the outputs or for whom the outputs were specifically designed. The relevant people in the Commissions admitted that more targeting of influential individuals and organizations is needed in order to maximize the impact of products and services. Commissions usually distribute hard copies of their products to all members, place copies at major events such as COP meetings and also send copies to IUCN Regional and sometimes Country Offices. There was anecdotal evidence that many of these products are still in piles in some IUCN offices and at the distribution depot in Cambridge. Analysis of the 109 main Commission products for this Intersessional Period showed that 64% were targeted at global audiences and a further 14% were for multiple regions so that the number of products targeted at specific regions was limited to no more than 7% for any region (Figure 7). It is therefore not unexpected that the Commissions outputs intended for global audiences may have less interest for users in specific regions.

**Figure 7 Content focus of the Commissions' knowledge products by region**




*Are they disseminated so that they are available and accessible to users?*

Overall, 41% of 104 users found the Commissions' knowledge products and services easily accessible (compared to 38% who found them accessible most of the time and 14% who found them accessible only sometimes or not at all). The availability of more material on the IUCN and Commission websites has increased accessibility markedly during this current Intersessional Period. Websites, together with mailed hard copies or CD-ROMs are key means for making users aware of products and services, with the first two being the preferred dissemination channels by 80% of the users. Users are not always end points. Fifty-three percent of users surveyed had passed the product or information about it or the service on to others. Clearly our surveys and interviews reached those who had received the Commissions' outputs but there is a larger and unknown group of potential users who are missed by current dissemination strategies.

One major problem in the accessibility of Commission products is that of language. Of the 109 main products produced in this Intersessional Period, 95% were *originally produced* in English and 5% in Spanish. Five percent of the products in English were also published in Spanish and 2% in French. The CEESP Newsletter/Journal is published with papers in their language of origin - English, Spanish or French – a practice which could be more widely adopted. Clearly some more affirmative action regarding resources for translation needs to be taken to make the Commissions' outputs more accessible to non-native English speakers – an issue that we know the Commissions are aware of.

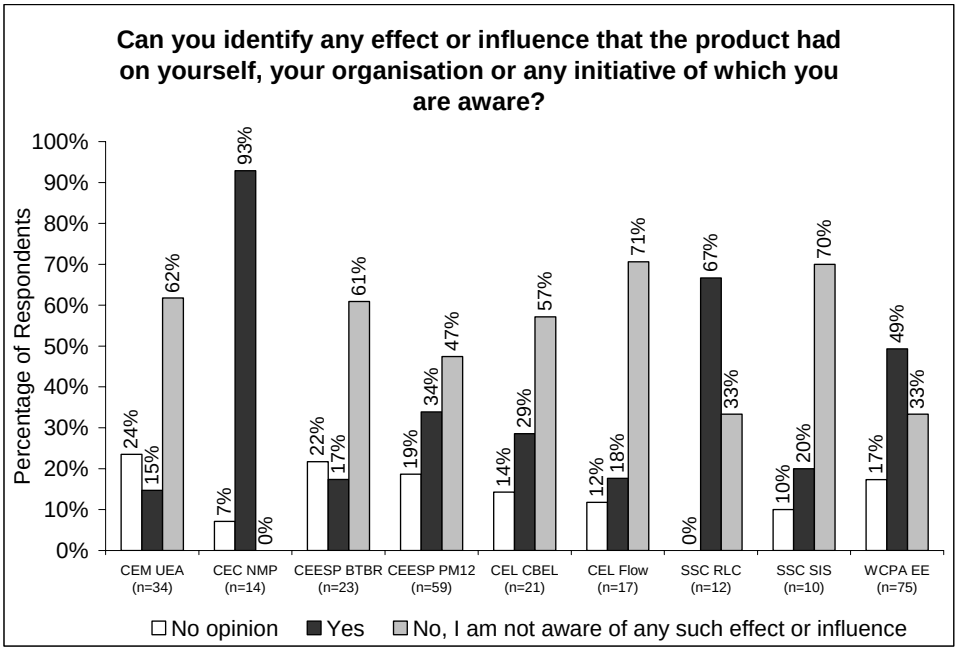
The Commissions together with the Secretariat are investing considerable effort in disseminating their products but there is less evidence of a dissemination *strategy*. There is little information gathered by the Commissions or the Secretariat about the effectiveness of random distribution of hard copies at large events or what happens to the copies sent to the Regional Offices. Only certain products are made available on CD-ROM which is a cheaper format to produce and distribute. Some comparisons of the cost-effectiveness of distributing hard copies versus web-based or CD-ROM distribution by product and region would be a key input to a more strategic approach to product distribution, although the clearly expressed desire of users for hard copies should be weighed against the potential cost savings of using other formats. For those users and in those regions where hard copies are essential, the key

strategy would be to ensure that hard copies reach their audiences and do not sit around in piles unused.

*Is there evidence of influence and impact as a result of these products and services?*

About half of the users surveyed felt that they knew of some concrete results from the use of the Commissions products and services and/or could point to its influence and impact. Those products with the highest "ratings" were the capacity building programme of CEC, the Red List Categories and Criteria of SSC, and the Guidelines for Evaluating Effectiveness of WCPA (Figure 8).

**Figure 8 Users' perceptions of the impact of Commissions' outputs**



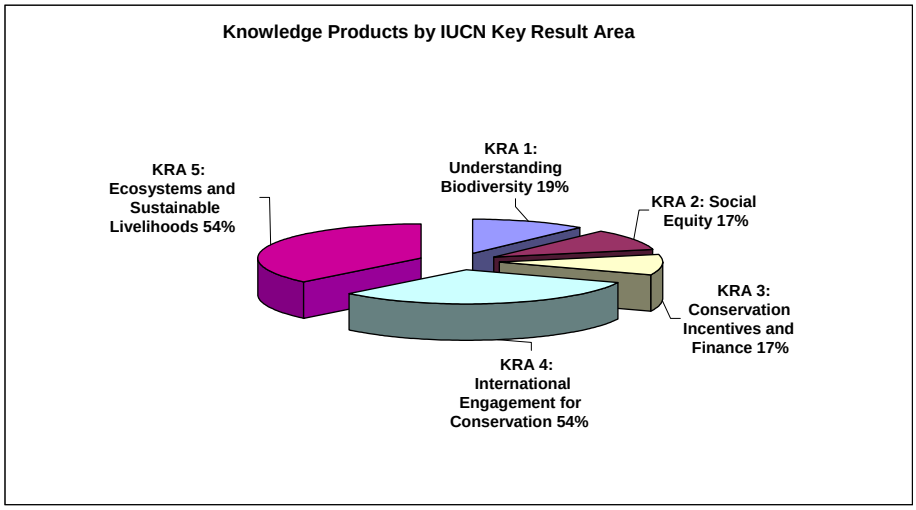

One limitation of the Review study is that sufficient time has not elapsed from when the product or service was launched to assess the eventual impact that it may have. This is particularly true for SIS which is not yet operational on-line but is also valid to different degrees for all the other case studies. However, there have already been some success stories. The GETI/ICTSD Technical Newsletter on Trade and Biodiversity (BRIDGES Trade BioRes) has contributed to better understanding of the importance of the links between the two, not least within IUCN. CEL's Resource books for the Asian and Pacific Regions has changed the way in which environmental law is being taught in those regions. CEC's capacity building programme has had a strong influence on those involved in the programme in five countries in Eastern Europe. WCPA's Guidelines for Evaluating Effectiveness has had influence on the management of protected areas in many regions.

An area where the Commissions' outputs might have expected to have greater influence is within the IUCN Secretariat. Although the number of respondents is small (16), more than half of them were not familiar with five of the case study products, and only 63% had used any of the products.

## 6.2 Alignment of Commissions' outputs with IUCN's emerging agenda

In the next Intersessional Period there will be additional expectations that the outputs of the Commissions will not only match the mandates of the Commissions but that they will be aligned with the IUCN Programme. An analysis of the 109 main Commission products found that they all are aligned with the new 2005-2008 Programme, particularly – as would be expected – with the Key Results Areas for International Engagement for Conservation (KRA4) and Ecosystems and Livelihoods (KRA5) (Figure 9).

**Figure 9 Knowledge products by IUCN Key Result Area 2005-2008**




A parallel analysis examined how the content of the Commissions' products were in line with the elements of the WSSD Plan of Implementation. Again, the main alignment was with biodiversity (49% of products); legal and institutional arrangements (28%); and poverty and equity (23%). Water resources accounted for a further 9% and global change for 8%. For a further 24 elements in the WSSD Plan, the content of less than 5% of the Commission products from this current Intersessional Period is relevant. Thus the Commission products are aligned with the emerging poverty-environment agenda but are very much concentrated in the few WSSD elements that relate to IUCN's traditional areas of competence.

## 6.3 Conclusions

As a group the Commissions have performed well in the production of their outputs. The case study knowledge products and services have been based on important needs in the conservation community; they have credibility and are regarded as on the cutting edge of their field; their formats were more or less appropriate for the target audiences; and the timing of their release or implementation was still within the window of opportunity. The targeting and dissemination were generally appropriate and as far as the case studies could show, target audiences have generally been reached. With few exceptions the use and influence of the products and services were in line with the expectations of those who initiated their development.

The Commissions' products are also well positioned to contribute to the work of IUCN during the next Intersessional Period. The product content is well aligned with the IUCN

thematic areas and most contribute to several themes. There is a very good resonance between the products and the 2005-2008 Intersessional Programme and many products have the potential to contribute to the expected IUCN Programme outcomes during the next few years. Although the WSSD Plan of Implementation is defined in broad terms, the products are in line with at least 29 of its actionable points.

Despite the positive overall assessment, the Commissions need to find ways to *accelerate* the use and influence of their knowledge products and services towards the desired outcomes. The 2003 External Review of IUCN notes that Commissions never had a monopoly of knowledge delivery in the Programme and that their leadership in their respective fields is far from assured. The environment in which the Commissions operate is now more competitive and challenging than ever before. There is an increased worldwide focus on knowledge management and knowledge networks as key organizational assets, and this Review has also shown that there are other networks competing with the Commissions for the input of their members.

These challenges present an urgent call to the Commissions for new thinking about the way in which their tacit and explicit knowledge flows can best be mobilized and enhanced to deliver valuable knowledge outputs to the Union. In spite of the fact that the Commissions have performed well in this regard, there are differences between how each of the case study products were handled and how they were perceived by users in terms of quality and relevance. There are therefore some areas for improvement and some lessons to be learned.

*Ensuring leadership in knowledge production*

To retain a leading edge in a competitive environment, Commissions have to be seen to have their finger on the pulse of critical knowledge needs and important emerging issues. This implies the development of cutting edge products that fill the most strategic niches and contribute most effectively towards the changes that IUCN wishes to pursue. In this context the Commissions could be more strategic in their thinking about which products and services to provide. Broader needs assessments and situation analyses should complement the current dependence on internally driven rationales for investing in certain products.

A more purposeful approach is needed to identify opportunities and scan the field, including what the competition is producing, than we have seen in several Commissions. The 3I-C Fund provides one such opportunity, but the Commissions can also take better advantage of their own widespread networks and access to influential organisations to put in place systematic processes for determining which products and services are priorities and would fill the most important gaps.

As some of the case study outputs were far from the research frontier, the definition of "cutting edge" clearly lies in the experience and perception of the user and relates not so much to the breaking of new scientific or policy ground as much as addressing specific user needs and filling gaps in the market.

*Minimizing risk to IUCN's reputation*

IUCN has an excellent reputation as producer of credible and reliable knowledge. This is a very valuable but fragile asset. If the outputs of one component of IUCN do not measure up to the values and quality associated with the organization as a whole, it can potentially damage the reputation of the whole organization.

This places a major responsibility on IUCN's leadership, including that of the Commissions. The Commissions' leadership should undertake to ensure that their delivery of knowledge is based on criteria such as clear argument, socially and politically responsible standpoints in line with the mission of IUCN, the application of basic academic quality measures and scientific rigor wherever possible. While some Commissions have in place good quality control mechanisms and procedures, this is not universally the case. For its part, IUCN should reinstate systematic quality control and editorial review processes that include the products and services of the Commissions, particularly but not only where those are produced with the support of the Secretariat and carry the logo of IUCN.

*Developing more strategic approaches to the knowledge production and dissemination process*

The Review was not able to do any analysis of cost-effectiveness but we suspect that for some products, current approaches to format and dissemination are less effective than they could, or should be. More use can probably be made of electronic media for dissemination and more strategic distribution of materials by target group, by region and to meet key timelines.

The Commissions should include specific attention in their work plans and strategic plans to their products and services so that the whole production and dissemination process is a strategic one that ensures the key people and organizations are reached and fewer hard copies go to waste. Dissemination strategies should be devised in collaboration with IUCN thematic programmes and Regional Offices to ensure optimal reach of products and services with limited resources.

*Adding value to knowledge products and services through collaboration*

It is too early to determine whether the Commissions are adequately responding to the regionalization of IUCN's Programme through their knowledge products and services. In terms of content and distribution the regionalization does not appear to have progressed very far. The 2003 External Review of IUCN notes that

> In a regionalized and decentralized Union in whose Programme Members are expected to play an increasingly prominent role, much of the knowledge management work must be articulated with regional and country offices and with Members.

Yet Commissions seem to contribute little to this approach. This has been confirmed by our observations. We have seen many examples of partnerships in knowledge production between the Commissions and other organizations (including IUCN Members), yet few where Commissions have worked together or have collaborated with Secretariat component programmes. Increased collaboration within IUCN can add value to new or existing products by adapting their format for different audiences who may not have been among the original target groups. Joint initiatives can develop products and services that range across the knowledge product and services value chain and enhance the *Knowledge-Empowerment-Governance* strategy of IUCN.

This implies that the knowledge flows across the organization have to be better understood including the uptake of the Commissions' knowledge products and services by the Secretariat and IUCN Members. We hope that the IUCN Knowledge Management Study will study these knowledge flows.

*Tracking use, influence and impact of knowledge products and services for improved planning and accountability*

Last, but not least, we did not find that any of the Commissions are monitoring the use of their knowledge products and services beyond collecting statistics on visits to their websites, or are systematically evaluating the use and impact of their outputs. In section 5.5 we recommended that the Commissions be included in the IUCN Monitoring and Evaluation System, and this should include tracking the use, influence and impact of their outputs on a systematic basis.

To this end, this component of the Review has shown that it is possible to determine whether the use of the Commissions' products and services actually lead to the intended changes. Looking forward, the Commissions can map their intended knowledge products and services, assess their place on the knowledge value chain, assign priorities based on known criteria and integrate their outputs into their overall strategic frameworks.

# 7 Conclusions and Proposals for Future Action

## 7.1 Summary of key performance areas for each Commission

In this section we summarize our overall findings with respect to questions of Commission effectiveness and efficiency for this Intersessional Period 2001-2004 that have been discussed in more detail throughout the report. In the interviews with key people inside and outside the Commissions, people were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the Commissions as well as what they saw as the risks and opportunities. These views are factored into the overall assessments. We also raise some issues regarding their continued relevance within the changing IUCN context and that of the wider environment in which the Commissions operate.

**Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)**

*Effectiveness of major program activities*
CEM underwent a change a leadership within this Intersessional Period and has only in the last two years been really operational so its lack of major results can be partly related to its recent history.

CEM must deliver results with respect to its current major activity on the ecosystem approach funded by the Dutch Government and it knows it. This is needed to demonstrate that the ecosystem approach being promoted by CEM is effective and practical so that it can be scaled up to provide tools for real-life applications such as urban and regional planning. In other

areas, CEM has laid the groundwork for doing *ecosystem restoration* but has not yet tested this in practice. It is awaiting the outcome of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment before doing much more in *Indicators* and its work in *Tools* does not seem to have a clear sense of where the main clients are. It is doing some modest work on *Indicators* and *Tools* under the Dutch-funded ecosystem approach case studies but has been unable to attract significant funding as yet.

Since its restart in 2002, CEM has produced a number of outputs, including four books, a website and a number of well-received presentations to international policy fora. Thus far, CEM has also delivered some encouraging results, such as its contribution to debates and decisions on the Ecosystem Approach in the CBD and the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD). It should be given the time to capitalize on the opportunities created by these decisions.

*Effectiveness in meeting expectations*
CEM's challenge is to meet expectations in an Intersessional Period that has seen organizational turbulence within the Commission. Its new leadership is regarded positively but CEM has had to focus on organizational issues that have not engaged the membership but rather have disengaged it. This has been exacerbated by a perceived top-down approach to management, some members feeling that they do not know how to contribute, and the decision to allow membership to grow selectively. CEM is being challenged to keep its reputation and members intact. Its external clients such as national governments have yet to see results that they can take up.

*Efficiency in using resources*
As far as we can tell, CEM has used its resources, including its Commission Operating Funds (COF) efficiently. It effectively used partnerships such as with SERI to get its work in *Ecosystem Restoration* off the ground. The extent of other finances raised by all the CEM Theme Leaders and Regional Vice-Chairs is unknown.

*Financial viability*
CEM is very dependent on one donor until it can produce results that can be applied in ecosystem management. It has been overshadowed in this Intersessional Period by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment which represents a major competitor for expert volunteer time and for donor support. It needs to develop a funding strategy that is based on results.

*Risk Management*
The main risk for CEM is that it will not deliver the results of the Dutch funded project on time. Another risk is that it will lose the support of its members if it cannot implement and fund a programme to engage them. There is a risk to IUCN's reputation if it does not have a strong Commission and programme on ecosystem management which lies at the core of its mission. Everyone has an interest in ensuring that CEM has the resources and support to deliver on its mandate in the next Intersessional Period.

*Opportunities*
The constructive decision on the Ecosystem Approach taken by CBD COP-7 in February 2004 has renewed CEM's "international license to operate" on this issue and creates a significant demand for testing approaches to ecosystem management that integrate social and environmental aspects, as well as fundraising opportunities. The decision taken by CCD COP-6 in September 2003 provides similar opportunities for CEM to test and promote more sustainable ways of managing natural resources in the world's drylands. CEM also has a major opportunity to take over where the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) leaves off when it completes the first global MEA assessment in 2005. IUCN should ensure that it is well positioned to take up the torch from MEA and engage actively with the MEA network

of 780 experts to bring it within IUCN's orbit. A strong and interdisciplinary CEM is an essential part of this positioning.

*Continued relevance*
Many stakeholders are now convinced that more integrated approaches to the management of natural resources are needed, but there is considerable uncertainty and disagreement about how to do this in practice. CEM has to demonstrate its value through the identification and promotion of technically sound and practically workable approaches to the management and restoration of ecosystems in a variety of geographic and sectoral contexts, if it is to remain relevant to the needs of IUCN's partners and members.

The MEA Framework is *Ecosystems and Human Well-being*. If CEM is to position itself to be MEA-II for the next global assessment, it needs to ensure that its conceptual approach to ecosystems not only integrates human and ecological systems but that this integrated framework is visible and understood outside the Commission. It also should ensure that its outputs meet the needs of decision-makers. IUCN participates in MEA through its President, its Director General and the Chair of CEM but only some 12% of CEM members are actively engaged in the MEA assessment process. If IUCN wishes to be well positioned with respect to MEA in 2005, it will need to have a strong *interdisciplinary* programme on ecosystems as well as a strong CEM to anchor the influx in potential members and activities.

**Commission on Communication and Education (CEC)**

*Effectiveness of major program activities*
CEC has been very effective in achieving results in advocacy for CEPA (Communication, Education and Public Awareness) within the international Conventions, including CBD, Ramsar and Climate Change. They have also achieved results in having Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) put into the WSSD Plan of Implementation.

CEC has been very active and responsive in undertaking training activities in the regions. While these are valuable in themselves, it is not clear what CEC's strategy is for capacity building – i.e. taking capacity building activities to a scale where they will have more impact. Given the open-ended demand for such training at national and regional levels, will they continue in the next Intersessional Period to provide training wherever they get financial support? Perhaps a more strategic approach is needed so that CEC can build on its experience to scale up these training activities to provide tools and guidelines for other organizations, including IUCN members to undertake in their own countries.

A number of activities are in the pipeline. CEC is developing a feasibility study for a virtual university called the *IUCN World Conservation Learning Network* and it is currently working through a UNEP funded project on *Environmental Citizenship* with national environmental educators on environmental education in schools. The work relating to media and the corporate sector do not appear to have produced many results, judging from the various reports to Council.

CEC has done much valuable work at regional level and reports on its results by region but it seems to have had difficulty in linking its work at the regional level to what it does at the global level.

*Effectiveness in meeting expectations*
CEC has delivered well on meeting the expectations of its external clients, especially in its two key areas of CEPA and ESD. The main problem for CEC is in dealing with the expectations of the Secretariat, or in coming to a clearer understanding of how CEC can

provide value-added to the One Programme and the work of the Secretariat. CEC's Work Programme for 2000-2004 identifies two key roles for itself with respect to the Secretariat's work. One is to develop Secretariat expertise through a series of short guidelines such as "*How to write a press release*" or "*How to summarize a conference*". The second is to have a corporate communications mechanism in place that draws on both voluntary expertise from the CEC network and paid consultants.

For its part, the Secretariat has not been clear on what type of communication expertise and capacity it needs for what purpose, and what its expectations for CEC are. One of the frustrations for CEC is that it has not got its message well understood within the Secretariat, including at management level. Senior management has moved the CEC Focal Point from Global Programmes to the Global Communications Unit (GPU) and this was reported to us as a source of concern for CEC and has led to a mixed set of activities that focus partly on corporate communication needs and partly on programmatic communication needs. This is a broad range of needs to respond to effectively, requiring differing sets of skills and expertise in development communication and corporate communications.

While not judging on the location of the CEC Focal Point, we do feel that CEC has itself contributed to this confused set of expectations about what its mandate and focus is. Some of what CEC proposes in its workplan in developing IUCN Secretariat expertise and the IUCN Corporate Communication mechanism we see as properly a staff function – and if the staff do not have the required skills (and it would appear some skill-building is in order), some combination of revised job descriptions, staff training and consultant advisors would seem more appropriate than using the knowledge network of CEC volunteers to fill those gaps.

*Efficiency in using resources*
As far as we are aware, CEC has used its resources, including its Commission Operating Funds (COF) efficiently. The extent of other finances raised by all the Sub Groups is unknown.

*Financial viability*
CEC has reportedly had difficulty in raising the funds that it needs to carry out its mandates. It has been very successful in some areas (Environmental Citizenship) but less so in others. It lacks adequate financial and staff resources to run a Commission and to provide sufficient opportunities to keep its members actively engaged with the CEC. This is seen as a weakness by some Commission leaders. We wonder if part of the problem of attracting financial resources is not at least partly related to CEC targeting IUCN as one of its key target audiences.

*Risk management*
The main risks seen from within the Commission are those of isolation from IUCN Programme and losing its volunteers through frustration. These are real risks that IUCN needs to manage and we would recommend that the Secretariat and CEC discuss (again if necessary) how CEC can best contribute to the One Programme in a way that is satisfactory to both parties. In particular, the Secretariat needs to be clearer about the type and focus of its corporate and programmatic communication needs, and its expectations of CEC volunteers.

We see the proposed *IUCN World Conservation Learning Network* as a potential future risk because IUCN would be entering a highly competitive field probably without the financial resources that potential competitors will have. It will be important as part of the feasibility study to assess what can be reasonably managed by CEC's and IUCN's human resources, and to identify the most strategic partners to work with, and at the same time secure the IUCN "brand".

*Opportunities*
CEC has two major opportunities: the CEPA provisions of international Conventions and the upcoming UN Decade for Education on Sustainable Development 2005-2014. In both areas, there will be increased demand from national governments for the expertise that CEC could provide. We see these as more important opportunities for CEC to pursue than its capacity building work within IUCN, because success in CEPA advocacy and in ESD will be the best advocacy for CEC's vision and mission within IUCN. The *IUCN World Conservation Learning Network* is potentially an opportunity in this regard as well as a risk.

*Continued relevance*
CEC's mandate and advocacy for CEPA and ESD is very relevant to sustainable development, and is much needed so it will continue to be relevant to the emerging agenda. IUCN needs to decide if and how it will undertake programme work in ESD. CEC is the only international knowledge network bringing together the constellation of expertise in communications and education represented in its volunteers. CEC is also to be commended for its strategic planning processes which have involved very frank assessments of its own capacities and successes and failures. Its leadership is investing considerable effort in searching for its continued relevance. We would suggest that it looks more outward rather than inward to the Secretariat – to build on the advocacy success it has already achieved with the Conventions and contribute to the IUCN Programme through its work with IUCN Members in the regions and with national governments.

**Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)**

*Effectiveness of major programme activities*
CEESP has been very active in this Intersessional Period. There are some clear successes – many at local level and beyond the capacity of this Review to comment on, but also at the global level through its Joint Task Force with WCPA (TILCEPA) on getting co-management adopted in the WPC Action Plan and in the CBD Programme of Work in Protected Areas. CEESP was extremely active at the WPC, working closely with the IUCN Secretariat to organize the Governance stream and the cross-cutting theme on communities (TILCEPA and CMWG) through to the CBD COP7 and its preparatory meeting (SSBSSTA)

The GETI Group of CEESP has also helped IUCN to develop and implement activities on trade and environment. It organized a meeting of 30 organizations prior to the WTO Ministerial meeting in Cancun that raised awareness of the impact of international trade rules on biodiversity conservation among the NGO community and helped to bridge the trade and conservation communities, and raised IUCN's profile within the trade community. The joint CEESP-GETI/ICTSD publication BRIDGES Trade BioRes has provided an important reporting service to stakeholders across the conservation-trade divide.

However, we also heard that CEESP's effectiveness has been marred by the way it has interpreted its mandate as a licence to "speak for" and to try to position IUCN within some of the economic and social policy debates around environment and sustainable development, rather than to play a less public role. More private advice and less public stances would have been more welcomed. Thus, CEESP's effectiveness has been curtailed by its operating style (see *Risk Management*).

*Effectiveness in meeting expectations*
CEESP, together with WCPA met or perhaps even exceeded expectations in its impact on the WPC Action Plan and CBD Programmes of Work. In general, the work of all CEESP's working groups has met expectations. However, many of CEESP's activities are directed at national and local decision makers and there is no information available to us on how far they

have met expectations more generally at these levels. As we note below, people interviewed for this Review tend to hold strong views about CEESP that inevitably influence their expectations of the Commission. CEESP does meet the expectations of its members. It has among the highest "approval" ratings of any Commission for the management and organization of the Commission and for being at the cutting edge.

*Efficiency in using resources*
As far as we are able to judge, for this Intersessional Period CEESP has used its resources, including its Commission Operating Funds (COF) efficiently. The extent of other finances raised by all the Sub Groups is unknown.

*Financial viability*
CEESP has worked with different partners to obtain funds for its field-based activities although this has raised questions about whether the activities are those of the Commission or of other organizations[30]. Its work in environment and security, community based resource management, co-management and trade and investment are all currently attractive to donors and at the project level, there does not seem to be difficulty in finding funds. Its younger membership may also be more field-oriented and thus more actively involved in projects in field implementation.

*Opportunities*
With the evolution of the IUCN Programme towards a more direct concern with poverty alleviation, sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals, the opportunities for CEESP to play a more central role in IUCN's Programme are enormous. We heard nothing but enthusiasm for having more social and economic input into IUCN's activities and for improving IUCN's performance in these areas. This is not a battle that CEESP needs to fight any more. The challenge for CEESP is to engage with a broader range of leading thinkers and practitioners in the social sciences; and to scale up its work at the community level to provide useful input to national and international policy.

*Risk management*
CEESP's effectiveness is reportedly weakened by its lack of credibility among leading social scientists including economists, and its working relationships with partners. There is also a breakdown of effective working relationships with the Secretariat. It is always difficult to judge issues of personality in working relationship but the strong opinions that we heard about CEESP require some reconsideration on the part of its leadership about its operating style. While the CEESP leadership feels that it has good relations with the Secretariat, the message that we heard from the Secretariat was generally not as positive. There is a need for frank discussion between the parties as this problem seems to be related specifically to CEESP rather than being a general one between the Commissions and the Secretariat.

IUCN needs the kinds of expertise that it expects from CEESP to help it work in sustainable development and in the interface between conservation and poverty reduction. It is clear from our interviews across IUCN and the other Commissions that what CEESP can *potentially* contribute to the one Programme is welcomed. We found no resistance to strengthening the input of social sciences including economics to the work of IUCN. We found very much the opposite.

CEESP has the dedication and enthusiasm of its members. The results of the web survey demonstrate that. It also has a different membership from earlier incarnations of the Commission. It is a membership that is significantly younger than that of the other Commissions and it has more practitioners working with communities. While both of these groups are important to IUCN we wonder if CEESP is not missing an important dimension to

[30] This is not unique to CEESP but was mentioned more often in relation to CEESP.

its membership from senior level strategic policy people who could be influential in helping CEESP to bring about the changes advocated in their work programme. Many users of its products are also enthusiastic about them so CEESP is reaching new audiences at community level for IUCN.

What CEESP has not achieved in this Intersessional Period is to engage many of the leading social science communities in the different regions, especially Latin America where critical social science is strong. This is not to say that CEESP does not include some leading social scientists and economists – it does, but it has disaffected too many others who will not work with IUCN through CEESP. Among the reasons given are that CEESP's work is not always rigorous in terms of social science, and it too often takes a political, judgmental stance rather than an analytical one. Clearly this is of concern and has led to our recommendation that the needs of the IUCN Programme for social sciences input be examined carefully before the next Congress so that CEESP can reflect on the implications for its programme in the coming Intersessional Period.

This disengagement of major social science and economic input to IUCN as it seeks to reposition itself for work in sustainable development is a major risk for IUCN and a failure on the part of CEESP to deliver on its mandate. It requires some serious rethinking of CEESP's objectives, its membership and how it operates. Criticisms about cliques, variable quality in terms of activities and products, and sometimes abrasive relationships with partners, we heard consistently enough for us to report them as areas urgently needing risk management. Inevitably they also reflect on the leadership and require the Chair and Steering Committee of CEESP to take the matter seriously.

*Continued relevance*
CEESP's mandate and expertise are central to IUCN in the next Intersessional Period. However, unless CEESP is able to reach out to leading social scientists and economists in the international community as well as to local communities, it will not be able to be relevant in some of the key arenas for influence and impact. It must also build on its successes such as with WAMIP to scale up its community level work to have influence at national, regional and international levels.

**Commission on Environmental Law (CEL)**

*Effectiveness of major programme activities*
Within the Environmental Law Programme (ELP) the Commission has taken the lead in the *IUCN Academy of Environmental Law* which is a network of participating universities engaged in leading edge research and the *Specialist Groups* which are more focused on training and information exchange. The *Specialist Groups* are reported to be effective and are expected to be further networked in the next Intersessional Period. The *IUCN Academy of Environmental Law* shows promise but was only launched in November 2003.

*Effectiveness in meeting expectations*
To the extent that among their primary clients is the legal community, expectations appear to be well met and generally people were positive about CEL's work and deliverables. CEL is a relatively homogeneous Commission in terms of membership and operates in an efficient and collegial manner

*Efficiency in using resources*
As far as we are able to judge, for this Intersessional Period CEL used its resources, including its Commission Operating Funds (COF) efficiently. The extent of other finances raised by all the Specialist Groups is unknown.

*Financial viability*
CEL has raised some funds but does not seem to have been as active or as successful as might be expected. There may be more opportunities for CEL to raise funds through its Centres of Excellence in the future.

*Risk management*
The main risk to CEL is that of competition from the creation of similar networks of environmental legal expertise outside IUCN. Many of CEL's members also belong to these other networks and thus their volunteer time is divided.

*Opportunities*
There are more opportunities for CEL to work with other Commissions and be actively engaged in the one Programme in interdisciplinary areas at the interface of law and ecological management. There are also opportunities in capacity building in addition to the ongoing work with the judiciary but it is a question for CEL how as a Commission it should be engaged in capacity building versus leading edge research and the development of new legal instruments.

*Continued relevance*
The repositioning of IUCN towards sustainable development can only underscore the continued relevance of CEL and environmental law.

**Species Survival Commission (SSC)**

*Effectiveness of major programme activities*
SSC is a well-performing Commission that brings credibility and visibility to IUCN. Its and IUCN's most visible product is the annual update of the Red List that produces more visits to the IUCN website than any other event or product. In this Intersessional Period SSC has also issued more user-friendly Categories and Criteria and training materials on using the Red List. SSC has had impact on the CBD/COP6, the WSSD and the Red List is now officially recognized as a decision-making tool of the Convention on Migratory Species. It is also undertaking four global assessments and has produced species Action Plans.

Overall SSC is highly productive and effective. There are two areas where SSC is reported to be less effective - how it deals with plants and how effectively it can provide outputs that support action as well as scientific assessment. It is working hard to improve its effectiveness in both areas.

*Effectiveness in meeting expectations*
The past and present performance of SSC inevitably lead to higher expectations than for most other Commissions and here we heard some concerns about SSC not being flexible enough in adapting its tried and true approaches to deal with new problems or new tasks. Expectations for SIS have not yet been met, largely because of difficulty in finding funding.

*Efficiency in using resources*
As far as can be determined, SSC has used its resources, including its Commission Operating Fund (COF) efficiently. The extent of other finances raised by all the Specialist Groups is unknown.

*Financial viability*
SSC is strategic in forming partnerships that enable them to not only do their work effectively but also can provide or attract substantial funding. Specialist Groups also appear to be very active in trying to raise funds. Some deal with species that are more appealing to the public

and donors than others so that the pattern of funding for the specialist groups is reportedly uneven, leading to uneven financial viability and hence variable coverage.

*Risk Management*
SSC faces a number of risks. The main one is its size and unwieldy structure. It is a challenge to run such a large network and we heard concerns about governance and distant leadership. Networking within SSC is becoming increasingly challenged – across related species groups and within regions. Specialist Groups are focused on their particular tasks and SSC as a whole is seen as self-contained and not as open as it might be to collaboration with other Commissions. SSC's size and structure is now seen as a risk factor for its continued effectiveness.

A related aspect of size is insularity. SSC has opened up its agenda by creating new cross-cutting sub-groups rather than building bridges with other Commissions. It has responded to concerns that SSC should be the forefront of more integrated thinking about conservation and should work beyond the narrower confines of species assessment.

The traditional SSC species approach is seen to work least well for insects and for plants, especially in the context of international goals set for plant assessments. To respond to this criticism, SSC has established sub-groups that cut across the species approach and has a Plant Conservation Committee. This Committee is working hard to move from a botanic garden perspective to work on plants in-situ. It feels that despite the difficulties, it is important to assess plants in the same framework as for animal species rather than to introduce a new set of tools and infrastructure.

SSC is also responding to concerns about sustainable development within its Sustainable Use Group. The problem is that by adding these different structures to deal with issues like plants and ecosystems, SSC gets larger and more complex.

In practice it is not clear how SSC can continue to become more open to cross cutting ideas without even more increasing its size and its sub-groups. A major rethinking of its growth strategy and whether it should restructure or even divide into two Commissions is needed. Parts of SSC's work on Sustainable Use and Re-introduction could alternatively fit into an enlarged CEM or become joint task forces.

*Opportunities*
A major opportunity on the near horizon is SIS which reportedly needs more financial support and time to get it on to the web. Once up and running it will bring new interest and credibility and extend the reach of IUCN to a broader set of users. There are more opportunities for SSC to work with and have impact on the Conventions, especially in the light of the adoption of the Sustainable Use Principles by the CBD.

*Continued relevance*
SSC is so central to IUCN's achievements and history that even with the repositioning of IUCN to take more account of sustainable development, SSC will continue to have a key role in providing the scientific assessments for species. Its continued relevance in certain areas, notably scientific assessment of loss of plant diversity will depend on how rapidly it can demonstrate that its approach is both effective and timely. There is a sense out there that SSC ignores criticisms rather than entering into dialogue about how to address them. More integrated approaches, more collaboration with other Commissions, and more work to link scientific assessment with policy and action would be strategic ways for SSC to remain relevant to the changing agenda.

**World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)**

*Effectiveness of major programme activities*
The outstanding achievement of this Intersessional Period was the World Parks Congress held in Durban in September 2003. These Congresses have been held every decade by IUCN/WCPA since 1962 and this last one was the largest bringing 3000 delegates from 157 countries together to showcase their work and to network. It also provided the basis for the WCPA's programme of work for the next decade. The WPC produced the Durban Accord and Action Plan and a message to CBD/COP7 that influenced the Parties to adopt a Programme of Work on Protected Areas which is the most ambitious in the history of the Convention. It sets clear targets for a global network of representative and effectively managed protected areas systems and will have major influence on how protected areas (12% of the earth's land surface, 1 % of the earth's marine surface) will be managed.

The achievements of the WPC have brought with them some new questions about the role of the WCPA in supporting a global protected areas constituency and whether a large international meeting is the most effective way to achieve the programme objectives of WCPA. It is a major effort in fundraising and organization for an already overworked staff. While the WPC was seen as making a significant contribution to the Global Agenda for Protected Areas for the next decade, an evaluation of the event raised questions about whether IUCN and WCPA benefited sufficiently from the event in terms of their own visibility and influence.

In addition to the WPC there were a number of other programme activities that are relevant and have had significant impact. These include: (a) the IUCN PA Category system has been adopted by a number of countries, and regional initiatives (CCAD, SPAW, etc) in their policies and legislation; (b) the Management Effectiveness Framework, which has had significant impact as noted in the review of Knowledge Products; (c) the development of the Protected Areas Learning Network (PALNet); and (d) joint work on People, Equity and Protected Areas with CEESP.

*Effectiveness in meeting expectations*
The expectations of participants for the World Parks Congress were high – from demands for hands-on local training to global policy analysis. Participants expected to be exposed to new conceptual developments in Protected Areas, learn about practical applications and to network with one another. In all areas their expectations were met although there were some concerns expressed about the lack of time to discuss issues in depth within an overcrowded and complex agenda. In other ongoing areas of work, the expectations of clients such as the World Heritage Centre and UNESCO are all being met to satisfaction.

*Efficiency in using resources*
As far as can be determined, WCPA has used its resources, including its Commission Operating Fund (COF) efficiently. The extent of other finances raised by all the Sub Groups is unknown.

*Financial viability*
We heard no particular problems concerning financial viability. WCPA was able to raise about US$10 million in cash and in kind for holding the WPC: the largest fundraising effort for a single event in IUCN's history.

*Risk Management*
WCPA has actively incorporated social and equity objectives in its conceptualization of Protected Area Management. It has partnered with CEESP in the Joint Task Force TILCEPA and has begun to work more seriously with indigenous and local peoples in co-management. Indigenous and Local peoples were involved in a significant and meaningful way in the

World Parks Congress. This certainly makes WCPA's work more relevant to the sustainable development and poverty reduction agendas, but it also presents some risks in terms of process management, and being able to mediate between a rights-based approach and an administrative or ecosystem approach to protected area management.

A similar challenge in managing potential conflict in the management of protected areas has emerged in relation to mining and other private sector activities within protected areas. The shift towards more equity and social concerns within protected areas underscores the need for WCPA to have the expert resources to manage these debates – either within the Commission or in joint Task Forces.

*Opportunities*
One major opportunity for WCPA lies in influencing and assisting governments to implement the newly approved CBD Programme of Work (PoW) on Protected Areas. WCPA and its Knowledge Products are specifically mentioned many times within the text of this PoW. Another is related to the risk discussed above. It is to successfully take a leadership role in areas of co-management, access and benefit sharing for local and indigenous peoples in protected areas, and working with the private sector. The way forward would seem to include partnerships with other programmes such as MAB Biosphere Reserves and International Model Forests that are also facing the challenge of dealing with stakeholder conflicts in managing protected and other areas. This may require additional expertise to be recruited to augment the profile of the existing WCPA membership.

Another opportunity on the near horizon is more effective networking of protected area managers through PALNet.

*Continued relevance*
The directions already taken by WCPA towards more social and equity concerns within protected areas and the extension of benefits beyond them are both positioning WCPA to have continuing relevance to IUCN's sustainable development agenda. The management of protected areas could be demonstration sites for participatory management and effective stakeholder processes.

## 7.2 Role of Commissions in IUCN

The Review was asked what needs to be done to improve the performance of the Commissions over the next Intersessional Period. In addition to the various recommendations made in the report, there are some other issues that IUCN needs to consider about the role of the Commissions in a changing internal and external environment. This Review of the Commissions has brought into perspective a number of assumptions and views held about the Commissions. They are very different from one another in their history, their size, productivity, operating style, membership, financial and human resources, their relationships with the Secretariat and with partner organizations. However, they share some common characteristics that need to be considered in the light of changes within IUCN, in particular the need for much greater integration between the work of the Commissions and that of the Secretariat.

It is also often said that the Commissions of IUCN are unique. In one sense they are but they share the characteristics of other formal knowledge networks that were described in section 1. They fall within a category of international purpose-driven volunteer networks based on expertise that run on communication to aggregate knowledge, produce outputs and engage with external groups that they seek to work with and to influence. Thus, how these other

knowledge networks have found ways to be more effective is more relevant to the Commissions than is realized. The Commissions are not so unique that lessons cannot be transferred to them from outside.

One group of international knowledge networks that has particular relevance to the Commissions because of a common ancestry and long history are the "Commissions" or Interdisciplinary Bodies of ICSU (International Council for Science) such as SCOPE (Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment). In fact ICSU was created in 1931 17 years earlier than IUCN by some of the same protagonists and has a similar bicameral governance structure with two categories of members – national bodies and scientific unions. The earliest Interdisciplinary Bodies were set up in the 1950s and SCOPE was established in 1969.

ICSU has evolved very differently from IUCN. Its secretariat has remained very small and is not an implementing agency but ICSU faces similar challenges to IUCN in how to maintain its equally vast volunteer networks of scientific expertise in a changing and more competitive environment, and how to renew the mandates of its Interdisciplinary Bodies to remain relevant. ICSU is also wrestling with how to integrate social and natural sciences to support more integrated scientific assessments; how to be more interdisciplinary; and how to address sustainable development. It would be worthwhile for IUCN and the Commissions to compare notes with ICSU. There seems to be less engagement between the two "sister" organizations than might be expected.

When we compare the findings of this Review with the operating principles of formal knowledge networks described in section 1.2 and the 1994 criteria for Commissions in section 2, the "report card" for the Commissions as a group would rate them highly for being purpose and task driven; for being built on expertise rather than just the interest of their members; and for including a critical mass of members with sufficient homogeneity of interest to be able to work together effectively, while including diversity of expertise.

Where most Commissions would receive a failing grade is in their ability to manage their internal communications and membership databases effectively, both of which tends to result in inactive members and frustrations among would-be active members. They also have not systematically collected or organized the information they need on the financial support base of the activities of their Sub Groups and members that are raising funds and conducting activities in the name of IUCN.

Most Commissions would also be given only a passing grade in providing their members with a clear enough focus that they know what is expected of them (the exceptions are SSC and WCPA). Three other criteria – being able to meet a clearly defined need; having widespread demand for its work and products and being a major player in the field are the critical tests that sort out the Commissions, with SSC, WCPA and CEL clearly stronger when measured against these criteria than are CEM, CEC and CEESP.

It is clear that what IUCN needs to strengthen in the future is its capacity for doing interdisciplinary and integrated work, and part of its current weakness is in the social sciences. One of the challenges facing the Commissions is how to create more capacity for interdisciplinary work within themselves. When is it best to attract, for example, social science expertise to work within a Commission like CEM or SSC and when does it make more sense to establish a joint Task Force with another Commission such as CEC or CEESP? There is a similar question for CEL since it is not only a more homogenous group compared to the other Commissions, but is creating within itself groups on soil and water.

The advantages of having the interdisciplinary resources "in-house" is that the work is likely to be done more efficiently – people are part of the same team and will respond more readily

on one another's requests for inputs. The disadvantage is that there is duplication of effort and each Commission expands in size. Inter-Commission mechanisms work best when they have very specific tasks and limited time frames. Going to the trouble of creating interdisciplinary groups anew *within* Commissions probably makes better sense when the tasks are longer term. It is also important to have some congruence between the conceptual system that is the focus of the work and the organizational structures delivering the work.

It should be clarified that IUCN does not want to strengthen its capacity in social sciences in a haphazard or simply numerical way. It needs to identify the particular expertise within social sciences and economics that will help it to deliver its Programme, and then invite the leading experts in each field to join the Commissions as appropriate.

The Commissions are becoming larger and with increasing size come the problems of network communications which are discussed in some detail in the report. It is partly a question of having better communication technology but it is also a question of the nature of the Commissions as hierarchical systems where power and direction still flow from the Chair. The present top-down management system seems to be the very antithesis of the operating principles for knowledge networks today that are based on the cross-fertilization of ideas, open source technology etc.

It is also clear from the Review that there have been problems of leadership and that these problems are not hypothetical but represent real and reoccurring risks for the Commissions. As the Commissions grow in size and heterogeneity of the members, they are more difficult networks to manage. Yet leaders are selected for their stature and expertise rather than how well they can lead and animate an international network that communicates largely electronically. It is not clear that the current leadership and management model, together with the communications systems, will be either sustainable or as effective in the future as it has been in the past. **Therefore the role of the leadership and the role of the members and how they are selected and expected work together need to be re-examined.**

The Commissions have already been concerned about how to attract and retain the best expertise in their areas. Some are worried that they have enthusiastic members with not enough funding to keep them engaged. Others are worried that their members or potential members are investing their energies in competing networks. The SSC Study on Volunteerism is an important start in examining the relationship of the Commissions to their members and the Review's web survey has explored how other Commissions share similar problems with respect to their volunteers. More feedback is needed from members to develop a strategy for IUCN and its Commissions to retain and attract the best experts to the Sub Groups and the various Task Forces and Advisory Groups. This is especially needed in the new context of One Programme because there is a danger that volunteers will "vote with their feet" if they perceive that they are working for the Secretariat rather than the other way round.

The agreement of the Commission Chairs to work together with the Secretariat on the one Programme should be based on a clear understanding of the real comparative advantage of both the Commissions and the Secretariat and the important role that each plays in achieving the strategy and mission of IUCN. There must be mutual respect for what each brings to the table in order for an equal partnership to develop. Where there is no comparative advantage, or a perception of no added value, then there is unlikely to be the kind of engagement that will deliver One Programme in a satisfactory manner.

Assuming Commissions do have an added value to delivering the Programme, they should not find that through lack of time and resources, they must "fit into" a Programme that is drawn up largely within the Secretariat and driven by donor funding for the Secretariat to implement. This will mean that the timing of planning processes will have to be developed

with Commissions, and that Advisory Committees to Programme also include or intersect with the relevant Commissions.

It also is predicated on the Commissions being strong enough in their expertise to play a role over and above their contribution to the Programme. If they are to provide a critical space for new ideas to help shape the programme agenda of IUCN, Commissions need to ensure that they have the capacity to play this role. Part of this capacity depends on providing opportunity and mechanisms for members to generate new ideas to compensate for accepting to be "tasked" as volunteer workers for IUCN. Allowing members to be involved with others in leading edge thinking is part of the value that the Commissions have for many of the best and the brightest people.

Thus we see the need for a new **social contract** between IUCN and the Commissions that builds on previous social contracts, such as the Sonloup Accords. **For increased accountability and greater commitment to work together with the Secretariat to deliver the one Programme, the Commissions should expect more support from the Secretariat and a re-articulated role as wise counsel and source of new ideas.** The Review was struck with the lack of attention in the Commissions to emerging issues or forecasting beyond threatened species and noted that UNEP looks to ICSU-SCOPE for guidance in thinking about emerging environmental issues on the horizon. This scanning of the horizon is surely a role for the Commissions to provide to IUCN and to the world beyond.

## 7.3 Proposals for future action

The Review was asked to recommend whether a more in-depth review of any Commission was warranted. Rather than more in-depth Commission reviews, we would instead propose a different approach that looks at the Commissions within the context of what IUCN needs for its Programme 2005-2008. We make this proposal because the issues that need attention beyond the recommendations made earlier in this report are not defined by the present boundaries of the Commissions but cut across the Commissions and the areas that lie between them.

We would propose three reviews to take place over the next two years that would examine different, but complementary aspects of the expertise IUCN needs to adequately address livelihood-poverty-conservation issues. The three reviews would build on one another and would form the basis of a rolling strategy for ensuring that IUCN has the expertise it needs and how the Commissions should be changed or strengthened to provide it.

**1. Review of the social and economic sciences that IUCN needs to mainstream poverty-environment in the IUCN Programme.**

This review would build on the work of the 3I-C project on *Poverty and the Environment* and the Inter Commission Working Group on Poverty as well as work together with the Study on Capacity Building to:

- Examine in more depth what work is being done at project, programme and policy level within the various Commissions and the Secretariat, including regional and country programmes, to identify how IUCN should improve the impact and influence of its work on the interface between environment and poverty. The new IUCN Programme for 2005-2008 highlights the need to

include in its strategy the aim of *growing* the influence of environmental sustainability into the social and economics spheres by using the Knowledge, Empowerment, Governance (KEG) strategy;

- Undertake a landscape analysis of what the state of art knowledge is in the area of poverty-environment to strengthen IUCN's global policy work, programme and project work in the field. This would include the work that is being done now in the Commissions and the Secretariat research;

- Identify what additional expertise that is needed and how it might be best organized into Advisory Groups, Task Forces of new institutional partnerships, and with what terms of reference.

The review should be done by a team that is able to examine activities at project, programme and policy level and to speak to leading experts in the different regions. Among its tasks would be to do a landscape analysis of what are the leading areas of research and practice in the social and economic sciences that should be brought to bear for IUCN's Programme, who the key players are, and how to engage them with IUCN. The review process might also bring together different expertise to discuss how IUCN's Programme might best be strengthened.

As the outcome of this review outcome will have direct implications for the mandate and work programme of several Commissions and the Secretariat, it is recommended that the work be completed prior to the Congress in Bangkok November 2004.

**2. Review of the role of communications in knowledge management in IUCN.**

IUCN has not been consistent or clear in what role communications should have in its programme work. CEC has tried various strategies to adapt to changing programme priorities but there remains a gap between what the CEC is able to deliver and what IUCN needs to improve on its own communications. A more fundamental rethinking is proposed about what is needed in communications to deliver the Programme and to achieve the mission of IUCN. One of the sources of confusion is that *communications* has several different meanings and that these are not always well communicated.

As this Review has pointed out, there are at least two aspects that are important to IUCN's work:

- Communications as a part of knowledge management and knowledge networks. This will form part of the work of the 3I-C project on Knowledge Management.

- Communications as a key component in moving from assessment to policy; from research to action. Experience has shown that the design work for maximizing the impact of outputs such as knowledge products and services must be built in upstream at the inception stage. This has implications for Programme management.

IUCN needs to strengthen its capacity in both areas. We see some advantage in IUCN taking a similar approach to that proposed for the social and economic input review. It should undergo an internal assessment of what are the problems to be solved and then bring together some leading thinkers and practitioners to help it design a strategy and implementation plan. One component of this process is already underway in the 3I-C project on Knowledge Management Strategy.

Since the 3I-C project on Knowledge Management will report to the Congress in Bangkok in November 2004, we would recommend that any further review of communications should wait until that report has been received. It would therefore take place in the light of the report's findings during 2005. CEC should be involved in the process.

### 3. Review of integrated ecosystem-human well being approaches

In 2005 the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) will have completed its first global and regional assessments. The MEA will provide scientific information for the implementation of the CBD, the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Migratory Species as well as the WSSD Plan of Implementation. If successful it is likely that the process will be repeated at a global scale every 5-10 years and at sub-regional and national scales. It will produce scientific assessments and tools that can be implemented by governments. This in itself provides an important opportunity for CEM and IUCN at national and regional levels.

MEA will have created an international network of nearly 800 leading scientists, social scientists and economists from all regions that have been working together on ecosystem assessments 2001-2005. If IUCN wishes CEM to become a leading knowledge network for ecosystems assessment and management it should ensure that it is well positioned to take over where the first Millennium Ecosystem Assessment finishes its work in 2005.

This could mean undertaking national and sub-regional assessment within the integrated ecosystem-human wellbeing framework developed by the MEA. More ambitiously it could also mean developing a strategy to have future *global* MEA assessments undertaken under the auspices of IUCN by providing a "home" and ongoing purpose for the network within IUCN. At present less than 50 members of CEM are involved in the MEA so that the potential for bringing additional expertise into IUCN on a core component of its mission is very high. Conversely if IUCN does not "adopt" the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, it is likely to migrate to another institutional home.

Part of the positioning of IUCN for undertaking future global MEA assessments would be to review what it is currently doing in ecosystem assessment and management and develop the capacity for more *integrated* work on ecosystems and human well-being. It is clear that some of the building blocks for a more integrated approach are in several of the Commissions in addition to the Programme.

It is recommended that CEM and the Secretariat take the lead in preparing such a review during 2005 so that IUCN will have both the capacity and a strategy for future work and will be ready with specific proposals to make to the Board of MEA and donors.

**It is recommended that IUCN undertake three reviews in 2004-2005 to strengthen its capacity for integrated work on poverty and the environment:**

1. **Review of social and economic sciences input needed for the IUCN Programme 2005-2008. To report to Congress in November 2004**

2. **Review of the role of communications in knowledge management. To be undertaken early in 2005.**

3. **Review of integrated approaches to ecosystems and human well-being. To be undertaken by December 2005.**

# Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of Reference for the Review

Annex 2. Evaluation Matrix

Annex 3. Key Informants

Annex 4. Research Instruments

Annex 5. Web Survey of Commission Members

Annex 6. List of References