

## Evaluation Abstract

**Title, author and date of the evaluation report:**

IUCN Strategic Review: Regional Office for South America (SUR), prepared by Enrique Lahmann, Tom Hammond and Natalia Ortiz, January 2001

**Name of organizational unit:**

Regional Office for South America (SUR)

**Mandate of the organizational unit:**

Although the mandate of IUCN-SUR is still a matter of discussion, the Review Team described it as a summation of the following six key areas:

1. Catalyze regional and national level conservation initiatives in areas of global importance (e.g. wetlands)
2. Facilitate the design, implementation, management, as well as monitoring and evaluation of a regional conservation programme in South America through working with members, building capacity, and identifying areas of complementarity;
3. Act as a leader in the region into the research, development, and diffusion of approaches, strategies, and other tools necessary for the effective conservation and sustainable use of natural resources;
4. Promote the generation, sharing and use of conservation expertise at a regional level, through thematic or geographically based member and stakeholder networks;
5. Facilitate and promote the implementation and/or adoption of global and regional conservation agreements (or policies) and support regional level policy development, capacity building and implementation in this regard;
6. Promote agreements between public sector agencies, non-government organizations, and the private sector towards the adoption of innovative strategies for sustainable development.

**IUCN area of specialisation:** Organizational

**Geographical area:** South America

**Length of existence of organisational unit:** Established in 1992

**Overall budget of the organizational unit:** Not specified

**Donor(s):** N/A

**Objectives of the evaluation:**

The Review had the following overall objectives:

1. Analysis of the strategic mandate of the programme – particularly in the context of the IUCN membership in the SUR region and the Quadrennial Plan and Business Plan;
2. Assessment of the financial viability and financial risk of the programme;
3. Overview of the effectiveness and efficiency of SUR as an organizational unit within IUCN;

Two issues of specific interest to the programme were also addressed:

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

Ultimately, the review seeks to determine whether the Regional Office for South America has made optimum use of the investment of IUCN resources in the region, as well as what (if any) changes in the

form or direction of that investment could be contemplated in order to improve the effectiveness of that investment in future.

**Type of evaluation:** Strategic Review/Organizational Evaluation

**Period covered by the evaluation:** Not specified

**Commissioned by:** Acting Director General of IUCN

**Audience:** IUCN Director General, IUCN Senior Management, Director of IUCN-SUR, IUCN-SUR staff

**Evaluation team:** Mixed Internal/External

**Methodology used:**

Sources of information: review of background information and consultation with stakeholders

Stakeholder groups consulted: IUCN-SUR staff; member representatives (including country chairs, Commission members, and Councillors); directors and senior staff of IUCN global thematic programmes in HQ; representatives of the donor community; and former staff of IUCN-SUR.

Consultation methods: face-to-face interviews; focus group sessions; telephone interviews; and questionnaires sent to IUCN member representatives electronically.

**Questions of the evaluation:**

The review focused on assessing the strategic mandate, financial viability, effectiveness, and efficiency of the IUCN-SUR Office. Factors affecting overall performance were also considered, such as strategy, structure, programme, stakeholders, management, monitoring and evaluation, and administrative support.

**Findings:**

The following represents some of the key findings of the Review Team:

- Strategy and Workplans: IUCN-SUR has both a clear and well-developed strategic plan and an annual workplan that is fully integrated within the overall planning and monitoring system.
- Programme and Projects: Although the SUR Programme does not have an extensive portfolio of projects under implementation, it has a well developed list of project concepts.
- Programme Delivery: Programme development has caused problems over the past 3-4 years, with various national-level project initiatives viewed as placing IUCN in direct competition with members. There has also been poor return on investment from the thematic programme initiatives.
- Management and Operations: The SUR Office functions very well with respect to office management, administration and general operations.
- Membership: There are currently a total of 86 IUCN members in South America, representing almost 10% of world wide membership. Non-government organizations, which are considered well-developed and integrated into national-level policy making, make up the largest contingent.
- Relevance: There is strong consensus from all stakeholder groups that IUCN has a very significant and highly necessary role to play in the region, and that a well-established and active IUCN presence in South America would be highly beneficial.
- Staffing: The Review Team identified a clear lack of technical capacity in IUCN-SUR.
- Core Competencies: Administratively, the Office has well established capacity in finance, member relations, communications, information management, and overall administration. Programmatically, the only current area of technical expertise in SUR is in forest conservation.
- Issues Identified include: biodiversity being overlooked in strategic terms; a need to have the Regional Director for SUR based in the same location as the Regional Office; weak interaction with donors and potential donors; a low level of support from IUCN headquarters with respect to the

development of regional thematic programmes and the training on IUCN systems, methods and approaches to programme development, etc.

**Recommendations:**

Nine possible scenarios for the future of IUCN-SUR are identified by the Review Team. The advantages and disadvantages of each scenario are discussed in the report. A summary table, including an estimate of their financial impact, is also provided in Annex 2. The options described are as follows:

1. Business as Usual (maintain current staffing levels and programme activities as they are);
2. Closure of the Regional Office for South America
3. Closing of Quito Office – Opening of a Small Regional Office in Brazil
4. Reduce Operations in Quito Office – Open Formal National Office in Brazil
5. Reduce Quito Office – Open Brazil National Office and Sub-Regional Office for Southern Cone
6. An Integrated Programme for Latin America
7. Strengthen IUCN’s Regional Presence in South America
8. Strengthen IUCN’s Regional Presence in South America, Including the Southern Cone
9. Strengthen IUCN’s Regional Presence, Discontinuing National-Level Efforts in Brazil

**Lessons Learned:** Not specified

**Language of the evaluation:** English

**Available from:** IUCN Global Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative, Gland, Switzerland; IUCN Regional Office for South America (SUR)