

## IUCN publishing process for IUCN Commissions

### To which document types does the IUCN publishing process apply?

All Commission publications seeking assignment of an IUCN ISBN must undergo the [IUCN Editorial Board](#) process. However, if there is an IUCN Secretariat co-author or co-editor, a [concept note](#) also needs to be approved by the [IUCN Publications Committee](#) at one of the Committee's biyearly concept note review meetings *prior* to moving forward with writing the manuscript.

Publications likely to require an ISBN have the following characteristics: 1) longer length (generally more than 20 pages (main content)); 2) long shelf life rather than intended for rapid dissemination; 3) broad and external audience rather than internal to IUCN or the Commission; and 4) scholarly content with footnotes and references. Therefore, this applies to books and monographs such as:

- Syntheses and analyses
- Guidelines
- Conservation strategies
- Field guides
- Knowledge product standards
- Public interest books

If these publication types are produced without ISBNs, they may be uploaded to the [IUCN Library Portal](#) as grey literature (alongside lessons learnt documents), but will not benefit from the advantages of having an ISBN and DOI, which include:

- Stable and unique identifiers that increase discoverability
- Official landing page on the IUCN Library Portal linked from the DOI link
- Appearing on the [Latest Publications page](#) of the IUCN website
- Dissemination via the IUCN [Off the Shelf newsletter](#)
- Publication monitoring with [Altmetric](#) (after the DOI payment has been done)

Briefs, policy briefs, information documents, position papers, policy statements, fact sheets, brochures, event reports, project documentation, journal articles and other types of records, marketing materials, and papers do not qualify for an ISBN or DOI from IUCN and are not individually catalogued in the [IUCN Library Portal](#).

The IUCN Library creates and maintains a separate record in the catalogue for each periodical that links to the journal's website, but Commission should seek ISSNs and DOIs for these from the publisher of the periodical.

### What are the steps in the IUCN publishing process?

The full details of the publishing process and the steps you need to follow are visually depicted in the [Publishing Highway](#) and shown in our [timeline planning template](#).

While writing and editing the manuscript, be sure to follow the [IUCN Publishing Guidelines](#) and the [IUCN Style Manual](#). Make sure DOIs are included in the references in the bibliography/reference list of your publication. This should be done while your manuscript is still in Microsoft Word so that the DOIs can be included in the final layout. Crossref (the registration agency for IUCN DOIs) has a free [online DOI search tool](#) that allows you to quickly and easily do a bulk search for DOIs. You simply copy the reference list in the search box, click on Submit and the online search tool will come back with DOIs that have been registered with Crossref.

Once there is a final and edited manuscript, it needs to be peer reviewed by a minimum of two (or more) external peer reviewers. Peer reviewers have to be external experts, i.e.: peer reviewers may be associated with IUCN or wholly outside of the Union, as long as they are external experts on the subject and are not associated with the publication or its authors or editors (i.e. personally or



professional, e.g. through reporting lines). IUCN calls for diversity – geographically and gender balance – and expertise in relevant disciplines in peer reviewer selection. The peer review comments should be in addition to comments from (an) editor(s).

**For edited volumes one or both of the following approaches to peer review are required:**

- A minimum of two peer reviews per chapter (these can include peer reviews by authors of *other* chapters in the edited volume), and/or
- A minimum of two peer reviews for the overall volume (these should be by experts who are not involved in the publication in any other way).

*Suggestion: If you have difficulties finding external experts not affiliated with the publication, please convey this request, along with the full manuscript in question, to the IUCN Publications Officer so that the Editorial Board can provide suggestions of names of suitable independent peer reviewers.*

**Steps in the peer review process:**

- i. Each peer reviewer has to document their comments into the [IUCN peer review tracking table template](#). Kindly make sure to share this template with each peer reviewer *before* peer reviewing starts. Peer reviewers should insert their substantial (rather than editorial) comments in the IUCN peer review tracking table and include references to the chapter, paragraph, and line number in question. A completed peer review tracking table is required (by comparison to e.g. marked-up manuscripts) because it is essential for the Editorial Board to be able to review concisely, point-by-point, how the authors have addressed each peer review comment. Peer reviewers also have to include their name and affiliation. Anonymous reviews are not acceptable for the documentation of the peer review process, as the Editorial Board needs to be able to confirm that each reviewer is appropriate and has no potential conflict of interest. In addition, peer reviewers have to give permission to IUCN to retain all data (incl. their name and affiliation) in the peer review tracking table to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation.
- ii. Once each peer reviewer has returned the tracking table with comments, kindly merge all tracking tables into one document. The Editorial Board will only review one complete document.
- iii. The authors have to add in the tracking table point-by-point explanation of how each reviewer comment has been addressed, and revise the manuscript accordingly. Authors have to make sure to explain clearly in the tracking table if (and what kind of) modifications were made following a comment. And also need to explain clearly in case no modifications were made. A simple ‘no’ won’t do. Nor are “limitations of time and capacity” acceptable reasons to reject peer review comments; tracking tables with such author responses will be rejected by the Editorial Board. In case more than one author is involved, all co-authors should agree on the responses made to peer reviewers’ comments and the revisions made to the manuscript. The modified manuscript has to be sent out for copy-editing.
- iv. Once responses have been added to the tracking table, it has to be signed by the Commission Chair. The Editorial Board will only review a completed and signed tracking table.

*Suggestion: before you have the tracking table signed, you could send it to the Publications Officer first to check if there aren’t possible issues that need further attention (before signing).*

- v. After signing, please send the signed tracking table and the final, post-peer review and copy-edited *but not laid out yet* manuscript to the Publications Officer for transmission to the Editorial Board.
- vi. The Editorial Board has one week to review the tracking table. This may sometimes take a bit longer, as a quorum (minimum of 8 sign-offs) is required for an official sign-off.

**Please note that each step requires a certain amount of time, which will also be of influence on the [production timeline](#) of your publication.**



### Additional steps once the Editorial Board has signed off on the peer review:

- i. Once the Editorial Board has officially signed off on the tracking table, you can send the copy-edited manuscript to the designer for layout.
- ii. Once the designer has laid out the publication, the [proof-reader](#) reviews the PDF to make sure all formatting has been done correctly.
- iii. Afterwards, send the proofread and modified (but not published yet) PDF to the Publications Officer. The Publications Officer will confirm that the document abides IUCN's visual identity and publishing guidelines (use of logo, copyright information, etc.).
- iv. After the visual identity is approved, an ISBN and DOI can be assigned to the publication.

A digital object identifier (**DOI**) is an international standard developed by the International Organization for Standardization. A DOI is required for all publications with IUCN Secretariat (co-)authors or (co-)editors and is recommended for all other publications with an IUCN ISBN. A DOI should be assigned to each separate language version or new edition of a publication. A payment of 500 CHF is required per DOI issued to cover the expense of tracking the uptake and impact of the publication with Altmetric. The DOI will only be assigned *after* the DOI payment has been made and *after* the laid out and proofread PDF has been checked by the Publications Officer for the copyright information and visual identity. An IUCN ISBN is a prerequisite for receiving a DOI; to obtain a DOI, please follow the same procedure for requesting an ISBN.

A DOI is a unique identifier and has numerous benefits:

- It is a stable, persistent and dynamic link because it identifies an object rather than the specific place where the object is located at a certain time. This means the DOI will always link to the current, live location of the publication.
- It enables accurate link- and citation-tracking and metrics (both bibliometrics and altmetrics)
- It improves discoverability and exposure of your publication

At IUCN, we will include all publications with a DOI in our Altmetric service, which compiles the “online attention” to your publication from various sources (social media, mainstream media, blogs, and more). That attention is given a score and displayed in the form of a [colourful donut](#), which will be available on the publication record of that publication.

- v. Once the DOI payment has been received, the Publications Officer can assign a DOI; register the DOI with Crossref (the registration agency for IUCN DOIs); and deposit your references so that your publication can be cross-linked to those in the bibliography/reference list (and vice-versa). The DOI should be included on the credits page.

### Guidelines, manuals and templates (all available on the [IUCN Union Portal](#) and [IUCN website](#)):

- **IUCN Publishing Guidelines:** for more information about the Publications Committee, the Editorial Board, peer reviewing, page order/make-up of publications, etc.
- **IUCN Style Manual:** explains the standard practices to be used when writing and editing IUCN publications, information on the IUCN style (incl. for references), etc.
- **IUCN Brand book guidelines (incl. logo use) and templates:** explains who should use the IUCN visual identity and how it should be used. It also provides rules for staff, Members, Commissions, National and Regional Committees and partners on how to use the IUCN logo.
- **Template IUCN standard credits page:** to be used for IUCN publications, available in the three official IUCN languages.
- **Template IUCN peer review tracking table:** available as Excel version and Word version.

#### For questions or more information, please contact:

Sarina van der Ploeg, IUCN Publications Officer (HQ) – IUCN Knowledge Management and Library Team  
Tel. +41 22 999 0119 / [sarina.vanderploeg@iucn.org](mailto:sarina.vanderploeg@iucn.org)

