

IUCN publishing process for IUCN Commissions

To which document types does the IUCN publishing process apply?

All IUCN Commission publications seeking assignment of an IUCN ISBN must go through the [IUCN Editorial Board](#) process, i.e.: the final manuscript has to be peer reviewed by a minimum of two external experts and the completed IUCN peer review tracking table has to be signed off by the IUCN Editorial Board (see further explained in this document). This only applies to Commission publications without IUCN Secretariat staff co-authorship or co-editorship.

However, for IUCN Commission publications with IUCN Secretariat co-authors or co-editors seeking assignment of an IUCN ISBN, first a [publishing concept note](#) needs to be submitted to and approved by the [IUCN Publications Committee](#) (at one of the Committee's biyearly concept note review meetings). This has to be done prior to moving forward with writing the manuscript. (See further the [IUCN Publishing Guidelines](#), section IUCN Publications Committee.)

Publications likely to require an ISBN meet the following criteria: 1) longer length (generally more than 20 pages (main content, excl. front and back matter)); 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. (See further the [IUCN library system content inclusion guidelines](#).)

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 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 or reference list of your publication. This should be done while your manuscript is still in Microsoft Word (and not laid out yet). 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.

Peer reviewing

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. IUCN encourages solicitation of reviewers from those IUCN Commission Specialist Groups, Thematic Groups, and other mechanisms which have expertise on the subject in question, as long as these have no conflicts of interest relative to the manuscript's authors and editors. Those signing the final peer review tracking table, i.e. Commission Chairs, as well as editors and authors (with the exception of authors of other chapters in edited volumes) are excluded as potential peer reviewer.

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).

The **IUCN Editorial Board can support in the identification of potential peer reviewers**; please contact the IUCN Publications Officer for more information.

IUCN Editorial Board

Steps in the peer review process:

- Each peer reviewer has to document their comments into the [IUCN peer review tracking table template](#). Kindly make sure to share the latest version of this template with each peer reviewer *before* peer reviewing starts. Peer reviewers should insert their substantial (not 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 and state any possible conflicts of interest. 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.
- 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 the *merged* 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 “no time” or “limitations of 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 by the Commission Chair).
- 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 IUCN Publications Officer for transmission to the Editorial Board.
- vi. The Editorial Board has one week to review the tracking table. This 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.

What to do after the Editorial Board sign-off?

- i. After the Editorial Board has officially signed off on the tracking table, you can send the copy-edited manuscript to the designer for layout and design.
- ii. Once the designer has laid out the publication, the proofreader reviews the PDF to make sure all formatting has been done correctly.
- iii. Afterwards, send the proofread (but not published yet) PDF to the Publications Officer. The Publications Officer will review the laid-out document and check if it abides IUCN’s visual identity and publishing guidelines (use of logo, copyright information, branding, etc.).
- iv. After the laid-out PDF is approved, the Publications Officer will assign an ISBN 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 CHF 500 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

All IUCN publications with a DOI are included 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. A DOI is only assigned in combination with an ISBN.

Translations

Translations of IUCN publications that have an IUCN ISBN, do not need to go through the Editorial Board process. Always share the link of the [online Terminology](#) (En/Es/Fr) and the [IUCN Style Manual](#) with the translator, before they start translating.

Each translation should be proofread by a native speaker, preferably an expert on the subject of the publication, to make sure the translation is accurate and complete. The layout and design of a translation has to be exactly the same as the original publication. Also, it is important that the credits page contains the translation disclaimer (see further the template of the IUCN credits page for translations).

The laid-out and proofread (but not published yet) PDF has to be sent to the Publications Officer for check and clearance of the copyright information and visual identity. After clearance, the Publications Officer will assign a new ISBN (and possibly DOI) and upload the publication to the IUCN library database. Never re-use an ISBN or DOI.

Guidelines, manuals and templates

All the guidelines, manuals and templates mentioned in this information sheet are available on both the [IUCN Union Portal](#) and the [IUCN website](#):

- **IUCN Publishing Guidelines:** Contains information about the Publications Committee, the Editorial Board, peer reviewing, page order/make-up of publications, page numbering, etc.
- **IUCN Style Manual:** Explains the standard practices to be used when writing and editing IUCN publications (e.g. British English spelling, IUCN-specific spelling, capitalisation) and gives information about IUCN's 'house style', incl. for references.
- **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 credits page:** Standard credits page that should be used in all IUCN publications (and grey literature), available in the three statutory languages.
- **Template IUCN credits page for translations:** Standard credits page for translations of IUCN publications. Contains the translation disclaimer; available in the three statutory languages.
- **Template IUCN peer review tracking table:** To document the comments from the external peer reviewers. To share with the reviewers before reviewing starts; available as Excel version and Word version.
- **Terminology for IUCN usage (En/Es/Fr):** HTML page on the IUCN website that contains conservation terms (in the three statutory languages) frequently used. Purpose is to ensure consistency across all IUCN documents.

These documents are regularly updated. Always check online for the latest versions!

For questions or more information, please contact:

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