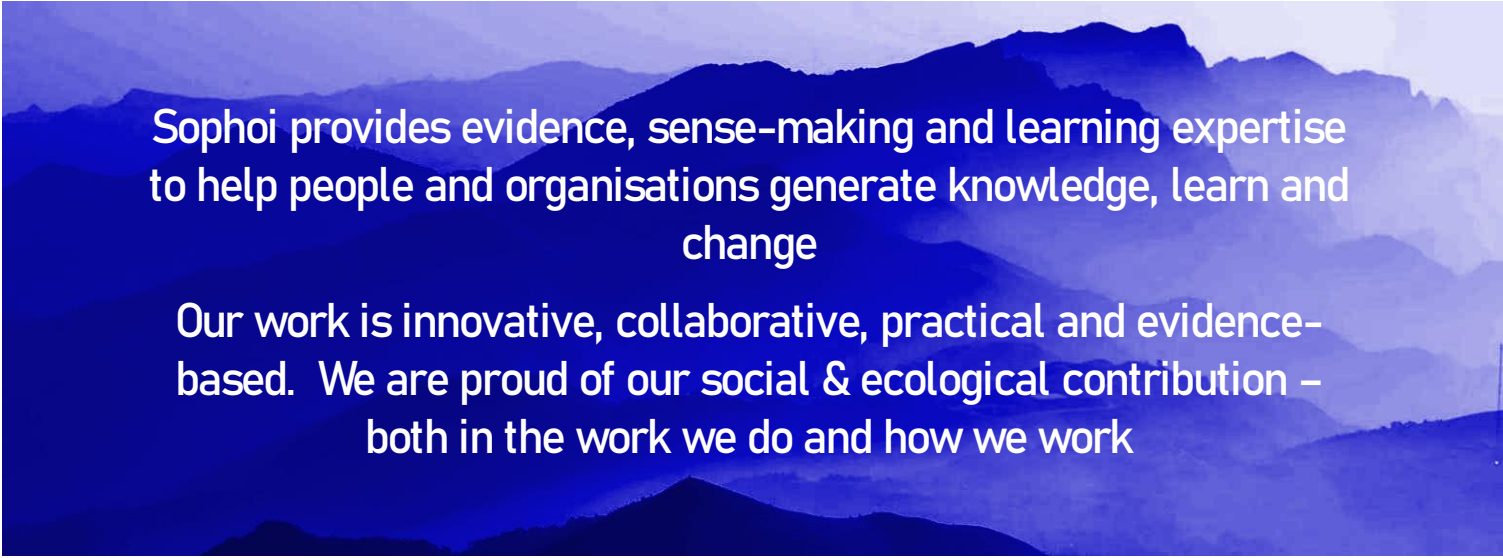


Independent evaluation of IUCN's influence on policy

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Volume 1 - Executive Summary & Main Report



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to help people and organisations generate knowledge, learn and
change

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Disclaimer

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Acronyms

ABMT	Area Based Management Tool
BBNJ	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (High Seas Treaty)
BC	Bonn Challenge
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCC	Climate Change Commission
CEC	Commission on Education and Communication
CEM	Commission on Ecosystem Management
CI	Conservation International
COP	Conference of Parties
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EbA	Ecosystem Based Adaptation
EC	European Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
EUPAG	European Union Policy Advisory Group
ERO	European Regional Office
FLR	Forest Landscape Restoration
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IBAT	Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool
IDR	In-depth review

IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IPC	IUCN's International Policy Center (since renamed the Policy and Law Center)
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
KEQ	Key Evaluation Question
KMGBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
MARN	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NbS	Nature Based Solution
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OECM	Other effective area-based conservation measure
OM	Outcome Mapping
ORMACC	Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean
ProDoc	Project Document
PPME	Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RLE	Red List of Ecosystems
ROAM	Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSC	Species Survival Commission
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biodiversity

UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WCC	World Conservation Congress
WCEL	World Commission on Environmental Law
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Executive Summary

1 - Purpose and context for the evaluation: Better understanding *how* IUCN influences policy

IUCN is the world's largest and oldest Union for the conservation of nature. The Union is composed of the Council, 1400+ Members (States, government, NGO and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations), seven Commissions, 75 National and Regional Committees and the Secretariat.

Influencing policy and policy processes for the conservation of biodiversity has been at the core of the Union for decades. Given IUCN's status and standing as an intergovernmental organization with UN Observer status, the Union, through the support of its Framework Partners and project donors, is uniquely placed to influence and inform biodiversity conservation policy across local, regional, national and global scales and processes.

IUCN is commonly seen and credited for having influenced and informed numerous national, regional and global biodiversity conservation policies and policy processes. Yet there is no explicit definition and little shared understanding across the Union of *how* IUCN influences policy – either internally (across and between IUCN's Secretariat, Commissions and Members) or externally by IUCN's policy audiences. What shared understanding of IUCN policy influencing that does exist tends not to go beyond recognition of IUCN's role in the generation and sharing of scientific evidence and new knowledge.

IUCN's influence on policy was last reviewed in 2005. In February 2023, the IUCN Secretariat leadership commissioned this learning-focused evaluation of IUCN's influence on policy at all scales: international, regional, national and sub-national. At the request of Secretariat leadership, this evaluation is financially supported by one of its Framework Partners, SDC.

2 - Evaluation design and sample

The evaluation set out to generate a deeper understanding of *how IUCN influences policy* by answering three sequenced questions:

1. What and how does IUCN influence policy? Part A - Findings
2. What policy influencing patterns, insights and conclusions emerge? Part B - Conclusions
3. What are the key recommendations to enable IUCN policy influencing to be more effective in the future?
Part C - Recommendations

Six In-Depth Reviews (IDRs) sit at the heart of the evaluation. Each IDR is a case study of an IUCN policy influencing process. Over 98 key informant interviews and a desk review of a sample of 39 IUCN projects from across a 10-year time frame form the evidence base for the in-depth reviews. A detailed [overview of the evidence for each IDR](#) has been presented on a standard template in an online visual diagramming platform hosted by Miro.

IDR	Title	Scope
1	Nature Based Solutions (NbS)	To understand IUCN's influence at the global scale, introducing, informing and then formalising NbS through the 3 Rio Conventions (UNCCD, UNFCCC, and UNCBD), covering NbS related to sub-themes of ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), forest landscape restoration (FLR), and disaster risk reduction (DRR).
2	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdictions (BBNJ)	To understand IUCN's involvement in the development and adoption of the BBNJ treaty.
3	Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean - Functional Landscape Restoration	To understand IUCN (and partners) influence and uptake by governments in their policy; and implementation and mainstreaming of functional landscape restoration into local, national, and regional initiatives in Costa Rica, Guatemala,

	(ORMACC FLR)	and the wider region.
4	European Regional Office and the European Commission (ERO EC)	To understand the policy influencing work of the IUCN European Regional Office (ERO) through the lens of (but not limited to) its involvement in promoting sustainable agriculture and supporting the passage of the Nature Restoration Law.
5	Kunming- Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF)	To understand IUCN's influence on the KMGBF (CBD COP Decision 15.4) and its monitoring framework (COP Decision 15.5). The IDR follows IUCN's engagement in the negotiations from before COP14 where the Parties agreed to start negotiations in earnest on a Post-2020 Framework. The main focus of the IDR is IUCN's influence on COP Decisions 15.4 and 15.5.
6	Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA)	To understand the extent to which the IUCN Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) concept and Global Standard has been adopted, taken up or used in key policy processes at the national, regional or global level, and in corporate policy, regional development banks and Biodiversity Coalition and more than 3500 corporations through the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT).

The evaluation piloted the integration of a two-stage **collaborative sense-making** process into the evaluation design, engaging both the Steering Committee and focal points for each of the in-depth reviews in a facilitated, collaborative, online process using Miro. The aim was to engage these key stakeholders to bring their own deep experience, expertise and insights to help '*make sense*' of the evaluative evidence, identify patterns and conclusions, and shape evaluation recommendations.

In order to situate IUCN's policy influencing strategies and results within the wider complex contexts in which they are delivered, the evaluation designed a **Conceptual Framework** based around three concentric spheres:

- **Sphere of control** – IUCN's policy influencing strategies, governance and management, and activities and outputs
- **Sphere of influence** – IUCN's policy influencing outcomes
- **Sphere of interest** – IUCN's policy influencing impact

Both the evidence generated within each in-depth review, and the synthesis and identification of patterns, insights and conclusions across the six IDRs has been organised around these three spheres.

3 - Key Findings and Conclusions

3.1 Sphere of control

Strategy and direction

The Secretariat and Commissions demonstrate good capacity and aptitude in policy analysis to inform strategy. However, with some exceptions, this has tended to be done tacitly through conversation on an ad hoc basis, which while pragmatic, doesn't facilitate review and feedback from people beyond a core group of people involved in policy work.

Much of IUCN's policy work is at a global level in the negotiation of technical and legal instruments where primary audiences include policy makers and negotiators. With changes in practice ultimately made in national and local spaces, Members and Commission members are expected to bridge the gap between international and local level change. That the Union contains Members and Commissions who are capable of bridging this policy-practice gap is a unique asset that could be made more explicit.

A lot of IUCN's work takes place with and through networks, routinely and on an ad hoc basis, acknowledging that it cannot bring about change on its own. Working in networks enabled IUCN and its collaborators to provide each other with mutually reinforcing support enabling them to more effectively deliver collectively on their policy goals. This made being recognised for its individual contributions, especially externally, harder.

Governance and management

Resolutions and Recommendations drive IUCN's policy mandate - IUCN's policy work generally responds to the needs of its Members through its Resolutions process. However, the diversity of IUCN's Membership is both a strength and a challenge – where reaching an IUCN position could be a complicated exercise. While Resolutions provide guidance, they still leave those doing policy work on the ground with contextual room for manoeuvre during policy influencing processes.

IUCN – the Secretariat HQ, Regional Offices and the Commissions - is effective at enabling women play a prominent role in providing leadership for its policy work. However, the Union as a whole is less consistent in ensuring the participation of experts from the Global South - especially during international negotiations. This is largely because Commissions are networks of volunteers, meaning that some experts have the opportunity to be supported by their positions in academic institutions and others, including experts from the Global South, have greater funding challenges.

IUCN's structural governance is unique and uniquely enabling – As demonstrated by IDR 1 on NbS and IDR 3 on ORMACC FLR, successful policy influence happens when Secretariat HQ and Regional Offices, combined with the IUCN's Membership, "sit down together" with government decision makers, NGOs and community-based organisations. This is enabled only by the Union's unique structural governance. This comparative advantage plays out in multiple policy influencing processes – across contexts, settings and scales - sub-national, national, regional and global. It is IUCN's unique policy influencing 'secret sauce' and should be more explicitly defined, shared and explored.

Activities and outputs

IUCN's work involving large delegations at global events has tended to benefit from formal management and support from Secretariat HQ, which has been welcomed by those involved. However, there is limited evidence, beyond an after action review, of IUCN actors taking time to formally learn from and reflect on their work together during such processes.

Some policy influencing efforts have benefited from a share of IUCN's unrestricted or core funding, yet this is a rarity. Framework Partners and donors are often reluctant to fund influencing work unless it benefits them directly, leaving IUCN actors reliant on project funding to produce deliverables to satisfy requirements.

Project-restricted funding does include some useful examples of how projects can support policy work directly, and IUCN could take better advantage of this in a coordinated effort to support policy objectives. IDR 3 ORMACC FLR managed to build a policy influencing FLR 'programme' out of projects. Mobilising funding within this context requires skills and experience to identify and exploit opportunities within various structures while keeping in sight key policy objectives, suggesting an entrepreneurial mindset.

3.2 Sphere of influence - IUCN's policy influencing outcomes

Successful policy influencing requires IUCN as a Union to move beyond the delivery of activities and outputs, to collectively define and deliver policy influencing outcomes – seen as positive changes in individual and collective knowledge, capacities, behaviours, relationships, norms and networks. These immediate and intermediate outcomes are a critical stage in a collective policy influencing strategy and theory of change. Some illustrative examples of IUCN successfully achieving policy influencing outcomes include:

- IDR 1 on NbS – Increasing broad-based understanding of the concept and value of NbS by governments, donor countries, financial institutions, private funders and businesses;

- IDR 2 on BBNJ - Building relationships and providing a negotiating bridge between 1) the positions of 'rich countries' and those of 'under-resourced countries'; and 2) between states and civil society;
- IDR 3 on ORMACC FLR - Constituents across the Union - Secretariat HQ and ORMACC Regional Teams, Commissions, and ORMACC Regional Members - adopted the concept of FLR, taking the first steps of translating the concept into a 'movement'; and,
- IDR 4 on the ERO – ERO's work with the Forum on the Future of Agriculture has influenced its strategy and programme. It also helped diverse stakeholders within the Forum to find common ground in support of the nature restoration law.

In particular, IUCN is recognised for strengthening relationships between stakeholders and building confidence amongst decision makers to develop policy proposals. For example, in the IDR 4 ERO, EC policymakers passing the nature restoration law relied on having a resource (a science-based statement from IUCN) to defend and provide confidence to their policy position.

IUCN's policy influencing comparative advantage is being able to integrate and balance 'hard' technical skills in conservation science with 'softer' knowledge intermediary skills & trusted partner relationships. IUCN does this best as a Union - in contexts where they can unify their Membership and translate project funding opportunities into more coherent policy influencing 'programmes'.

Successful policy influencing programmes that are 'greater than the sum of their project parts', require a specific, contextualised and periodically updated policy influencing programme theory of change that guides the Union's work (Secretariat, Regional Offices, Commissions and Members) in its sphere of control (strategy, activities and outputs) with expected outcomes in its spheres of influence and interest.

The IUCN Secretariat exists to serve the Union, particularly the Membership. This unique attribute means IUCN – particularly the Secretariat - does not need to claim credit, and sometimes even under-plays its own contribution to successful policy influencing processes led by Members. In fact, in certain contexts, IUCN may under-claim to its detriment in terms of recognition of the Union's collective aptitude and capacity in policy influencing, underplaying the value this offers and consequently not actively attracting donor funding for policy influencing work.

3.3 Sphere of interest - IUCN's policy influencing impact

(Evidence of) policy influencing results takes time - At headline value this is no surprise. But it is worth reflecting that several of the policy influencing processes can be traced back over 20 years. Several of the IDRs illustrate that many of the concepts and definitions on which IUCN's policy influencing processes are built can take many years, if not decades, to emerge before they are formalised. They are the products of on-going, dynamic and inter-related conservation science discourse and debates, which are continually evolving. In IDR 1, the first reference to NbS was in 2008, with the IUCN NbS definition being formally adopted at the WCC in 2016. Similarly in IDR 2, IUCN Members had called for the protection of the High Seas in its resolutions from as early as 2000. Yet the BBNJ treaty text was finalised in March 2023 and formally adopted in June 2023. IDR 6 on KBAs has a similarly long evolution and definition process which has its origins in the 2004 WCC, with the Global KBA Standard adopted in 2016.

In contrast, only one IDR - IDR 3 FLR - is considered to have delivered positive nature, climate and human wellbeing impact. Through the Restoration Barometer, the ORMACC office is able to help monitor the quantity (Ha) and quality of FLR implementation across the Mesoamerican region. Although it may be too soon to assess both the quantity but particularly the quality of these land restoration efforts, it does nevertheless indicate genuine impact-level progress in FLR.

Successful positive policy influence is often still a long way from genuine impact. This is a particularly salient point in the context of the urgency to address the related global societal challenges - biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution and degradation, and poverty, inequality, and social justice.

IUCN needs to develop a policy influencing strategy that goes beyond the sphere of control to the spheres of influence and interest. IUCN does not have a shared, clear and coherent understanding of Union strategy once they achieve policy influence. IUCN – particularly the Secretariat and Commissions - have a clear idea of policy influencing strategies and roles when working within the sphere of control, but far less of an explicit and shared understanding of Union-wide strategies and roles as policy influencing processes progress through the policy cycle into policy implementation, enforcement and review (spheres of influence and interest).

3.4 Enabling and constraining factors

The Commissions represent a stable source of expertise which support the highly technical nature of IUCN's scientific offering. A key enabling feature is IUCN's ability to work as a Union, combining the strengths of the Commissions, Members and Secretariat. Commission expertise and volunteerism drove the science behind at least four of the IDRs, including NbS, BBNJ, KMGBF and KBAs.

But the challenge is the volume of scientific knowledge that is being produced across the Union – Commissions, Members and Secretariat, and how this is centrally coordinated by the Secretariat, and consistently and strategically deployed for policy influencing by IUCN.

IUCN's status as a UN Observer gives IUCN special access to, and influence over the sessions and the work of the UN General Assembly. While this status with the UN General Assembly does not automatically confer the same status in other processes, IUCN benefits nevertheless from its intergovernmental organisation (IGO) Observer status in other UN Conventions.

4 - Recommendations

The evaluation has generated 12 Recommendations which, if implemented evenly across IUCN, should improve IUCN's overall policy influence. As such, the recommendations are addressed to all constituents of the Union – the Secretariat, Commissions and Members as well as Framework Partners and project donors – seeking to address challenges around how IUCN plans and prioritizes its policy work and how IUCN documents and makes sense, supporting business processes around portfolio development, financing (from multiple angles), enhancing capacity competencies and leveraging all components of the Union.

Recommendation 1 IUCN policy cycle: Consider updating the IUCN Policy Cycle to better represent the role of knowledge (standards, tools, assessments, data, indicators and meta-data and scientific publications) in IUCN's work on agenda setting, policy development, policy implementation, and policy review. (For IPC)

Recommendation 2 Planning for policy influencing driven off a shared theory of change: Engage in coordinated planning activities to strengthen IUCN's policy influencing interventions, starting with the development of a universal IUCN policy influencing Theory of Change, drawing on the conclusions of this evaluation. The theory of change should highlight: the Union's unique structural governance; IUCN's policy influencing comparative advantage balancing 'hard' technical skills in conservation science with 'softer' knowledge intermediary skills & trusted partner relationships; and, the intermediate outcome nature of meaningful policy influencing results. (For IPC, IPME, PPC, Chief Scientist, Chief Economist, Commission Chairs, other relevant thematic or regional leads) IUCN Members and the World Conservation Congress)

Recommendation 3 Project standards: We recommend a revision to project guidelines and standards focusing specifically on policy aspects of projects to give assistance, example and guidance, but not prescription, to project managers designing projects with policy influencing elements. (For IPC, IPME and Finance)

Recommendation 4 Programme approach: Policy influencing that is 'greater than the sum of its project parts', requires a 'policy influencing programme' approach. Starting with policy objectives, actively assess the project portfolio and pipeline to identify opportunities for a small number of strategic policy influencing programmes. Based on the evaluation conclusions and as a starting point, IUCN policy influencing programmes should be developed for: UNCBD; UNFCCC; BBNJ/High Seas; and, UN Decade on Restoration. Each policy influencing programme should have a clear,

contextualised and periodically updated overall policy objective and accompanying programme theory of change. These should be ‘nested’ under the universal theory of change above, and specific, contextualised and periodically updated as guides to the Union’s programmatic policy influencing work.

Recommendation 5 Documenting, sensemaking and learning : Led by the Secretariat, encourage and formalise activities (products and processes) that routinely, consistently and collaboratively document, sense-make, and adaptively learn within and between each of IUCN’s policy influencing programmes. (For IPC with a Task Force)

Recommendation 6 Upstream activities to support downstream influencing: The IUCN Secretariat should plan for and implement projects and activities aimed at supporting State and government and sub-national Members in planning for and implementing their policy obligations. This should be documented as clearly as possible to ensure that this service to Members is distributed evenly and leaves no-one behind. (For all Regional and National Offices, Commissions)

Recommendation 7 Use of unrestricted or framework funding: Based on planning developed under Recommendation 2, allocate a percentage of unrestricted funding annually to support policy influencing work. (For the Director General, Chief Financial Officer with IPC, Regional Offices and other relevant players)

Recommendation 8 Framework Partners: We respectfully request IUCN’s Framework Partners to recognize the strength of IUCN’s policy influence at all levels, the tremendous value added of Commission volunteerism in generating policy relevant science and invest new and additional resources earmarked for IUCN’s policy influencing work. (For the Framework Partners, Director General and Strategic Partnerships)

Recommendation 9 Competency and capacity in policy influencing for the Secretariat: With IPC, Human Resources should develop a policy competency framework to be used in the recruitment of key policy-oriented positions such as future Directors General, Regional Directors, Country Representatives, thematic leads and policy officers. (For HR and IPC)

Recommendation 10 Managing and coordinating IUCN’s policy work: To aid in coordination between IUCN globally and regionally, between Members, Commissions and the Secretariat, use the annual work-planning process to document and compile IUCN’s policy influencing work from all corners of the Union. This information could aid in planning (Recommendation 2) and sense-making. (For all “policy teams”)

Recommendation 11 IUCN Members and policy influencing: We urge IUCN Members to work with the IUCN Secretariat and Commissions support the implementation of the IUCN Programme and work within their governments to support obligations under international agreements, including, but not limited to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in a manner that engages other government departments and sectors. (For all categories of Members)

Recommendation 12 IUCN Commissions and policy influencing: Ensure that draft Commission mandates are well aligned with the policy objectives named in the draft Programme in terms of (1) generating and supporting knowledge for policy, including horizon scanning, standards, tools, indicators, data and meta-data, scientific publications (2) supporting and participating in policy influencing efforts, and (3) supporting capacity building and implementation of policies and (4) linked to (1) generating data and filling indicator/data gaps required for monitoring (at minimum), the KMGBF and SDGs. (For all IUCN Commissions and Commission Chairs)

1. Introduction

Sophoi - www.sophoi.co.uk - is pleased to submit this report for the Independent evaluation of IUCN's influence on policy. We would particularly like to thank the Evaluation Steering Committee (SC), the In-Depth Review Focal Points, as well as all the key informants engaged throughout the evaluation process for contributing their time, experience and insights.

The primary purpose of the Evaluation as set out in the TORs is *“to assess IUCN’s effectiveness in contributing to policy at national, regional, and global levels. IUCN’s leadership, and the Council in its leadership role, wishes to identify, communicate, and learn from successes and failures to establish principles and lessons for policy strategies and advocacy in the future.”*

A secondary purpose is described as *“to make recommendations to guide future policy influence strategies and activities by IUCN’s Members, Commissions, Council, Secretariat and Committees.”*

Interpreting these purposes through the Inception phase allowed us to develop **three sequenced ‘evidence into learning’ objectives** around which to build the evaluation conceptual framework, approach and methods, and to structure this Evaluation Report:

- **Part A - Findings - to generate robust evidence of IUCN policy influencing strategies & results**
- **Part B - Conclusions - to generate a deeper and shared understanding of IUCN policy influencing patterns & conclusions**
- **Part C - Draft Recommendations - to facilitate a process of collaborative-sensemaking to enable IUCN adaptive learning on future policy influence**

1.1 Approach and methods

The overall evaluation approach is theory-based, complexity-informed, outcome-orientated, and learning-focussed. An overview of the evaluation design is presented in **Figure 1** below.

At the heart of the evaluation sits six In-Depth Reviews (IDRs). Each IDR is essentially a detailed and contextualised case study of an IUCN's policy influencing process, presented using a standard template in a [Miro platform](#), and supported by a sample of 39 IUCN projects. Details of IDRs, and the project sample within each, are presented in **Section 1.2 Sample** below.

In operationalizing the evaluation, the evaluation design emphasises the following key features:

- **Mixed-methods data collection** - integrating three primary data collection tools and their templates:
 - **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** - combining the overall Inception interviews and KIIs conducted across the six IDRs, a total of 98 KIIs and 4 group discussions (IDR3) were conducted using a standard KII template. Details of the key informants engaged and the KIIs conducted are presented in the IDRs in the Miro platform, and in **Annex 4**.
 - **Project desk reviews (PDRs)** - using a standard PDR template were conducted for 22 of 38 (the Team received no documentation from IUCN for 12 projects) projects in our sample. The allocation of projects across the six IDRs is presented in the Miro platform; and, an overall analysis of the entire project sample was completed to observe tendencies in objectives, outputs, results, IUCN's roles and quality of project documentation. This analysis is presented in Annex 4

- **Internet searching** - a structured key word internet search was conducted for each IDR with the aim of capturing any wider evidence sources (knowledge products and platforms) not covered within the IDR project sample and general documentation;
- **Balancing two perspectives** - 'inside IUCN-out' and from 'outside IUCN-in', with particular emphasis on balancing KII evidence between those inside 'IUCN' and those key informants 'outside' of IUCN.
- **Consistent data analysis, presentation and synthesis** - using a standard underlying In Depth Review (IDR) template in Miro to consistently 'assemble' the policy influencing data and evidence, and then to consistently present and synthesise across the six In Depth Reviews. See **Figure 2** below.
- **Collaborative sense-making** - innovatively the evaluation has piloted the integration of a two-stage collaborative sense-making process into the evaluation design, engaging both the Steering Committee and Focal Points in a facilitated, collaborative, online process (again using Miro). The aim is to engage these key stakeholders to bring their own deep experience, expertise and insights to help 'make sense' of the evaluative evidence, identify patterns and conclusions, and shape evaluation recommendations.

Figure 1 - Evaluation design overview

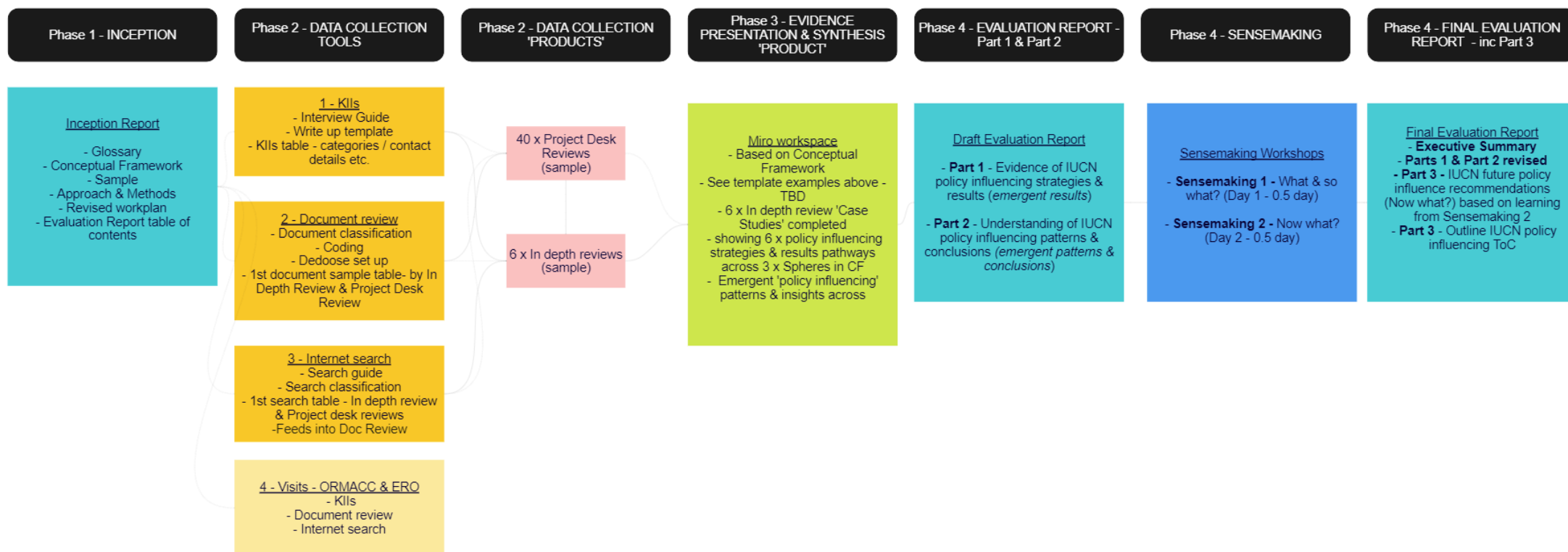


Figure 2 - Blank IDR template in Miro

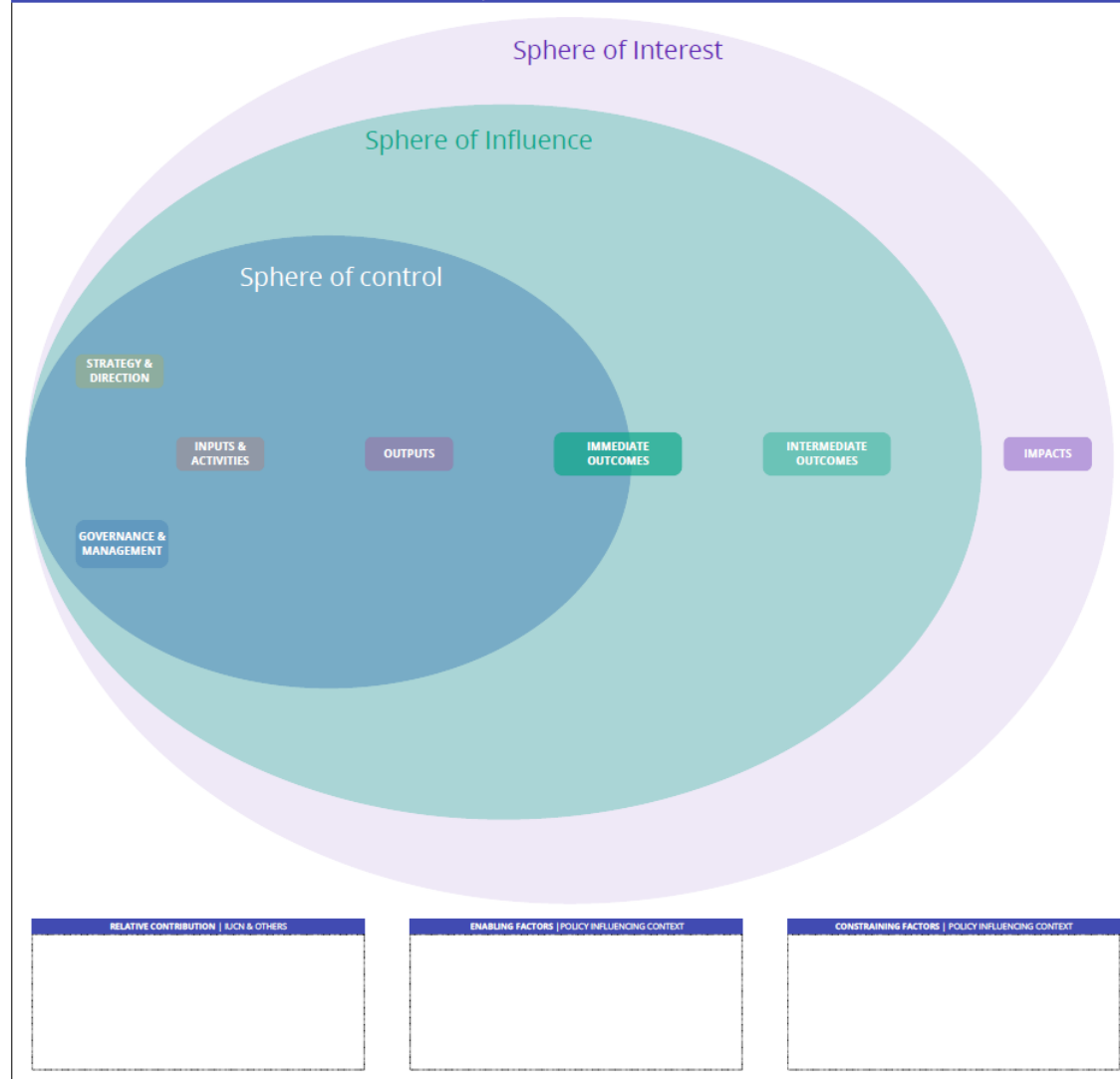
PART 1 - IN DEPTH REVIEW OVERVIEW | REVIEW TAGS / TIMELINE / SUMMARY

IDR TITLE & SOPHOI LEAD	
Main focal geographies	Major IUCN Union members involved
Key external partners & funders	Most relevant IUCN WCC Resolutions
IDR TIMELINE	
<div>REF EVENTS</div> <hr/> <div> <div>Each project to complete</div> </div>	
IDR SUMMARY SCOPE / CONTEXT / BACKGROUND / POLICY INFLUENCING OBJECTIVES	

PART 2 - DATA & EVIDENCE SUMMARY

INTERVIEWS	DESK REVIEW	INTERNET SEARCH
<small>IUCN INTERNAL KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED</small>	<small>IDR PROJECT SAMPLE LIST</small>	<small>IDR INTERNET SEARCH CRITERIA APPLIED / WEBSITES USED</small>
<small>EXTERNAL KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED</small>	<small>DOCUMENTS REVIEWED</small>	<small>KEY INTERNET SOURCES FOUND & ANALYSED</small>

PART 3 - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK | POLICY INFLUENCING STRATEGIES / RESULTS / PATHWAYS - WHAT & HOW?



PART 4 - IDR LESSONS & CONCLUSIONS | SO WHAT? / NOW WHAT?

IUCN'S POLICY INFLUENCING STRATEGIES WHAT WORKED WELL & WHY?
IUCN'S POLICY INFLUENCING STRATEGIES WHAT DIDN'T WORK SO WELL & WHY?
FUTURE POLICY INFLUENCING DO MORE OF? DO LESS OF? DO DIFFERENTLY?
BROADER LESSONS & INSIGHTS FOR THE UNION, PARTNERS & FUNDERS?

1.2 Sample

The evaluation sample was extensively discussed with the Evaluation Steering Committee (SC) (see **Annex 1**) and agreed during the Inception Phase. The fundamental innovation developed during the Inception Phase was to agree on a sample approach which is more explicitly thematically defined by identifying and developing six IDRs, each with an allocation of projects from our project sample. (see **Annex 6** for the project sample list).

This sample approach allowed for:

- Greater ‘depth’ in evidence collection - 6 x IDRs are required for understanding IUCN’s relative contribution to policy influencing outcomes - and focussing our set of data collection methods - KIIs, document reviews, and internet searching with the scope of each IDR.
- Integration of ‘depth’ and ‘breadth’ - explicit integration (triangulation) of data and evidence between in-depth reviews and project desk reviews strengthens the quality of the analysis within an IDR and synthesis between IDRs; and,
- Clearer sense-making to identify overall findings, conclusions and recommendations - through the ‘graphic’ illustration of each in-depth review using a common template (driven off the Conceptual Framework and developed in Miro) surfacing emergent patterns and insights and enabling sense-making participants to ‘view’ 6 thematically discrete IUCN policy influencing processes in a common format.

More broadly, the sample was defined using the following key purposive sample criteria suggested in the TORs:

- Established policy influencing processes that reached a major milestone during the evaluation’s study period of 2013-2022.
- Policy processes with a strong potential to showcase each element of IUCN’s delivery mechanisms, as described in the TORs, including leveraging the Union (the TOR speaks specifically of leveraging Commissions, however this sample includes strong examples of leveraging the IUCN Membership), project implementation and non-project, core-funded work by the Secretariat.
- Policy processes supported by a strong base of evidentiary artefacts, including, but not limited to planning documents and engagement strategies, a range of knowledge products including standards, tools, data, indicators and scientific publications and documented evidence of change.

Table 1: The six IDRs topics agreed for the evaluation sample

IDR	Title	Scope
1	Nature Based Solutions (NbS)	To understand IUCN’s influence at the global / international scale, introducing, informing and then formalising NbS through the 3 Rio Conventions UNCCD / UNFCCC / UNCBD - covering NbS related to sub-themes of ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), forest landscape restoration (FLR), and disaster risk reduction (DRR).
2	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdictions (BBNJ)	To understand IUCN’s involvement in the development and adoption of the BBNJ treaty
3	Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean - Functional Landscape Restoration (ORMACC FLR)	To understand IUCN (and partners) influence and uptake by governments in their policy; and implementation and mainstreaming of functional landscape restoration into local/national/regional initiatives in Costa Rica, Guatemala, and the wider region.

4	European Regional Office and the European Commission (ERO EC)	To understand the policy influencing work of the IUCN European Regional Office (ERO) through the lens of (but not limited to) its involvement in promoting sustainable agriculture and supporting the passage of the Nature Restoration Law
5	Kunming- Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF)	To understand IUCN's influence on the KMGBF (CBD COP Decision 15.4) and its monitoring framework COP Decision 15.5). The IDR follows IUCN's engagement in the negotiations from before COP14 where the Parties agreed to start negotiations in earnest on a Post-2020 Framework. The main focus of the IDR is IUCN's influence on COP Decisions 15.4 and 15.5.
6	Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA)	To understand the extent to which the IUCN Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) concept and Global Standard has been adopted, taken up or used in key policy processes at the national, regional or global level, and in corporate policy, regional development banks and Biodiversity Coalition and more than 3500 corporations through the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT).

1.3 Conceptual Framework

We have developed a conceptual framework that goes beyond the DAC framework and is specific to the policy work of IUCN. This is for a number of reasons. Policy work is distinct from programme work or a field project. It is highly complex, non-linear and multi-factorial and proceeds in anything but a 'linear' or 'rational' fashion, with policy processes being shaped by a multitude of interacting forces and actors. This makes it almost impossible to predict with confidence the consequences of a set of activities on outcomes, and extremely difficult to pin down the full effect of actions even after the event. Finally, our framework builds on the significant work done by academics and evaluation experts to conceptualise, measure and evaluate impact of knowledge and action on policy.

Description of framework and key components

We draw on the work done by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) on planning, monitoring and evaluating social change, specifically its work on Outcome Mapping ([IDRC, 2001](#)). In this they set out an actor focussed theory of change, consisting of three concentric spheres (sphere of control, sphere of influence, and sphere of interest) that are used to map an initiative's actors according to how they seem to influence each other as they contribute towards the overall vision of the initiative.

Outcome mapping encourages teams to analyse actors, for example, by prioritising them and listing the key groups or individuals (key actors) whom the initiative should influence or support directly and who are believed to play a key role in contributing to the overall vision of the initiative (sphere of interest). The initiative has no control over the key actors, but it can work with them and influence them to effect change.

Therefore, these actors are in the initiative's sphere of influence. The power to make changes towards the initiative's vision (in the sphere of interest) rests with them. Hence, any changes in their behaviour can be considered an important effect or result to which the initiative may have contributed, as the key actors may then contribute to changes in the sphere of interest.

In some influencing initiatives, many different actors may be mapped and found in the sphere of influence. In this case, the actors may be grouped into actor groups, or single actors can be representatives for a group of actors.

The sphere of control contains the initiative's actors who exert a considerable level of control over the initiative's finance, inputs, activities, and outputs. The actors here, such as the initiative-implementing team and the service providers, realise the initiative's strategies and activities.

Onto this framework, we overlay the work done by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) - [Louise Shaxson and Tiina Pasanen \(2016\)](#) - on monitoring and evaluating policy research. Referring to the diagram below, we see within IUCN's

sphere of control, IUCN's policy work (the dotted circle). There are three elements to this: 1) strategy and direction, 2) activities and outputs and 3) governance and management. IUCN's policy work draws on a number of inputs. It is hoped that this leads to certain changes, which we call outcomes and impacts. Outcomes fall within IUCN's sphere of influence - which comprises stakeholders which IUCN has direct contact with. Downstream impacts (comprising the protection and growth of nature) fall within IUCN's sphere of interest.

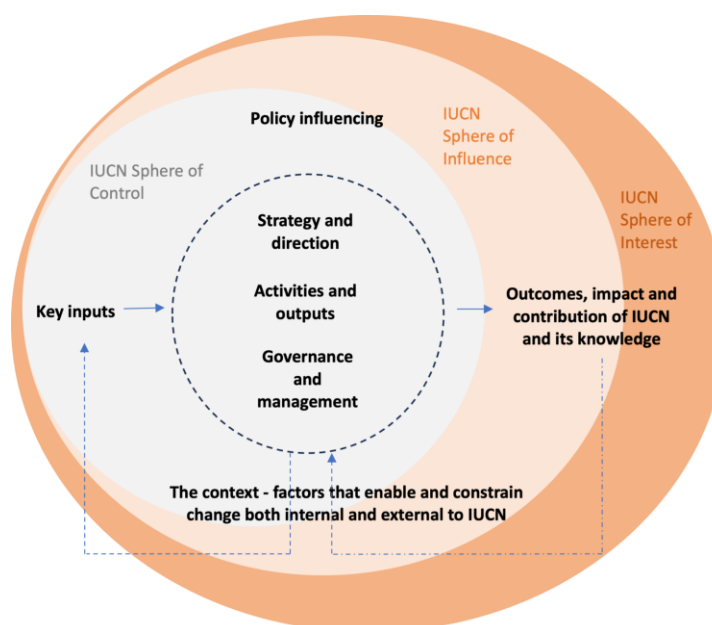


Figure 3: Developing the conceptual framework- IUCN's spheres of control, influence and interest

Across all three spheres (of control, influence, and interest) there are a range of actors and factors which both enable and constrain the extent to which IUCN's inputs are used or not in policy and practice. both internal to IUCN and external to it.

IUCN is one of many players who intend to bring about policy changes, outcomes and impacts. Outcomes and impacts emerge, not due to one actor or another, but because of what a range of stakeholders are doing together, which can be mutually reinforcing. Contribution (which takes a broader perspective by considering the collective efforts of multiple stakeholders) not attribution (which seeks to establish a direct causal link between interventions and outcomes) is subsequently key. We describe the elements of the framework in the table below, along with the key questions that were developed during the inception phase to cover the evaluation questions from the ToR.

Table 2: The elements that form the conceptual framework

Sphere	Component	Key questions
Control	Strategy and direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What sort of policy analysis does IUCN conduct to inform what it does (its strategy)? How does IUCN define problems and frame its objectives? What types of policy instrument does IUCN tend to focus on, and what level of governance does it engage ? Which stakeholders does it engage with? What approach does it take to its engagement with stakeholders? What types of knowledge does it tend to generate and use in its policy work? What approach does it take to learning from and adapting its strategy? How does it work with/in networks and platforms?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long does IUCN's engagement with policy last?
	Governance and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does IUCN generate legitimacy for its policy work? Where does leadership for the policy work stem from? What is the nature of participation and consultation in IUCN's policy work? How does IUCN manage and support its policy work and how does it learn from it? How is IUCN's policy work funded and what is the effect of this? What motivates IUCN affiliates to do policy work? How robust is IUCN's collective identity?
	Activities and outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the range of activities and outputs that are undertaken/produced by IUCN in its policy influence work? How well were they produced or undertaken? How well were they socialised with target audiences (especially where knowledge products are concerned)? Which activities and outputs were particularly influential amongst target audiences?
Influence	Immediate outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did audiences respond to IUCN's policy influencing activities and outputs?
	Intermediate outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What meaningful policy influencing changes emerged, both positive and negative?
Interest	Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is IUCN's policy influencing impact? What ultimate changes occurred to biodiversity, climate and human wellbeing?
Contribution	Relative contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does IUCN's particular contribution sit alongside (and interact with) the wider mosaic of influences and contributions? Was IUCN a sole actor, a primary actor, a lead contributor, a team contributor amongst others?
Roles	Emergent policy influencing roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What policy influencing roles does IUCN tend to play across the Spheres?
All	Enabling and constraining factors	<p>What factors constrained and/or enabled IUCN's policy work. Drawing on the work of Green (2016) and Cairney (2016), these are grouped in the following way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the interests, values and credibility of actors (including IUCN); formal and informal institutions; aspects of the context such as demography, technology, national politics and environmental factors; policy networks and alliances; dominant ideas which provide the context for expertise to be received and taken up, and finally; the role of events or critical junctures (both planned, such as periodic IUCN Congresses and unplanned such as sudden changes of leadership)

		within IUCN and within specific jurisdictions, catastrophic events including the Covid pandemic, amongst other things).
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1.4 IUCN as a Union - key context and definitions for the evaluation

IUCN is a Union of Members - States, government, NGO and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations – Commissions. The Union is managed by a professional Secretariat, with Commissions reporting to Council and Members. The Secretariat is present in 60+ countries around the world and has eleven regional offices.¹

The Union is governed by the Membership through the World Conservation Congress, who set the general policy of IUCN through adopting of the Programme and the Motions and Resolutions process.² Members propose Motions which are debated and voted on at the Congress.³ Resolutions set the policy directions of IUCN and direct the different components of the Union - Members, Commissions, Director General and Secretariat - to undertake certain actions. The Membership may also vote on Recommendations, which are requests made to parties outside of the Union. The implementation of Resolutions is tracked using an online platform. At Congress, the Members vote to approve the IUCN Programme and Commission Mandates. Between Congresses, the Secretariat implements the Intersessional Programme and is governed by the Member-elected Council, including the Programme and Policy Committee of Council, one of three permanent Committees of Council. IUCN's Statutes allow for policy setting in between Congresses by the Council (Statute 46a) and the Director General is authorized to issue statements on behalf of IUCN⁴

The Secretariat, composed of Regional offices, Global Thematic Centres and Corporate Units, coordinates IUCN's policy influencing work and implements or executes the project portfolio.⁵ IUCN is an accredited entity of the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund, and as such, is empowered to implement projects on their behalf, which are executed by other entities, often IUCN Members.⁶

There are seven IUCN Commissions: which include the Commission on Education and Communication, the Commission on Ecosystem Management, the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, the Species Survival Commission, the World Commission on Environmental Law, the World Commission on Protected Areas and the Climate Crisis Commission.⁷ Over 16,000 experts volunteer for IUCN's Commissions, who:

- Analyse issues and prepare assessments, reports, action plans, criteria and methodology;
- Undertake research and other scientific and technical work;
- Undertake tasks assigned to them within the integrated programme of IUCN;
- Provide advice on any matter within their fields of competence;
- Broaden knowledge and competence on matters relating to their mandates;
- Work with Members and the Secretariat to develop activities within the various Regions;
- Support Members and components of IUCN with necessary expertise; and
- Undertake such other responsibilities as may be assigned to them by the World Conservation Congress and the Council.⁸

¹ [Our Union | IUCN](#)

² [IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations Platform | IUCN Library System](#)

³ [IUCN World Conservation Congress | IUCN](#)

⁴ [IUCN President and Council | IUCN](#)

⁵ [Secretariat and Director General | IUCN](#)

⁶ [GEF and GCF implementation | IUCN](#)

⁷ [Expert Commissions | IUCN](#)

⁸ [Expert Commissions | IUCN](#)

Categories of IUCN Membership include state and government agency Members, subnational government Members, national and international non-governmental organisation Members and Indigenous Peoples' Organization Member. Members are empowered to form Regional and National Committees in order to convene themselves.⁹

1.5 IUCN policy

As a foundation, the evaluation adopted IUCN's definition of policy and policy positions as defined below. A full set of definitions is presented in the Annex 3 Working Glossary in Volume 2.

IUCN policy	IUCN policies are principles or courses of action, which guide its present and future decisions and actions, in order to achieve its mission.	IUCN Procedures 2022
IUCN's policy positions	These are reflected in position papers and reflect more time-bound and strategic or tactical responses and include policy recommendations and briefings directed at a particular event or meeting (as compared to policy statements, which are substantive, long-term and strategic nature)	IUCN Procedures 2022
IUCN's 'value proposition'	The Union provides credible and trusted knowledge; it convenes and builds multi-stakeholder partnerships for action; it has a global-to-local and local-to-global reach; it sets and influences standards, practices, and global policies impartially; and it draws on a vast network of volunteer scientists and expert practitioners worldwide.	Nature 2030 IUCN Programme p. 6
Policy See also IUCN Policy above	<p>A framework for action selected from among alternatives to guide governance and management,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focused at global, trans-national, national or local level; • formulated through a set of processes involving the participation of diverse stakeholders who have discussed alternatives and have given input into choices to be made; • sanctioned by a legitimate authority, in particular Inter Governmental Organisations, Regional authorities, national, provincial and local government, traditional authorities, influential organisations, or consortia of influential organisations and/or governments. <p>Might take the form of treaties, accords and other multilateral processes</p>	Adopted from Review of IUCN's Influence on Policy, Phase 1: Describing the policy work of IUCN (2005) (pp. 35-36)
Policy process 'cycle'	<p>IUCN characterises the policy process as a four-stage policy cycle:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. agenda-setting, 2. policy development, 3. policy implementation, and 4. policy review. <p>IUCN's work to influence policy may be targeted at any stage of this cycle, and policy influence is expected to occur through multiple outputs and intermediate outcomes in the cycle – not only when policy text changes.</p>	Adopted from Review of IUCN's Influence on Policy, Phase 1: Describing the policy work of IUCN (2005) (pp. 35-36)

⁹ [Members | IUCN](#)

PART A - IUCN's POLICY INFLUENCING STRATEGIES & RESULTS

Part A presents a summary of IUCN's policy influencing strategies and results based on the analysis and synthesis of the evaluation's two core data collection frameworks: six In Depth Reviews (each combining KIs, document reviews, and structured internet searches) and 22 Project Desk Reviews (see **Annex 4**). Where relevant, Part A integrates and highlights evidence, patterns and insights on IUCN's policy influencing strategies and results generated through the Sense-making 1 (SM1) workshop.

2. Evidence of IUCN policy influencing - Summary of 6 In Depth Reviews

As a foundation for the evidence generated on IUCN's policy influencing strategies and results, short summaries of each of the six IDRs are presented below. These summaries are not intended to present detailed and contextualised evidence as this is set out in the Miro platform. Rather they are intended to provide a reader with sufficient context and detail to understand the Evaluation Report without extensive reference to the [Miro platform](#).

1 - Nature Based Solutions (NbS)

Scope: To understand IUCN's influence at the global / international scale, introducing, informing and then formalising NbS through the 3 Rio Conventions - UNCCD / UNFCCC / UNCBD - covering NbS related to sub-themes of ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), forest landscape restoration (FLR), and disaster risk reduction (DRR).

Context: Global interest in and momentum around NbS from a broad range of interest groups has grown almost exponentially in the last 5 years, starting from the point of IUCN's adoption of the definition in 2016. Internally and accordingly NbS feature quite heavily in the IUCN Programme – Nature 2030, across the land, water, oceans, and climate programme areas, often combined with restoration to provide scalable on-the ground solutions to priority issues. IUCN as a Union, led by the Secretariat NbS Management Hub in partnership with experts from the [IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management](#) (CEM) and its [NbS Thematic Group](#), has sought to maintain, positively direct and build on this growing interest and momentum.

Policy influencing objectives: IUCN as a Union has the mandate to influence NbS policy: A) To influence the uptake and mainstreaming of NbS at all levels and, B) To ensure that NbS is implemented / applied at a high level of social and environmental integrity as framed in the IUCN NbS Global Standard. Outside of IUCN, interest in NbS has grown and been picked up in the three Rio Conventions - United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD)..

Summary of IUCN's policy influencing strategy & results: IUCN has influenced the adoption of NbS in all three Rio Conventions - both in terms of formal Convention NbS wording recognition and more broadly in ensuring NbS are defined in line with IUCN's definition and Standard

IUCN, with early references by the World Bank, pioneered the concept of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) almost 20 years ago, first developing and adopting a formal definition at the 2016 World Conservation Congress, and then developing and promoting the Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions as a safeguard for their use at the 2020 World Conservation Congress. NbS features quite heavily in the IUCN Programme – Nature 2030, across the land, water, oceans, and climate programme areas, often framed through restoration to provide scalable on-the ground solutions to global societal challenges.

Through IUCN's Commission on Ecosystem Management and the Secretariat, along with the support of several State and Non-State Members, IUCN has developed numerous knowledge products, tools, training materials on NbS, including the Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions, numerous policy briefs and guides related to priority issues such as disaster risk reduction, ecosystem restoration, forest / functional landscape restoration and climate change.

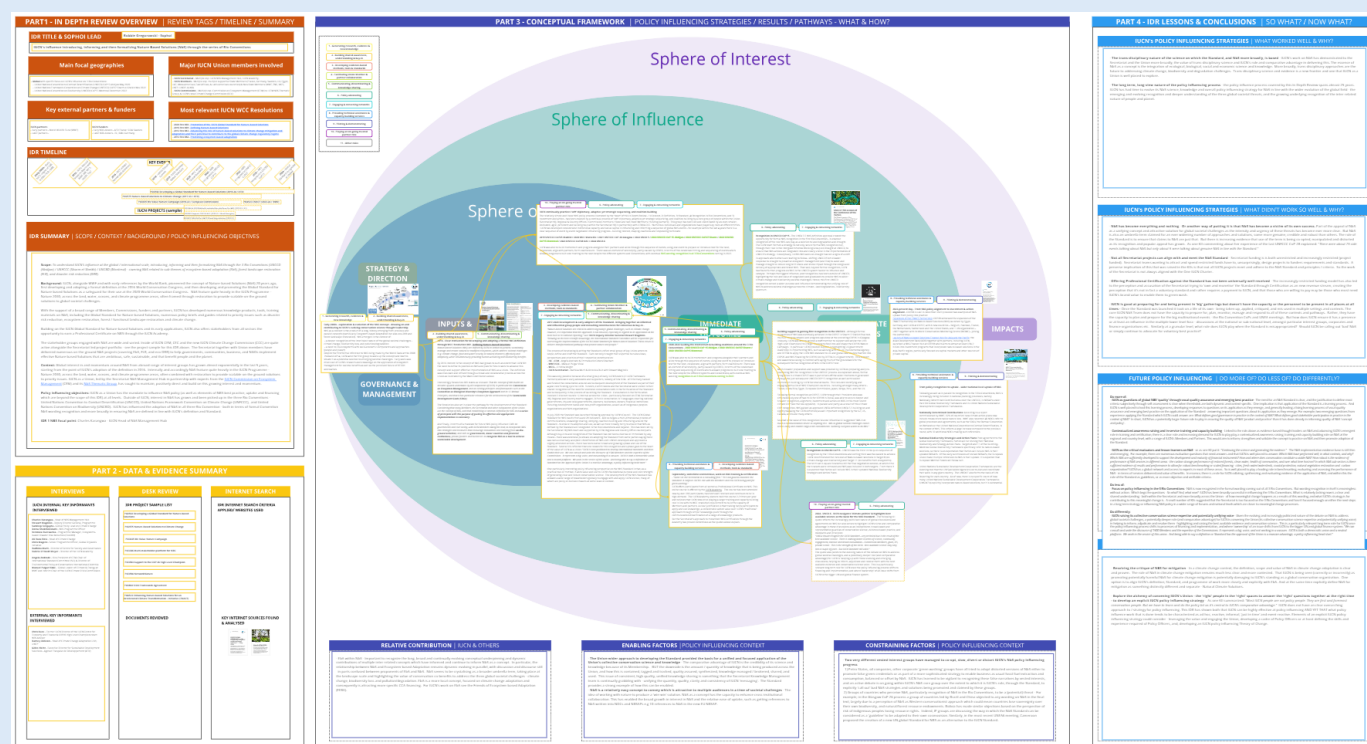
Building on the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions and its early applications, IUCN also offers stakeholders from all sectors the opportunity to earn a Professional Certificate on NBS through the IUCN Academy.

The stakeholder groups engaged with NbS are wide and varied. Inside of IUCN CEM, WCEL, CEC and the new IUCN Climate Crisis Commission (CCC) are quite active alongside the Secretariat's project portfolio. The Secretariat together with Union Members have delivered numerous on-the-ground NbS projects (covering EbA, FLR, and eco-DRR) to help governments, communities, business, and NGOs implement effective Nature-based Solutions that are ambitious, safe, sustainable, and that benefit people and the planet.

There is a relatively simple and linear NbS policy influencing process illustrated by the 'heart' of this In-Depth Review - 1) Concept, 2) Definition, 3) Standard, 4) Recognition in Rio Conventions in 2022, and 5) subsequent influencing over NBS uptake, investment and action. In terms of the scope of this IDR, IUCN achieved their policy influencing objectives, with eventual NbS wording recognition in all 3 Rio Conventions coming in 2022: **UNCCD CoP 15 in Abidjan / UNFCCC CoP27 in Sharm el Sheik / CBD CoP15 in Montreal**. In parallel, IUCN has influenced the **United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)** - the world's highest-level decision-making body for matters related to the environment, with a universal membership of all 193 Member States. At UNEA 5 there was a proposal which could have radically redefined NbS - in the end the parties adopted a slightly (and substantively inconsequential) modified version of the IUCN definition. At UNEA 6 there was a move to create a new standard - which failed with the de facto recognition that the IUCN standard essentially already described best practice.

This policy influencing process has been enabled by a continual process of 'soft' diplomacy, adaptive yet strategic sequencing, and coalition building by a core group of people within the Union (Secretariat HQ, Regional & Country Offices / Commission Members / State and non-State Members / funding partners).

IDR focal point: Charles Karangwa - IUCN Head of NbS Management Hub



2 - Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (High Seas Treaty)

Scope: To understand IUCN's involvement in the development and adoption of the BBNJ treaty.

Context: According to key informants and documentation, from the late 1990s/early 2000s onwards, stakeholders became increasingly aware that Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) are home to significant biodiversity, including unique species that have evolved to survive extreme heat, cold, salinity, pressure and darkness. But ABNJ were being (and still are) threatened by both climate change and human exploitation. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (opened for signature in 1982, entering into force 12 years later in 1994 and ratified by 169 parties) provided the overarching international legal framework for the ocean. It created obligations to protect and preserve the marine environment and to conserve marine resources, but it did not specify mechanisms or processes for conserving marine biodiversity in ABNJ. Taking a sectoral (fishing, pollution) or regional approach (e.g. the Antarctic) may have addressed parts of the problem or the problem in different regions. But they did not address the way in which multiple pressures on the ocean interacted or the connectivity between marine ecosystems, or the mechanism to create protected areas in ABNJ.

Policy influencing objectives: IUCN members had called for the protection of the High Seas in its resolutions from as early as 2000 (WCC 2000 RES 020: Conservation of marine biodiversity). Other key resolutions were passed in 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2020. For instance WCC 2016 Res 050 called for increasing marine protected area coverage for effective marine biodiversity conservation; while WCC 2020-Res 128 called for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in the ocean beyond national jurisdiction. Commission members involved in the negotiations provided inputs to drafting resolutions, facilitated discussions and reported to members on their implementation at the quadrennial IUCN Congress. Resolutions provided broad principles for IUCN delegates to hold in mind, leaving them significant room for manoeuvre during negotiations. IUCN's policy objectives were multiple and varied over time. Up until 2015, IUCN aimed to raise awareness and enthusiasm for the high seas, make the case for a new treaty and to inform discussions about key elements of a potential treaty. Once the UN agreed to develop a new treaty (phase 2), attention focused on reaching agreement on the scope, feasibility and key parameters of the treaty. IUCN's aim was for negotiators to develop and adopt a relatively ambitious treaty. They expanded their focus from MPAs to include all four elements of the treaty. Once the treaty text was nearing agreement, attention broadened to include setting the foundation for successful implementation.

Summary of IUCN's policy influencing strategy & results: With IUCN's UN Observer status giving it special access to international policymaking, a small group of commission Members attended sessions and followed discussions at the UN particularly during the early part of phase 1. This was accompanied by 'inside track' engagement with key actors during and between meetings in New York. Commission Members engaged directly with key government representatives but also high seas management practitioners, experts and non-state actors – framing the issue primarily as a conservation issue. Commission Members aimed to persuade and socialise. They didn't set out to gain visibility or "be the star of the show". While they pushed for a treaty, they didn't do so in strident terms.

IUCN's participation during phase 3, the IGC sessions, was through a formal delegation. A key informant (negotiator) suggested they found NGOs more visible than IUCN despite it offering expert based comments at every opportunity - utilising its right to take the floor before NGOs during formal meetings. The IUCN delegation continued to take a largely inside track approach outside the formal negotiation processes through so called corridor meetings and private convenings as well as intersessional workshops.

The leadership transition within the Ocean team saw the IUCN Secretariat take a more political approach to engagement, to accompany the technical approach taken by the Commission Members. This was enabled by a 2020/21 WCC resolution. According to one negotiator, advancing negotiations both technically and politically was key. Although IUCN stressed the importance of connectivity concerns for least developed countries early in the BBNJ process from 2019 onwards, they committed more strongly to this after the transition, suggesting that not protecting the high seas could bring harm to the future of Pacific Small Island Developing States. IUCN raised awareness through a documentary film focusing on the plight of indigenous people and their reliance on the high seas. They also supported the High Seas Alliance's (HSA) efforts to promote the participation of people from indigenous groups in the negotiation. By doing so IUCN gave their influencing work more of a human face.

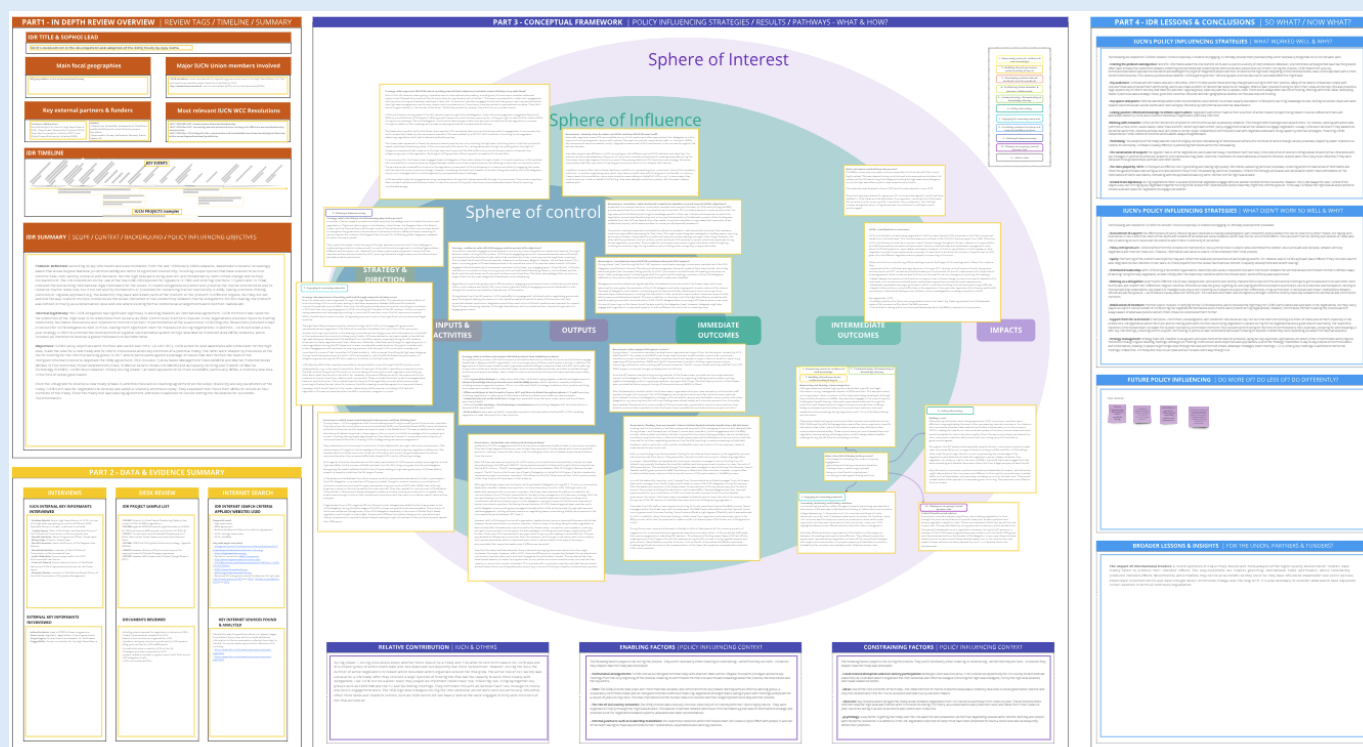
To accompany this, the Oceans team engaged heads of delegation of key nation states through private 1-2-1s and receptions. IUCN exploited their vulnerability to pressure because of gaps between stated commitments (and a desire to be adhering to particular norms) and practice. The Secretariat also made efforts to ensure the negotiation process (and IUCN's involvement in it) was more visible, by engaging the media with the help of a communications strategy. However, translating the depth and breadth of the work being discussed by the IUCN delegation into succinct messages which could be digested by non-specialists

was a challenge.

IUCN was able to play the long game ensuring representation during both phases especially through its Commissions. Commission Members demonstrated resilience and a determination to stay the course of a long and intensive process (especially toward the end) requiring considerable energy.

The treaty text was finalised in March 2023 and formally adopted in June 2023. Several IUCN proposals or text that it supported made it into the final treaty. This included reference to responsibility and liability as well as principles and approaches. Marine protected areas and area based management tools, (ABMTs), which IUCN had worked on, were referenced heavily. IUCN was the inspiration for many of the provisions on ABMTs, from the ABMT, MPA and sustainable use definitions to the contents of management plans. These would not have been there had IUCN not been a long-time participant with access to foundational IUCN WCPA publications. Other contributions came during offsite meetings around the fringes of UN meetings and IUCN High seas expert workshops on ABMTs in Gland.

IDR focal point: Aurélie Spadone- Senior Programme Officer, Ocean Team



3 - Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean (ORMACC) Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR)

Scope: To understand IUCN (and partners) influence and uptake by governments in their policy; and implementation and mainstreaming of functional landscape restoration into local/national/regional initiatives in Costa Rica, Guatemala, and the wider region.

Context: IUCN and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) coined the term Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) in 2000 as a framework for reorientating forest restoration policy discourse away from an almost singular focus on planted forests and plantation to a broader, more holistic understanding the restoration of forest ecosystem functionality within a landscape context, complementing both forest conservation and sustainable management. In 2011 the Government of Germany and IUCN

launched the Bonn Challenge. The Bonn Challenge is a global goal to bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. Currently, more than 70 pledgers from more than 60 countries are restoring 210 million hectares of degraded and deforested lands. In 2016 IUCN led the development of the BC Restoration Barometer to help pledgers identify, assess, and track action on their restoration commitments. The Barometer measures progress based on success factors that create favourable conditions for restoration such as funding and supportive policies; and results and benefits, such as land area brought under restoration, carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, and the creation of jobs. Barometer data can be used for reports to the [Paris Agreement](#), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and other global goals. Countries and organisations can use the Barometer to track progress, and increasingly see its value as a tool to access and raise climate finance, against the three Rio Conventions - [climate](#), [land degradation](#) or [biodiversity](#) goals.

Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) as a concept preceded but has since evolved as part of the wider concept of Nature Based Solutions (see IDR1 - NBS for IUCN's wider role in defining both the NBC concept and subsequent Standard) and in parallel to the concept of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EBA). In the last 5 years, FLR itself has evolved from a focus specifically on 'forest landscapes' to the broader concept of 'functional landscapes', recognizing the value of establishing multiple ecosystem functions and services - both ecological and productive.

Policy influencing objectives: In the context of this In Depth Review, IUCN's FLR policy influencing objectives are broadly defined to align with the restoration pledging and restoration progress objectives of the [Bonn Challenge](#) and the subsequent [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-30](#).

Summary of IUCN's policy influencing strategy & results: The Bonn Challenge has received unprecedented support in Latin America, with certain countries in the region and through the support of IUCN's ORMACC Regional Office, becoming global leaders in FLR - Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico, amongst others. Launched in Peru in 2014, [Initiative 20x20](#) of which IUCN sits on the Board, has been instrumental in connecting governments, investors, and technical partners to implement and scale up FLR in Latin America. The Initiative which is part of the Bonn Challenge, with 17 Latin American countries pledging to bring 20 million hectares of degraded land into restoration by 2020.

Core to and underlying all of ORMACC's FLR policy influencing work in Meso-America has been a 3-stage process with a distinct tool or process associated with each stage:

1. Application of the ROAM methodology - enabling FLR assessment into strategy and policy processes including financial mechanisms
2. The Bonn Challenge - national implementation pledging and accompanied FLR implementation strategy development
3. Progress reporting using the Restoration Barometer - monitoring and demonstration of progress

IUCN was responsible for co-designing both the ROAM and the Restoration Barometer. And the funding, including two high budget projects associated with these core tools and products has enabled the ORMACC team to turn individual projectized support into a more coherent and coordinated regional FLR policy influencing programme which is undeniably 'greater than the sum of its parts'.

IDR 3 is a case study in how IUCN successfully works with its Membership. It illustrates the value of IUCN as a Union, particularly how the Secretariat can work with, leverage and mobilise the IUCN Membership. Central to the ORMACC Regional Office's policy influencing success has been its engagement of, and collaboration with IUCN Membership in the Region.

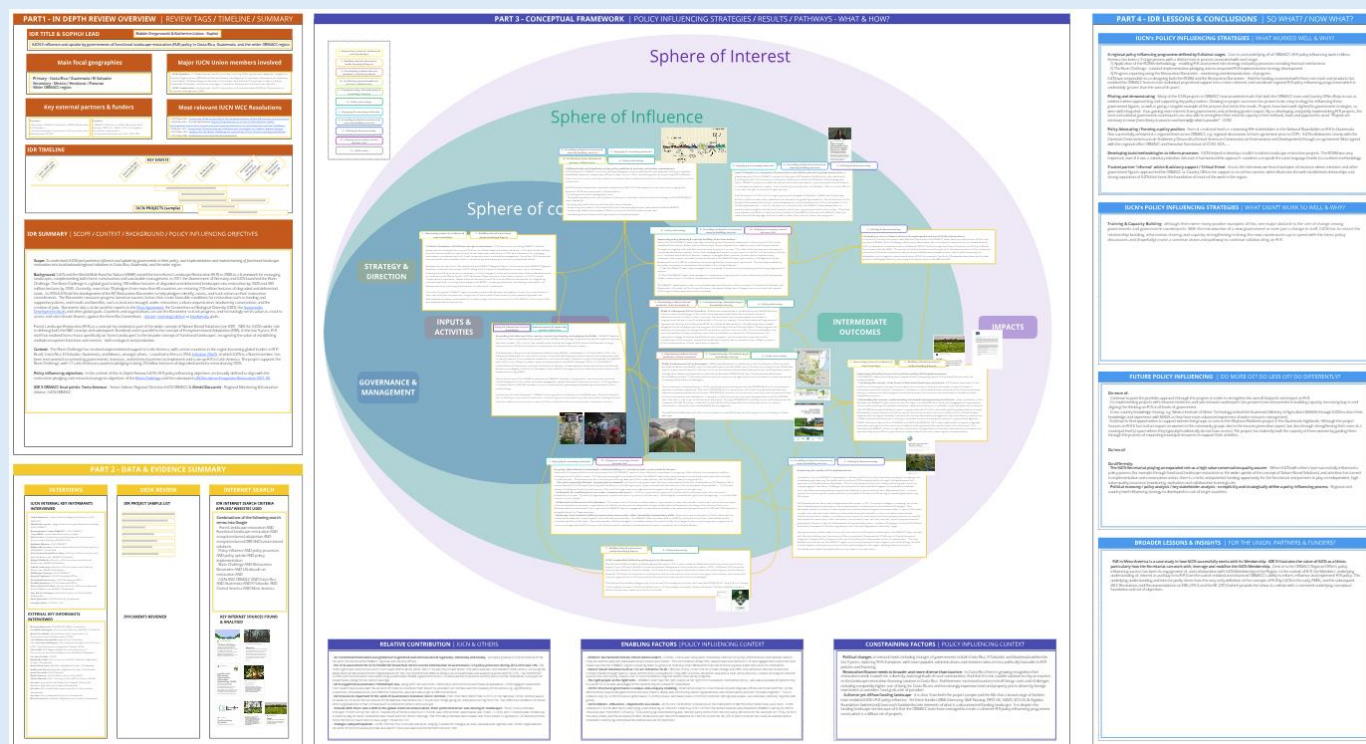
IUCN ORMACC teams are playing two complementary roles going beyond influencing FLR policy and into implementation.

1) Evolving the concept - from forest to functional landscape restoration. IUCN teams have been on the forefront of evolving the concept from an early focus purely on forests to a broader concept focused on ecosystem restoration (forests, farmlands, freshwaters, cities, wetlands and oceans) and functional landscapes (aiming to restore multiple ecological, social and economic functions across a landscape to benefit multiple stakeholder groups.)

2) Grounding the concept - understanding local needs and generating local buy-in - A key implication of this has been the ORMACC team's focus across the region on local NGO and community engagement to generate a robust understanding of local-

level restoration needs and local buy-in in parallel to national level policy influence.

IDR focal points: Tania Ammour - Senior Advisor Regional Direction IUCN ORMACC, Ahmid Daccarett - Regional Monitoring & Evaluation Adviser, IUCN ORMACC.



4 – Europe Regional Office's ERO's policy work

Scope: To understand the policy influencing work of the IUCN Europe office through the lens of (but not limited to) its involvement in promoting sustainable agriculture and supporting the passage of the Nature Restoration Law.

Context: the European Union is an important policy space regionally - informing policy and practice in its 27 member states - but also globally, with standards and regulation having far reaching influence. Moreover, IUCN has close to 400 members in Europe, many of which are in the EU, who give it its mandate to create a just world that values nature. Engaging with and influencing policy in the EU helps IUCN go beyond generating data/research or protecting particular areas through one-off projects/programmes and move towards achieving longer term impact.

Policy influencing objectives: The IUCN Europe 2021-24 Workplan lists eleven impact areas (all of which have a policy element), one of which is to achieve a more sustainable agricultural and food system and another of which is to promote the protection and restoration of forest ecosystems. These only became a priority in 2016, which coincided with the recruitment of IUCN ERO's first policy specialist. The IUCN ERO subsequently acknowledged that around half of the EU's land was farmed; that agriculture was the most frequently reported pressure to negatively impact the state of nature in Europe and; that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was both a driver of biodiversity loss due to harmful subsidies and an opportunity for supporting sustainable agricultural practices.

Following this a series of internal and external documents were produced by IUCN Europe setting out analyses of the agricultural policy context, its intentions to generate new science, facilitate discussion amongst key stakeholders with the intention to

channel knowledge into the revision of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). These documents included a 2017 internal strategy document, a 2017-20 IUCN Europe work plan, a 2018 paper called Towards Sustainable Agriculture, published on its website and 2023 internal strategy document.

Finding a way into the debate wasn't easy as the agricultural sector was and continues to be populated by a plethora of actors. IUCN Europe, after consulting a range of internal and external stakeholders, found a niche, interfacing between agricultural and environmental stakeholders, who tended to operate in silos.

Summary of IUCN's policy influencing strategy & results:

Opportunities to engage with policy came in four ways:

1. Externally funded projects led by IUCN or other organisations. This included two types, those which responded to a call for proposals and were tightly structured with little scope for deviating from agreed norms, and those which allowed IUCN significant flexibility in design and delivery. On the former this included the evaluation of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020, An impact assessment of the nature restoration law and ECO-READY, where IUCN is part of a consortium of 16 organisations which, with funding from the Commission's Horizon programme (between 2022-6), aims to establish an observatory to identify key threats to food security in Europe with special regards to risks posed to climate change and biodiversity loss. The latter, projects which provided flexibility in design, included two successive projects to promote sustainable agriculture funded by the Dutch government (2018-21 and 2021-24) featuring a series of roundtables and publications.
2. Demand oriented work, in response to key policy and political events: this featured responding to the launch of the EU 2030 biodiversity strategy with a written commentary; issuing letters and statements in support of the EU Nature Restoration Law; and responding to the call for evidence of the Soil Health Law Initiative, and to the consultation of the Soil Health Law in October 2022.
3. Cyclical/routine interactions with stakeholders on shared platforms/spaces: Brussels is a hotbed of policy activity with a lot of networking opportunities. Not surprisingly, IUCN engages with stakeholders including policymakers routinely in a variety of platforms, spaces and places on a routine as well as ad hoc basis.
4. Working with the Forum for the Future of Agriculture: the break in activity caused by Covid, the appointment of a new Commissioner and a context where decisions makers were less receptive to ideas related to environmental protection and greening the economy, resulted in IUCN shifting its focus from working alone to supporting the Forum for the Future of Agriculture.

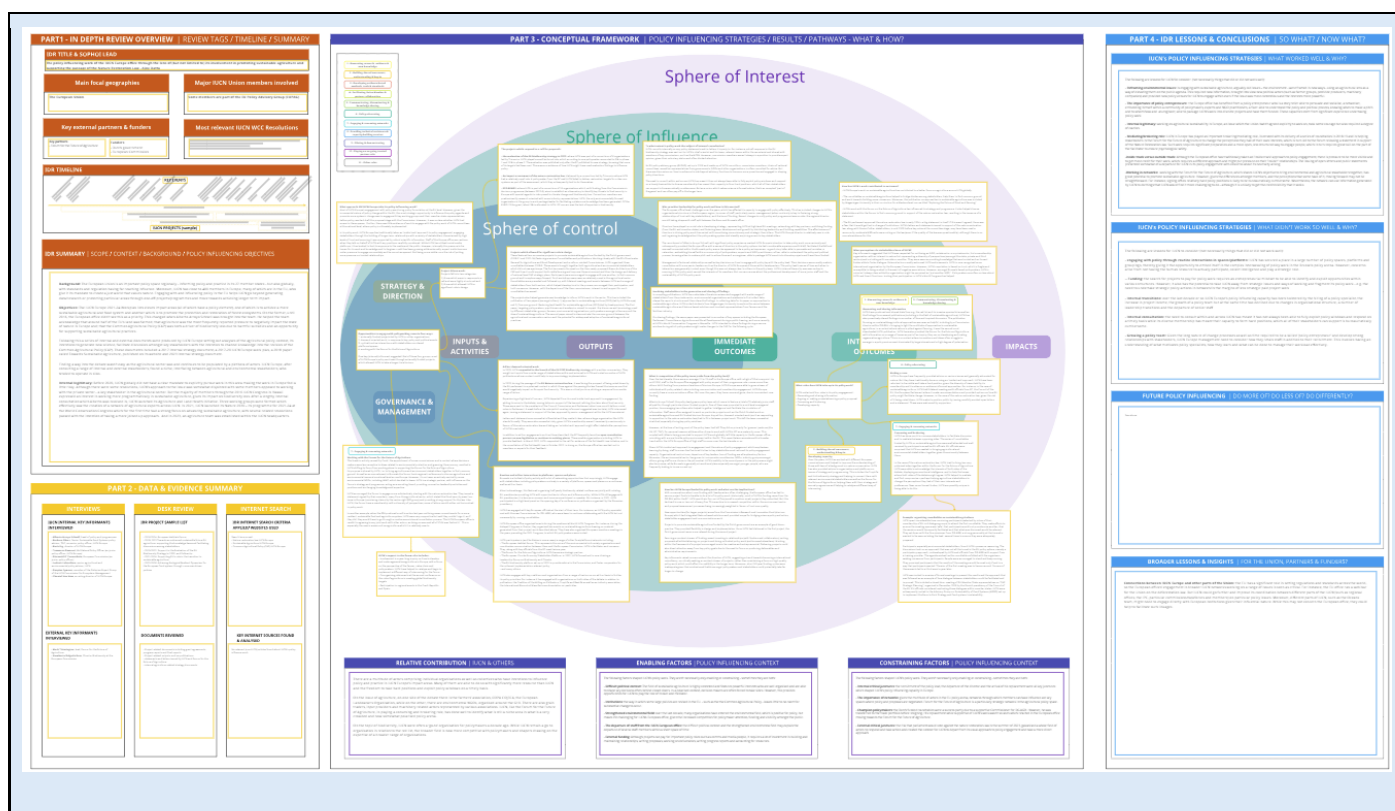
IUCN Europe's work on sustainable agriculture has contributed to a better focus on agriculture across IUCN globally.

The roundtables on sustainable agriculture helped to bridge divides among stakeholders, help them to find common ground and work towards building some consensus. Moreover, the publication on approaches to sustainable agriculture was included by Wageningen University in their curriculum for a Masters-level course titled "Exploring the Future of Food and Farming"

IUCN's work with the Forum on the Future of Agriculture has influenced its strategy and programme. It also helped diverse stakeholders within the Forum to find common ground in support of the nature restoration law, resulting in the issuance of a statement.

The EU parliament approved the nature restoration law in early 2024 – a big statement in itself. If this wasn't agreed, there was a fear that it would get lost in change of institutions. IUCN's letters and statements issued in support of the nature restoration law, along with those of other stakeholders, in mid 2023 before key votes at the committee stage, may have been used a resource by moderate MEPs who were voting on the law (even if the quality of the law was questionable) - although there is no concrete evidence for this.

IDR focal point: Alberto Arroyo Schnell- Head of Programme and Policy at the European Regional Office of the IUCN



5 - Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Scope: This IDR focuses on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) itself (CBD COP Decision 15.4) and its monitoring framework (COP Decision 15.5). The IDR follows IUCN's engagement in the negotiations from before COP14 where the Parties agreed to start negotiations in earnest on a Post-2020 Framework. The main focus of the IDR is IUCN's influence on COP Decisions 15.4 and 15.5.

Context: The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is the result of years of negotiation by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is the intended follow up of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Targets which ended in 2020. The GBF has four Goals and 23 Targets and follows the disappointing implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2010-2020 and the associated Aichi Targets. The GBF was negotiated by Parties to the CBD where IUCN, accredited as an observer to the CBD as an intergovernmental organisation, had access to, and participated in the negotiations of the GBF.

Policy influencing objectives: 1. Strategically influence the negotiations towards the adoption of a strong Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, 2. Position and secure IUCN's role as key player in the implementation of the Framework once adopted, 3. Increase IUCN's influence, visibility and impact whilst promoting and advancing IUCN's policy work and its Programme – Nature 2030.

For the post-2020 GBF, IUCN prioritised the following issues:

- Protected and conserved areas in the right places, effectively managed and equitably governed – 30X30
- Restoration of ecosystems at scale, including through the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration
- Concerted global action for species and support through a Global Species Action Plan
- Increasing financial resources to at least USD 200 billion per year, and increasing international conservation finance flows to correspond to the share of global biodiversity footprint embedded in international trade (currently approximately 30%).
- Explicit inclusion of Nature-based Solutions in relevant targets

- Other important areas include the post-2020 monitoring framework (indicators), responsibility and transparency (planning, reporting and review mechanism), other implementation support mechanisms, such as capacity-building and knowledge management, and the role of women and IPLCs." From the IUCN's Engagement Strategy for OEWG5/COP15

Summary of IUCN's policy influencing strategy & results: IUCN's engagement in the CBD Post-2020 Negotiations included all components of the IUCN, plus putting forward IUCN standards, knowledge, guides, data and indicators, technical advice and inputs into assessment processes under the Global Biodiversity Outlook series and the IPBES assessments. IUCN (Secretariat, Commissions, Members at all levels) IUCN's overall strategy for engagement was governed by a Post-2020 Task Force of Council that included participation of the Secretariat. IUCN participated in every CBD event between COP14 and COP15 during which the KMGBF, its structure, goals and targets were discussed. IUCN (Secretariat, Commissions, Members) IUCN provided detailed feedback on every draft of the KMGBF, attempting to align the Framework, Goals and Targets against IUCN's position. IUCN Members played an insider role within national negotiating delegations. During the policy events, IUCN participated in parallel and side events, convened pavilions and met bilaterally with negotiators. The IUCN Delegation followed the "One Programme" approach and was comprised of Commission Members, representatives of Member Organizations, Councillors and the Secretariat. Other Commission Members, and Members, were also intensely involved, whether they are on the IUCN delegation or other delegations (governments, NGOs, etc.).

Outside of official negotiations, IUCN engaged in science generating activities, convened and facilitated dialogues, provided technical advice to governments, sensitised Members to IUCN's position, convened the World Conservation Congress in which Members initiated, debated and voted in 24+ Resolutions related to the Post-2020 Framework, developed and implemented projects related to biodiversity policy, including projects that contributed to knowledge generation (standards, tools, data, indicators, scientific publications), supported implementation of policy and aspects of IUCN's policy influencing. One innovative project demonstrated a "whole of government approach" leading to "voluntary commitments" across 16 countries in which IUCN convened multi-sector and multi-stakeholder dialogues.

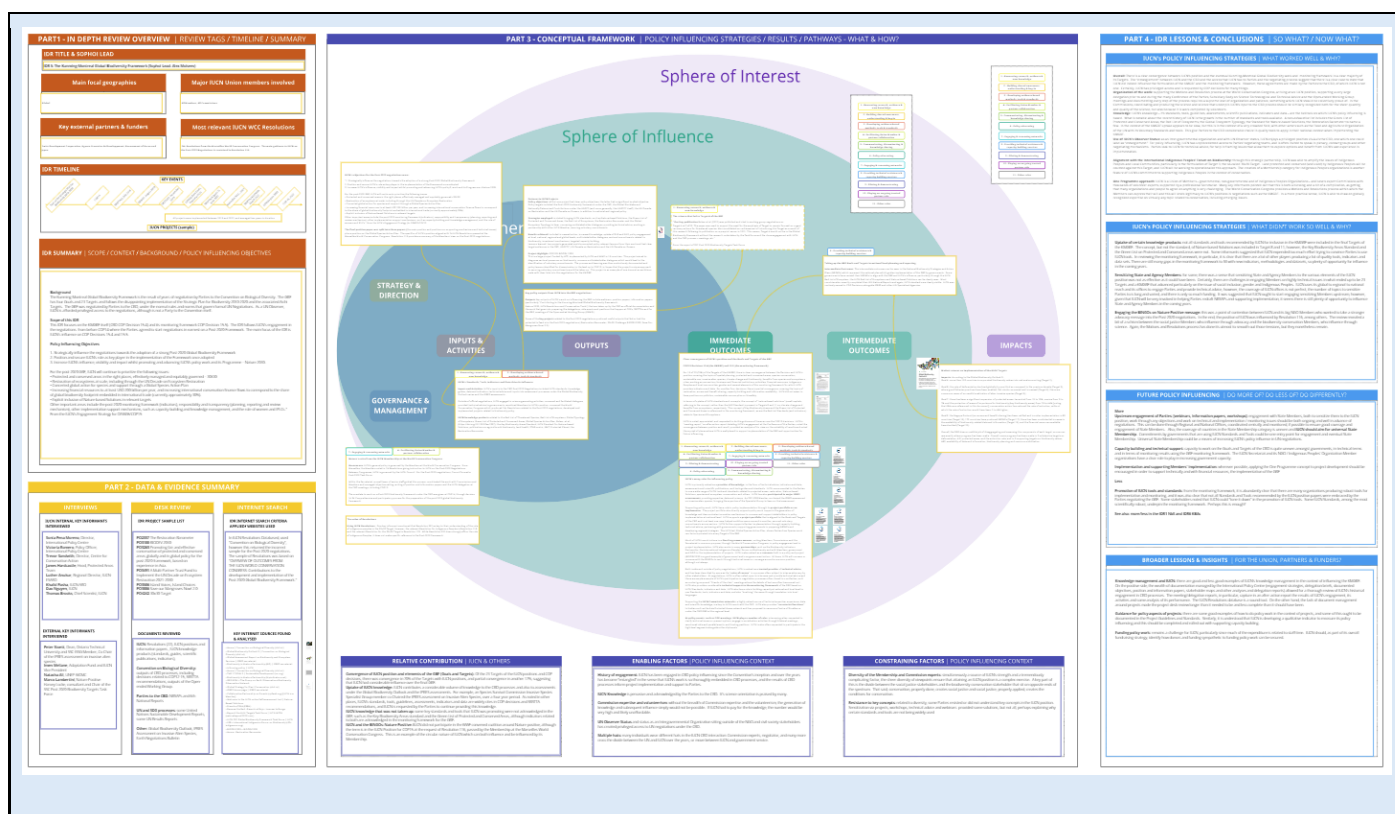
IUCN promoted knowledge products - the Red List of Threatened Species, Red List of Ecosystems, the Global Typology of Ecosystems, the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, the Global Species Action Plan, Bolam, et al. (<https://doi.org/10.1002/fee.2537>) the Key Biodiversity Areas Standard, the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions, publications on agriculture and biodiversity, land health, the Species Threat Abatement and Restoration (STAR) Metric, the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT), Protected Planet, the Restoration Barometer in support of IUCN's position.

For 16 of 23 (70%) of the Targets in the KMGBF, there is clear convergence between the Decision and IUCN's position covering the topics of spatial planning, protected and conserved areas, species conservation, sustainable use, invasive alien species, climate change and biodiversity, benefits from species and ecosystems, cities, working across sectors, business and financial institutions, subsidies, financial resources, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, gender and several elements of the monitoring framework for which IUCN provides indicators and data. For another four decisions, there is partial convergence, covering the topics of restoration, access and benefit sharing, capacity building and information availability. IUCN did not seem to have positions on pollution, sustainable consumption or biosafety.

In terms of uptake of IUCN standards and concepts, the concept of "nature-based solutions" (small capitals, referring to the concept, rather than the NbS Standard is present in Targets 8 and 11 on climate change and benefits from ecosystems, respectively. The concept of Key Biodiversity Areas and the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas is referenced in the monitoring framework, as are the Red List Standards (and indicators) relate to Species and Ecosystems in support of IUCN's position.

COP Decision 15.5 on the Monitoring Framework for the KMGBF approved ten Headline indicators, of which six currently exist and four are derived from IUCN knowledge products, processes and expertise. These include an indicator derived from the Red List of Ecosystems, an indicator on extent of natural ecosystems derived from the IUCN-CEM Global Ecosystem Typology, the Red List Index, the proportion of species with an effective population size of >500 and the coverage of protected areas and OECM

IDR focal point: Sonia Peña Moreno- Director of the International Policy Centre of the IUCN Secretariat



6 - Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)

Scope: To understand the extent to which the KBAs concept and Global Standard has been adopted, taken up or used in key policy processes, such as the CBD, the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species, at the national level, and in corporate policy, such as the International Finance Corporation (IFC) (Performance Standard 6) and the Equator Principles Financial Institutions (EPFIs), regional development banks and Biodiversity Coalition and more than 3500 corporations through the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT).

Within this large group of KBA users, we have looked at 3 global Conventions (CBD, the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species), 3 national governments (through their SDG planning and/or development of KBA National Coordinating Groups), 2 donors, and 3 IUCN projects. Only three projects were deemed suitable for the project desk review because some projects proposed for this review were not set up as traditional projects and lacked documentation. IUCN Secretariat project coverage of KBAs is limited compared with the much larger portfolio of projects on KBAs of the KBA Partners, most of whom are IUCN Members (which was beyond this scope).

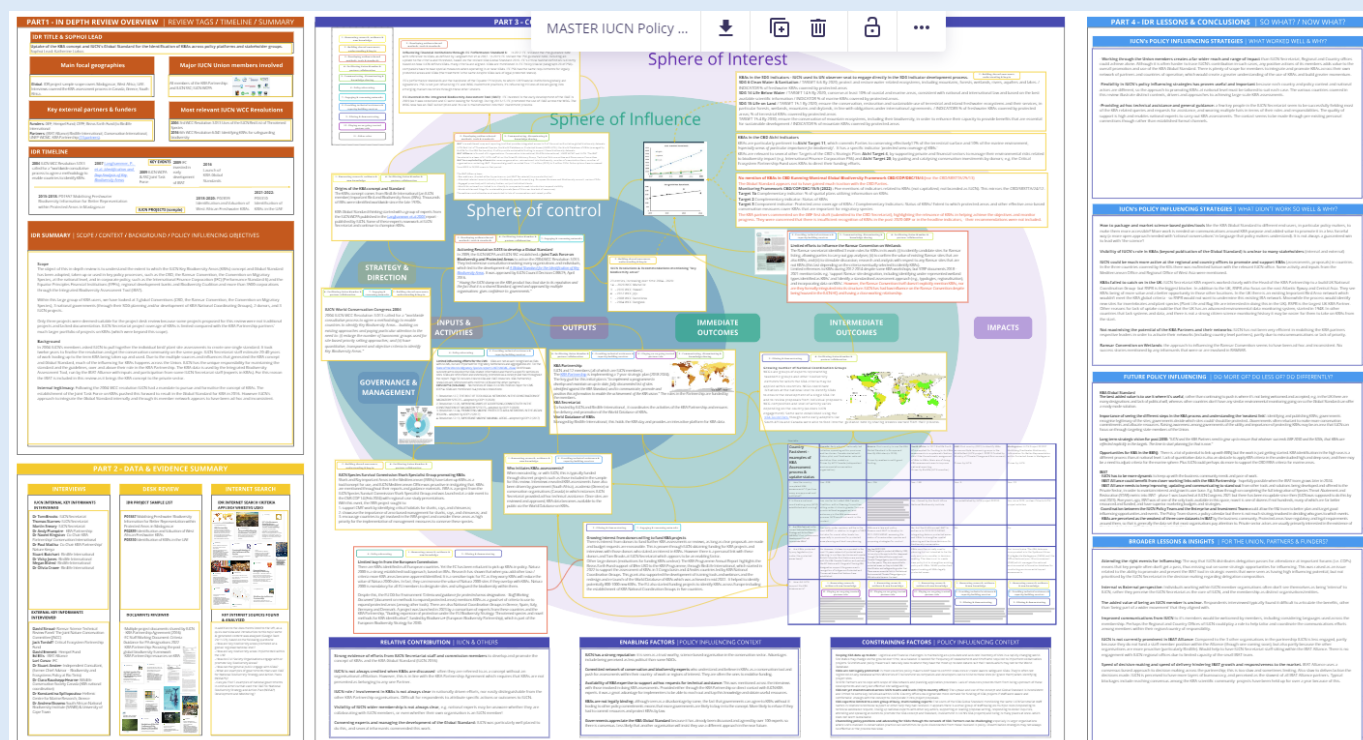
Context: In 2004 (at the WCC) IUCN Members asked IUCN to draw together approaches for identifying important sites for biodiversity (e.g. Important Bird Areas, Important Plant Areas) to create one single standard. It took twelve years and extensive consultation to finalise the Standard and achieve the collective buy-in of the conservation community. IUCN Secretariat staff described the 40 years of history leading up to the term KBA and concept of KBAs being widely taken up and used.

Policy influencing objectives: Following the 2004 WCC resolution 3.013 IUCN had a mandate to pursue and formalise the concept of KBAs. In 2009, the IUCN WCPA and IUCN SSC established a Joint Task Force on Biodiversity and Protected Areas. They led extensive consultation involving many IUCN Members, other organisations and individuals, which led to the development of *A Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas*. It was approved by IUCN Council Decision C/88/25, April 2016. However IUCN's approach to integrate the Global Standard within its Secretariat often appears to have been opportunistic and inconsistent., in contrast to the strength and consistency of its uptake through the IUCN Commissions

and Membership.

Summary of IUCN's policy influencing strategy & results: Due to the multiple sources and influences that generated the KBA concept and Global Standard, much of the influencing for KBAs happens across the Union. IUCN has the unique responsibility for maintaining the standard and the guidelines, (under the IUCN Species Survival Commission and World Commission on Protected Areas), as well as their role in the KBA Partnership and Secretariat. The KBA data is used by the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool, run by IUCN, BirdLife International and Conservation International (both IUCN Members) and UNEP_WCMC. For this reason the IBAT is included in this review as it brings the KBA concept to the private sector., as well as to governments through the IBAT Country Profiles.

IDR focal points: Tom Brooks- IUCN Chief Scientist, Thomas Starnes- Biodiversity Assessment Spatial Data Programme Officer at IUCN, Martin Sneyry- Head of Enterprise and Investment team, IUCN Secretariat



3. Sphere of control

Chapter 3 presents evaluation findings, based on a synthesis of the IDR and PDR evidence, of IUCN's policy influencing strategies and results within the Sphere of Control domain of the evaluation conceptual framework. This chapter covers findings related to IUCN's policy influencing strategy and direction, governance and management, inputs and activities, and outputs.

3.1 Strategy and direction

In this section we present findings about IUCN's policy influencing strategy (i.e. what it does) including:

- 3.1.1 The nature of IUCN's policy analysis
- 3.1.2 How IUCN frames its objectives
- 3.1.3 The spaces in which IUCN policy work takes place
- 3.1.4 The stakeholders IUCN engages with
- 3.1.5 IUCN's approach to engagement
- 3.1.6 The types of knowledge IUCN tends to generate and use in its policy work
- 3.1.7 How IUCN learns from and adapts its strategy
- 3.1.8 IUCN's work with networks and platforms
- 3.1.9 The duration of IUCN's engagement with policy

Collectively this section responds to the following evaluation questions from the original TOR: 1, 2a, 4, 6, 6a, 7, 12 and 14

3.1.1 - The nature of IUCN's policy analysis

Analysis of the context, key actors, their interests and incentives amongst other things can help inform thinking about one's strategy. IUCN has been good at documenting technical analysis of the gaps and opportunities for intervention, such as work done in IDR 2 in 2006/7 which set out who was doing what in the high seas, the relevant treaties and options for moving forward. However, it has been less good at documenting analysis of the policy context.

Broadly speaking across the 6 IDRs, policy analysis has tended to be done tacitly through conversation on an ad hoc basis. Some of this has been made explicit and documented in project proposals and reports for accountability purposes. In a few cases, this has been done in more systematic ways. In IDR 4, the European regional office set out its analysis of the agriculture policy context and plans to engage with it in a series of policy, strategy and planning documents produced between 2017 and 2023. And in IDR 5, staff in IUCN's International Policy Centre engaging with the Conference of Parties (CoP) for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) developed a map of key stakeholders for each sub-topic. Documenting analysis and plans enabled thinking to be shared and exposed to review and scrutiny and therefore to be improved.

3.1.2 - How IUCN frames its objectives

Effectively influencing policy and practice begins with understanding the problem, developing and framing an objective and building a compelling narrative. Our analysis shows that **problems and objectives pursued reflected the needs and priorities of IUCN Members through its WCC resolutions process** – a point we return to in the next section on governance - and **responded to broader conservation and development objectives**. On the latter, the evidence across IDRs is strong. For instance, in IDR 3 on promoting the uptake of forest landscape restoration, objectives were designed in line with the restoration progress objectives of the Bonn Challenge and subsequent UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-30.

IDR 2 shows how IUCN has also **contributed to ensuring new issues are put on the agenda** recognising, e.g. that existing institutional arrangements were not sufficiently effective to protect marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction and proposing that a new treaty be developed.

Keck and Sikkink (1998) highlight how objectives are framed can determine its institutional location as well as the receptivity of target audiences. **The findings suggest that the relative emphasis within problem definition, objectives and narratives on the conservation versus socio-economic dimension varies across IDRs, and sometimes evolves over time.** For instance in IDR 2, the problem was seen initially primarily as one where marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction was being threatened by human exploitation. This in turn required marine areas to be protected. The narrative developed and shared was one which put a face on the high seas. In IDR 5, the problem was framed as the loss of biodiversity, which needed to be reversed through e.g. protection, restoration of ecosystems and to conservation and sustainable use of species.

On the other hand, evidence from IDRs 1 and 3, environmental or nature-based solutions, such as forest landscape restoration (FLR) tools were framed as a means to an end, a way of addressing socio-economic problems, pollution and other national, regional and global challenges. Here the environment was seen as having instrumental rather than intrinsic value, responding to the perceived failure of REDD+ approaches.¹⁰ Further, IDR 4 highlights how environmental issues were arguably **reframed using an agricultural lens**, while in IDR 2, IUCN, toward the end of the negotiation process, **increased their commitment to putting a human face on the issue** by framing it as one affecting the future of pacific based small island developing states highlighting their people's reliance on the high seas.

3.1.3 - Scales at which IUCN policy work takes place

Much of IUCN's policy engagement work across the 6 policy objectives sampled for IDRs for this evaluation are in relation to international technical and legal agreements, negotiations, conventions and treaties. These include, for instance, UNFCCC, UNCCD, CBD (IDR 1), the negotiation of a new high seas treaty (IDR 2) the negotiation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (as called for through a CoP decision, which then landed in another CoP to be finalised and adopted) (IDR 5), the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Migratory Species amongst others (IDR 6). The sample also demonstrates that **IUCN also engages at regional level** (the EU in IDR 4 and Meso-America in IDR 3), **and at national level**, in e.g. Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica (IDR 3).

3.1.4 - The stakeholders IUCN engages with

As Keck and Sikkink (1998) describe (and remains true today), environmental and climate change related politics and policy involves not just states (which are themselves heterogeneous), but also many non-state actors. They in turn interact with each other, with states and with international organisations. Policy and practice is the result of an interweaving of the intentions and actions of all these actors in specific spaces and places shaped by politics and power, resulting in an 'entanglement'.

Influencing policy requires finding and engaging with individuals and collectives, especially the most influential, who are embedded in this entanglement using evidence they respond to best - a process which is demanding and labour intensive. **Across IDRs, IUCN has shown itself relatively adept at doing this**, helped by IUCN having strong pre-existing relationships and stakeholders often having IUCN Membership. For instance, in IDR 1, IUCN in its bid to have Nature-

¹⁰ REDD+ stands for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation plus conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

based Solutions taken up in global agreements engaged ‘champion’ countries including France, Costa Rica, Egypt, the EU, Japan, Kenya, Peru and the UK amongst others.

In IDR 2, Commission Members engaged a broad epistemic community comprising decision makers and experts, including government representatives who were influential and supportive of an ambitious treaty, and those who were influential but opposed the development of a new treaty and strategic Members of key country groups (such as Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean and the Pacific). In IDR 3, staff from IUCN’s ORMACC engaged with aligned Government Members - ministries and officials in small Mesoamerican countries - which have come to demonstrate global leadership in the landscape restoration arena. And in IDR 4, a well networked policy specialist was able to engage with a wide range of actors across the agricultural and environmental sectors.

3.1.5 - IUCN’s approach to engagement

Approaches to policy engagement can be broadly divided into ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ strategies and those which are technical and political. Insider approaches involved persuading decision makers through direct engagement with them and their influencers in meetings, phone or video calls and letters. This includes a strong focus on cultivating relationships and gaining access to decision making spaces and sharing knowledge and expertise. Outsider approaches involved putting pressure on decision makers in a more open and transparent way, using e.g. open letters, traditional/online as well as social media to demand change. Technical engagement focuses on scientific, legal or procedural details relevant to the subject under discussion while political engagement focuses on broader strategic, diplomatic and geopolitical considerations inherent in the negotiation process.

Much of IUCN’s policy work draws on insider and technical approaches. For instance in IDR 1, IUCN staff, members and commission members engaged in a continual process of soft diplomacy in engaging with negotiators and participants to global agreements. In IDR 2, in addition to following discussions at the UN using its observer status, Commission Members engaged key decision makers in private spaces around the margins of, and between, formal meetings in New York. IDR 2 also demonstrated how Commission Members supported negotiators to think through the practical implications of specific treaty text, answer questions and ensure negotiators stayed ‘on task’. And in IDR 3, ORMACC staff supported decision makers in policy planning processes through an on-going, informal and iterative capacity support process. Taking an insider approach hasn’t stopped IUCN from taking positions and being ambitious. For instance, in IDR 2, Commission Members pushed for a treaty, but did so by persuading and convincing.

During international negotiations, political engagement was just as important as technical engagement. This was demonstrated in IDR 2 when the Ocean team engaged heads of delegation of key nation states through private 1-2-1s and receptions to help alleviate bottlenecks. IUCN was thus able to exploit officials’ vulnerability to pressure due to their desire to be seen to adhere to particular norms and associated gaps between stated commitments and what was manifesting during the negotiations.

Across some IDRs we also see IUCN taking a somewhat outsider approach to its policy work. In IDR 2 for instance, the Ocean team made efforts to ensure the high seas treaty negotiation process, and IUCN’s involvement in it, was more visible, by engaging the media with the help of a communications strategy. However, translating the depth and breadth of the work being discussed by the IUCN delegation into succinct messages which could be digested by non-specialists was a challenge. In addition, IDR 4 describes how the IUCN European Regional Office (ERO) issued a public statement in support of the nature restoration law at a time when the law was facing the prospect of being shelved by the EU parliament. It is unclear whether these two examples are part of an emerging trend across IUCN and if so where pressures to do so stem from. If this is a trend, pressures may stem from IUCN HQ to secure more public

recognition and visibility for its work and achievements, which in turn may stem from pressures to secure continued funding.

3.1.6 - The types of knowledge IUCN tends to generate and use in its policy work

IUCN has traditionally engaged with decision makers and shapers to share knowledge and ensure policies and practices help ‘societies, economies and nature to thrive together’. But what types of knowledge has IUCN tended to share in its policy work? Datta et al (2016) identifies four broad types of knowledge used in policymaking: 1) administrative and statistical data; 2) research studies and expert advice; 3) stakeholder perspectives and 4) policy implementation experience.

Across the IDRs, much of the knowledge generated and shared by IUCN falls into the second category of research and expert advice. For instance, in IDR 2, IUCN shared expert advice on all four key elements of the draft high seas treaty: Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), 2) Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), 3) Marine Genetic Resources (MGRs) – a particularly niche area - and 4) Capacity Building and Transfer of Marine Technology (CBTMT).

Our IDRs also highlight the importance of policy implementation experience in IUCN’s policy work. For instance, in IDR 3, many of the IUCN projects in ORMACC provided results that both the ORMACC team and Country Office Reps used as evidence when approaching and supporting key policy makers. In IDR 2, a number of action research projects provided important knowledge inputs to treaty discussions and negotiations. These included projects in the Western Indian Ocean and the Sargasso Sea in the Atlantic Ocean. The projects illustrated 1) why the area of the high seas was important and 2) the challenges in implementing protection measures with current institutional arrangements. Material from these projects were presented in various off-site seminars and workshops hosted by IUCN, ensuring theoretical insights were practice-informed and were welcomed by participants.

In IDR 4, we see that knowledge produced to inform the European office’s work in the agricultural sector falls in the third category of stakeholder perspectives. This included a paper to unpack the discourse and terminology used by different stakeholder groups in the area of sustainable agriculture as well as the common ground that existed between the agricultural and conservation sectors.

3.1.7 - How IUCN plans, learns from, and adapts its strategy

IUCN’s policy work takes place in highly dynamic contexts where plans and strategies can get pulled apart by unintended consequences emphasising adaptation. Adapting one’s policy influencing work requires a combination of sensing shifts in the wider context (policy, politics, economics, environmental, social), monitoring the relationships and behaviours of diverse actors, weighing up different types of knowledge, being open to unexpected effects and making sense of data in collaborative enquiry.

Across the IDRs, we see that IUCN **has broadly taken a context specific and responsive approach to its policy work.** Collection, analysis and sense-making of relevant information has taken place in ad hoc, tacit ways through conversation and communication within core groups. For instance, in IDR 1 on promoting the uptake of NBS in global agreements, IUCN took an iterative approach using one event to prepare or introduce text for the next, collaborating with partners and forming coalitions as they saw necessary. In contrast IDR 3 illustrates how IUCN engaged in a particular context - with a set Mesoamerican states (Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador) who were broadly unified, interested in, and committed to advancing FLR policy in the region.

In IDR 2, **IUCN’s objectives varied over time as the situation evolved.** First, they aimed to make the case for a new treaty. Then they intended to inform discussions about key elements of a potential treaty. This was followed by supporting negotiators to reach agreement on the text of the treaty. Once the treaty text was nearing agreement,

attention broadened to include setting the foundation for successful implementation. In IDR 4, **we see the ERO being opportunistic**, responding to calls for evidence from the European Commission (EC) often in response to new legislation or revisions to existing pieces. For instance, the ERO responded to a call for evidence for the Soil Health Law Initiative in October 2022.

3.1.8 - IUCN's work with networks and platforms

As discussed above, policy is the result of an interweaving of action and interaction amongst a multitude of actors. Many of these interactions take place within formal as well as informal networks and across national borders. Some networks involve economic actors and firms, some feature scientists and experts whose professional ties and shared ideas underpin their efforts to influence policy, some are networks of activists and NGOs who are driven by ideas and values while others include all of the above.

The IDRs illustrate that IUCN is well embedded in this 'interweaving' - acknowledging that it cannot bring about change on its own. For instance, in IDR 6, IUCN is described as part of the IBAT-Alliance, also comprising Conservation International, Birdlife International and UNEP WCMC. The IBAT Secretariat is a team of 6, with IUCN staff sitting on the Scientific Advisory Group, Technical Sub-committee and Governance Committee. In IDR 2, IUCN Commission Members are described as having founded and/or are Members of several groups: the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI) and the Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative (DOSI) – both scientific networks; as well as the High Seas Alliance an advocacy network comprising 55 Members, mainly environmental NGOs (and IUCN) whose objectives were to campaign for improved high seas governance and conservation.

IDR 4 shows how IUCN's European regional office engages with stakeholders including policymakers routinely in a variety of platforms, spaces and places. These include being a strategic partner of the Forum for the Future of Agriculture (the forum); the host of the European Habitat Forum, a member of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform; and a member of the EU biodiversity platform set up in 2022 to provide advice to the Commission; amongst many others. The forum in particular is a fairly prominent space in the European agricultural sector, with IUCN making contributions to the forum's strategy and programme, acting as a sounding board, providing counsel on leadership activities and positions and exchanging knowledge and expertise.

Working in networks enabled IUCN and its collaborators to provide each other with mutually reinforcing support enabling them to more effectively deliver collectively on their policy goals. For instance, in IDR 2, IUCN's contributions to the High Seas Alliance (through its Commission Members) enabled its members to be better informed and its work (such as the high seas dialogues) to be of higher quality. IUCN also benefited from the HSA, especially its capacity to convene negotiators and other stakeholders, such as indigenous groups and to track negotiations. In some cases, the HSA and their Members could do what IUCN couldn't, even if it wanted to – e.g. to draw public attention through its media engagement and take a firmer position with negotiators about what they should or shouldn't do. But being part of a network made it **harder for IUCN to claim credit or public recognition for any changes that did emerge (in a context where IUCN may be under pressure to do so even if it is not a formal objective).**

Differences within the networks that IUCN operated in could put pressure on its actors and their relations with one another, requiring time and energy to find common ground. For instance, IDR 6 describes how the IBAT alliance took a consensus based approach to decision making, which resulted in decisions taking significant time to be made and acted on, hindering the alliance's growth and responsiveness to the market. Further, collective action which cajoled decision makers using outsider approaches, ran the risk of hurting the insider relationships IUCN had with the same decision makers. This was highlighted in IDR 2 when, towards the end of the negotiation process, with pressure mounting to finalise the text, the HSA's steering committee agreed to a 'name and shame' campaign. This was only

averted when the HSA's coordinator resigned in protest. Moreover, IDR 5 describes differences between IUCN and the Global Goal for Nature group, a coalition convened by WWF: they did not have the same views on the mission statement for the Global Biodiversity Framework but were part of their discussions and provided inputs. The group evolved to become the Nature Positive Initiative which IUCN is now a part of.

This picture is further complicated by the fact that IUCN is itself a network and Membership institution that includes in its Membership often the same states, government agencies and nongovernmental organisations that it engages with in its policy work – thus blurring the boundary between its internal and external worlds. **This made signing off on relatively 'hard' collective actions or policy positions very difficult and emphasised the importance of positions being agreed at the World Conservation Congress**. For instance, in IDR 4, when the forum produced a call to action in 2023 outlining seven commitments for a more resilient, sustainable food and agriculture system, IUCN were very supportive but said they couldn't sign it as if they did, they would have to go through a cumbersome (albeit important) internal consultation process. This meant that IUCN might remain quiet on particular positions so as not to upset its Members. We discuss the participation of IUCN's Members in providing legitimacy to IUCN's policy work, through its resolution process in the next section.

3.1.9 - The duration of IUCN's engagement with policy

Finally, our analysis illustrated that the time it takes for major policy change to occur across the IDRs, even when the evidence seems unequivocal, is long. Further, it can take a long time to identify the most important decision makers and then influence them enough to shift their beliefs and become motivated enough to take key decisions. And although windows of opportunity only last briefly, it can take a long term investment to wait for that moment to arise. For instance, the policy process described in IDR 1 on nature-based solutions covers 25 years, while the process to develop and adopt the high seas treaty in IDR 2 took more than 20 years. **Against this backdrop, IUCN has generally been able to play the long game, driven by members and commissions keeping issues on the 'boil' and driven by deployment of (short term) projects.** For instance, in IDR 2 IUCN ensured it was represented during all three phases of engagement through its Commission Members, who demonstrated resilience and determination to stay the course of a long and intensive process, requiring considerable energy.

3.2 Governance and management

In this section, we present findings about IUCN's governance and management (i.e. how IUCN organises itself in its policy work) including:

- 3.2.1 How IUCN generates legitimacy for its policy work through the resolutions process
- 3.2.2 Where does leadership for the policy work stem from
- 3.2.3 The nature of participation and consultation in IUCN's policy work
- 3.2.4 Management and support for IUCN's policy work and how it learns
- 3.2.5 How IUCN's policy work is funded and the effects of this
- 3.2.6 What motivates IUCN affiliates to do policy work
- 3.2.7 IUCN's collective identity

3.2.1 - How IUCN generates legitimacy for its policy work through the resolutions process

IUCN and its work draws its legitimacy from its diverse Membership. This comprises state and government agencies, subnational governments, national and international NGOs and indigenous peoples' organisations. IUCN Members guide the organisation's work by bringing motions to the Members' Assembly of the IUCN World Conservation

Congress (WCC) which are then voted on, and once adopted become Resolutions and Recommendations. Members also guide policy through the adoption of the four-year Programme and mandates of the Commissions. In theory this should guide IUCN's policy work.

Evidence from most IDRs illustrate how IUCN's policy work responds clearly to the needs of its Members. For instance, IDR 3 illustrated how ORMACC's capacity to inform, influence and implement Forest Landscape Restoration Policy in Meso-America stemmed from the early definition of relevant concepts by IUCN in the early 2000s and the subsequent WCC resolutions and recommendations on ecosystem-based adaptation (EBA). IDR 2 describes how IUCN Members had called for the protection of the High Seas in its resolutions from as early as 2000. Commission Members involved in the negotiations provided inputs to drafting resolutions, facilitated discussions and reported on their implementation at the quadrennial IUCN Congress. IDR 5 demonstrated that IUCN's policy objectives and approach during the CBD was guided by 22 resolutions passed at the Marseille World Conservation Congress.

However, the diversity of IUCN's Membership was both a strength and a challenge – where reaching an IUCN position could be a complicated exercise. Resolutions could have unintended consequences for Members, while there have often been Members who did not choose to vote for a motion – in both cases potentially creating 'bumps in the road' for those pursuing policy work and senior leadership. An example of the differences amongst IUCN Members was illustrated in IDR 5 where social justice and biodiversity conservation stakeholders had differing views on IUCN's approach to the CBD negotiations. The former favouring a bolder approach to making a case, and the latter preferring a more persuasive approach led by science. Nevertheless, IUCN Members could choose to take different policy positions but would not speak on behalf IUCN in doing so. In any case, IDR 2 suggested that **while Resolutions provided guidance, they left those doing the policy work with sufficient room for manoeuvre during negotiations.**

IDR 4 illustrates that there may be significant reasons to pursue policy work in a certain area, but without the necessary internal legitimacy to do so. This was the case with the ERO's work in sustainable agriculture after the arrival of a policy specialist in 2016. Although the majority of Members expressed an interest in working more programmatically in sustainable agriculture through the 2016 IUCN Congress in Hawaii, IUCN lacked a clear mandate to explicitly pursue policy work in this area. Although this did not prevent the ERO from e.g. facilitating stakeholder roundtables and generating new knowledge between 2017-20, it did mean it had to do so with a degree of caution, while motions were put forward and formal legitimacy was sought.

3.2.2 - Where does leadership for policy work stem from?

Policy work requires decisions to be made, initiative to be taken and efforts to be invested. In other words, **policy work requires leadership.** This part explores where leadership for IUCN's policy work tended to reside and the factors which shape its effectiveness. It is in three parts: i) the importance of core groups of people and individual policy entrepreneurs; ii) how people are recruited to such groups and their composition and, iii) who has influence within such groups.

i) The importance of core groups and policy entrepreneurs - The IDRs suggest that leadership for policy work tends to be located in a small group of committed individuals whose roles include a range of tasks, of which engaging/influencing policy is just one. IDRs 1, 2, 5 and 6, demonstrate how policy work tended to be guided by groups featuring a mix of Secretariat staff and/or Commission Members. For instance, IDR 1 shows how those involved in advancing nature-based solutions included staff from headquarters as well as Members of four Commissions: the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM), the Climate Crisis Commission (CCC), the World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL) and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). IDR 5 describes how IUCN's contributions to CBD meetings were involved Commission experts guided by staff from headquarters, while IDR 6

illustrates that thinking about advancing KBAs originated within the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and was taken forward by a group of biodiversity experts (and Members)..

In some cases, these groups were overwhelmed as they took on multiple roles in high pressure situations. For instance, in IDR 6 on the uptake of KBAs, a core group were responding to technical assistance requests, connecting national experts with other key actors, supporting or leading proposal writing, responding to donor inquiries, attending to speaking events to promote the KBA concept and involved in project delivery. They had to be in many places at once, which did not seem sustainable.

Core groups have often coalesced around a particular personality – a skilled and experienced individual who we might call a policy entrepreneur (Court and Maxwell, 2005), possessing both ‘hard’ technical skills and ‘soft’ influencing related skills. For instance, IDR 2 describes a Secretariat staff member who was present throughout the 2 decades plus long process to develop and adopt the high seas treaty and was responsible for IUCN’s strategy. She had knowledge of the treaty process and knew key negotiators/influencers. She was also able to mobilise resources – financial, information and social, had good awareness of political opportunities when they arose and effectively shaped IUCN’s policy influencing strategy.

Moreover, IDR 4 describes how the Head of Programme and Policy, who was recruited to the IUCN ERO as its first policy specialist. He had considerable experience with WWF, facilitated the European Habitat Forum (EHF) and was well connected within the Brussels policy arena. He was a good storyteller able to persuade and socialise, a networker, embedding himself within a community of policymakers, experts and NGO practitioners, a fixer: able to understand the policy and political process, knowing when to make a pitch and to whom/how and an engineer; able to package IUCN’s work into discrete projects and have them funded (requiring fundraising capacities). His arrival provided the Europe office with a sense of direction in the policy sphere.

ii) Recruitment to and composition of core groups - Policy entrepreneurs tended to take a selective approach to ‘recruiting’ people into a group. For instance, in IDR 2, in the absence of a database from which experts could be systematically selected and invited, experts were brought into the group based on a combination of personal connections (nurtured through Membership perhaps in other groups), their skills and expertise, interest in the topic, the roles required and capacity to have their time paid for. They then applied for, and secured, IUCN affiliation if they lacked it. There is often a lack of transparency around who is ‘recruited’ to a core group, which can create tensions especially amongst those who are not selected.

IDR 4 on the other hand shows how the successive ‘policy entrepreneurs’ have grown policy teams (groups of policy officers) paid for through donor funded projects and recruited through open calls. For instance in the mid 2010s ERO was able to grow a team of individuals with policy related roles including communications and Membership engagement, while more recently the policy lead grew a policy team which came to feature a total of five relatively junior staff.

Ensuring policy ‘teams’ feature a range of perspectives, experiences and approaches can help policy work be more creative, effective and joined up. This might mean ensuring representation in terms of technical speciality, institutional affiliation as well as identity (gender, race or ethnicity, nationality, age, socio-economic backgrounds, amongst others).

On technical speciality, IDR 1 demonstrated effective **interdisciplinarity** amongst IUCN experts – drawing together knowledge from ecological, biological, social and economic fields in the development of the NbS concept. Further, IDR 3 involved policy specialists, economists and agronomists. On the other hand IDRs provided evidence where key actors could have played more of a role in IUCN’s policy work. For instance, IDR 6 (which explored the uptake of the KBA

concept) illustrated how key IUCN specialists were denied access to key influential events where they could promote the IBAT tool. In addition, IDR 2 described how experts which represented human and economic interests (including the CEM Fisheries Expert Group played a limited role in discussions. It's unclear what effect this had on IUCN's strategy, but their involvement may have influenced the framing of its objective as well as approach, even if IUCN's engagement was consistent with resolutions adopted by Members.

Regarding institutional affiliation, IUCN, especially within its Secretariat is made up of different units holding different information which may all have a role to play in IUCN's policy work. It is therefore important that they work together where relevant. For instance, IDR 6 describes how improved coordination between the IUCN policy team (which curates a policy calendar) and Enterprise and Investment Team, would have allowed the latter to better identify and target events and opportunities to promote the uptake of KBAs.

Regarding identity, IDRs 2 and 3 demonstrate the **prominent role women** played in leadership. Two female Commission Members and later the Oceans team director played an important role during the Inter-governmental conference sessions during phase 3 in IDR 2, while in IDR 3, three senior female ORMACC team members were seen as inspirational leaders within ORMACC helping to promote the uptake of FLR tools across Meso America.

Nevertheless, **policy influencers, especially with regard to international negotiations tended to be white and located in the Global North.** This was the case in IDR 2. This is likely due to a relative abundance of relevant expertise in the Global North, their proximity to UN HQ (especially those residing in the US), knowledge of UN processes as well as access to funding. Nevertheless during the latter stages of the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) phase in IDR 2, a legal expert from IUCN's regional office in Fiji and a youth delegate were added by the Oceans team to the IUCN delegation. The inclusion of the former enhanced the legitimacy of the IUCN delegation especially in the minds of Global South based negotiators and brought in new insight.

In addition, IDR 2 illustrated that **working in a delegation on international negotiations was no easy task.** Experts with different disciplinary backgrounds, specialisms and identity characteristics required time and several meetings to get to know and trust each other and learn to embrace and respect their differences. **Meeting frequently over time also helped to foster and strengthen a shared identity and a more helpful working culture.**

iii) Control and influence - Policy teams often comprise people located in different parts of the Union – Commissions, the Secretariat (headquarters and regions) and Members. Operating successfully, and adhering to IUCN's one programme charter meant finding the right balance between the degree of control headquarters needs to retain and the autonomy required by those doing the work (especially regional offices and Commission Members) so they could manoeuvre successfully and put their ideas into action in complex and dynamic contexts.

Senior leaders can and have played an important role in shaping and enhancing IUCN's policy work. This includes representing IUCN at high level meetings, cultivating and strengthening relationships with key actors, mobilising resources and fostering team development and growth by e.g. distributing leadership and building capabilities. A number of examples highlight this. IDR 1 illustrated how IUCN's president, was UN Climate Change High Level Champion for COP28, giving the organisation considerable visibility.

IDR 2 illustrated how a new director in the Ocean team took several measures to support the work of the delegation working on the high seas treaty. This included providing the delegation with more management support; paying for (some of) the time and expenses of (some) Commission Members; facilitating the participation of an IUCN Oceania regional team member and a youth delegate; communicating key messages internally within IUCN and externally through webinars and media engagement; putting political pressure on negotiating teams; and maintaining visibility

and pressure in the inter-sessional period between IGC 3 and 4. **However, leaders can only be helpful and supportive, if they are supported by their team members.**

IDR 2 highlighted the nature of interaction and influence between headquarters and Commission Members, with key informants suggesting that participation of the Environmental Law Centre likely ensured that IUCN's positions were 'softer' than they would have been in their absence. It also **illustrated the difficulty that can arise when 'ways of working' are not formally negotiated amongst Commission Members and headquarters staff** (at least initially after a leadership transition within the Ocean team).

IDR 4 highlighted the implications on policy work that was more centralised. Within the ERO, management of relationships with external stakeholders as well as key decisions on how to engage with policy lay with the policy lead. Their decisions (e.g. around issuing letters and statements) were usually made in consultation with more senior leaders such as the director of IUCN Europe and those within headquarters. The policy lead's sense of how and when to take action was generally trusted, even though this was not always clear to others in the policy team. IUCN's internal hierarchy was seen as key to ensuring IUCN's policy work served the interests of its Members. **But concerns arose about the professional development of more junior staff and the sustainability of IUCN's policy work.**

3.2.3 - The nature of participation and consultation in IUCN's policy work

Although IUCN promotes participation especially of its Membership in shaping its policy priorities, through its resolutions process, there is still room to consult on how it delivers on its priorities. Promoting consultation and participation can often be the right thing to do (a normative perspective), can often help to achieve particular ends (instrumental) and can often lead to better approaches (substantive). In this section we share findings of how and how well IUCN promotes consultation and participation in its policy work and some of its implications.

Our findings show a variety of ways in which IUCN consults internally and externally on its policy work. In IDR 1, IUCN consulted both internally and externally. Internally, it engaged Commissions, Secretariat HQ, regional country teams and Council. Externally it undertook a public consultation in three languages covering national government, city and local governments, planners, businesses, donors, financial institutions including development banks and non-profit organisations, as well as of indigenous peoples' organisations and faith organisations. In IDR 3, ORMACC in promoting the uptake of FLR, engaged a range of stakeholders including HQ, government decision makers, NGOs, conservation activists and community based organisations. This was facilitated by IUCN's governance structure, where many of its external stakeholders were also IUCN Members.

And in IDR 4, the ERO established an EU policy advisory group (EUPAG) in 2016 comprising IUCN councillors, Commission Members, chairs of national committees, as well as representatives from governments, NGOs and other organisations. They were often consulted for advice and informed strategy (through there are discussions on how to enhance its role beyond an advisory function to become more proactive and engaged in shaping policy directions).

IUCN actors intending to publish formal policy pronouncements require approval from senior management. For instance, in IDR 4, a draft response to the EU biodiversity strategy was sent out to IUCN's chief scientist and his team, relevant teams within the Secretariat and shared with Members of key Commissions, such as the WCPA.

IUCN involves stakeholders in the generation and sharing of knowledge and expertise. For instance, IDR 4 illustrates how in compiling publications, IUCN engaged with a wide range of stakeholders from the private sector, environmental organisations and academia to first collect data, shape the report's structure and then share the findings. In collecting data for its paper on approaches to sustainable agriculture, IUCN invited students from Wageningen University to explore the nexus between sustainable agriculture and Nature based solutions and involved representatives from

farmers and the fertilizer industry. On sharing findings, the same paper was presented in a number of key spaces including the European Parliament Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development during a public hearing, and at IUCN's World Conservation Congress in Marseille. IUCN intended to share findings during a narrow window during which policymakers might make changes to the CAP for the following cycle.

A number of factors made effective consulting somewhat challenging. For instance Commission Members leading policy work weren't always aware of how they might mobilise the Membership whilst finding resources to promote participation was often challenging. Further, Commission Members (not providing leadership) weren't always in a position to provide expert opinion on a timely basis, given their multiple priorities.

Finally, **the need to consult within and across IUCN has meant it has not always been able to fully exploit policy windows and respond on a timely basis** while its diverse Membership has meant their capacity to form hard positions, which all of their stakeholders can support, is bureaucratically cumbersome. For instance, IDR 6 describes how IUCN is perceived as the slowest of all IBAT Alliance partners, due to its bureaucracy which has held up projects for long periods of time. But as a Union which values science informed advice, that's often an accepted "part of the game".

3.2.4 - Management and support for IUCN's policy work and how it learns

For policy work to be delivered effectively, it needs to be well managed and supported - functions which need to be valued. This should also help participants learn from their experience so they can improve the quality of their work. Evidence of this stems mainly from IUCN's participation in international negotiations through relatively large delegations which presents a mixed picture.

IDR 2 illustrated how management support to Commission Members changed during the negotiation process. For example, during phase 1 and 2 coordination amongst Commission Members and the IUCN delegation was fluid and informal with administrative demands made of them limited. This was welcomed given their time wasn't being paid for by IUCN. Further, Commission Members mobilised some support (either through headquarters or themselves) on an ad hoc basis to e.g. organise off-site workshops.

Once IGC sessions started, a long serving member of the Ocean Team provided part time organisational support to the delegation. This included organising briefings/position papers, putting together knowledge products, organising webinars, amongst other things. The then deputy director of the Oceans team provided facilitation support during off-site workshops on ABMTs in Gland. After the leadership transition within the Ocean team, organisational support was ramped up, with another staff member brought into to support the IUCN delegation. During the IGC phase, management was formalised with more demands made of Commission Members. This was welcomed by many given the expansion of the IUCN delegation and wide ranging and complex nature of discussions.

Although pre meeting briefs set out some objectives and approaches, **a lot of the 'strategy' manifested in day to day process of communication and conversation**, the back and forth of emails, WhatsApp messages, video meetings, in person 1-2-1s and small group meetings in addition to the formal meetings in New York. It was labour intensive, messy and required purpose and skill to work one's way through it all. The same can be said of the work described in IDR 5.

IUCN Secretariat capacity also facilitated communication with other delegations, by, for instance, ensuring hard and soft copy briefings were shared widely and interview requests from the media were handled. Despite work to communicate IUCN's work externally, supported by central communications, they lacked a communication specialist to help the Oceans team translate the work being done by experts into short succinct and cogent messages for non-specialists.

Learning tends to happen on an ongoing informal basis between individuals and close colleagues. However, learning can be more effective when it is deliberate, happens through structured processes and involves conversation in small groups. **There is limited evidence of IUCN actors taking time to formally learn from and reflect on their work together.** Although IDR 5 describes IUCN producing an after action report¹¹ detailing its engagement at CoP meetings, it is unclear whether this was the result of a discussion amongst those leading IUCN's policy work or was socialised with them afterwards.

3.2.5 - How IUCN's policy work is funded and its effects

Policy work requires funding to cover the costs of activities and outputs that are required and to compensate those involved for the time they spend. **In some cases, policy influencers have benefited from a share of IUCN's unrestricted or core funding.** For instance IDR 1 describes how consultation around and subsequent development of an NbS standard was funded as part of AFD's 4 year core funding cycle to IUCN, while IDR 4 highlights how the ERO's policy lead is fully funded by core funds. However, IUCN's core or unrestricted funding is limited, while competing needs make its allocation far from straightforward. Increases in core funding would require 'taxing' project income, which is likely to elicit reactions from across the Union. **Donor funded projects are therefore an important vehicle through which to fund policy work.**

Some policy influencers have been able to mobilise project funding in support of a policy influencing strategy or at least elements of it. For instance, IDR 2, shows how Commission Members together with staff from headquarters were able to mobilise funding from philanthropists (including Rockefeller, JM Kaplan Fund, The Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund and the Anthropocene Foundation) and institutional donors (including the governments of Norway, Netherlands, Germany, France, Sweden and the EU) to fund staff time as well as participation of stakeholders in a series of workshops and seminars over many years. Meanwhile, IDR 3 shows how ORMACC mobilised funding from state agencies in Germany, Norway, UK, the US, and the Argidius Foundation in Switzerland in support of a coherent FLR policy influencing strategy over a period of time. This was despite a fragmented funding landscape.

However, where funding has been available some IUCN actors have not had the capacity to mobilise it effectively. For instance, data collection for IDR 6 brought to light that the East Africa regional team did not necessarily have the confidence and skills to approach and negotiate funding with donors (who were mostly European) instead relying on IUCN Secretariat experts (also European) to lead the discussion and proposal development process. This suggests an assumption where the EA office assumed a dependency on the Secretariat - a dynamic that was co-created.

Donors were often reluctant to fund influencing or policy work unless it benefited them directly. In many cases, policy work had to be combined with other components such as field/conservation action, capacity building and scaling up initiatives at regional level. In some cases, **competition for funding has increased.** For instance, IDR 4 describes how historically, much of ERO's funding came through projects commissioned by the EC. IUCN would win four out of five (small to medium sized) projects they competed for. But this declined to one or two out of every five. Key informants suggested the 'field' of organisations within the environmental sector had expanded while proposal assessment processes were increasingly being weighted in favour of cost over quality..

Different funders and types of project offered different levels of flexibility. For instance, IDR 4 describes how projects secured by ERO could be grouped into two categories. The first were those which were in response to a call and were highly structured with little scope for creativity and adaptation. This included the evaluation of the EU biodiversity

¹¹ This is a detailed critical summary or analysis of a past event made for the purposes of re-assessing decisions and considering possible alternatives for future reference

strategy to 2020, an impact assessment of the nature restoration law and a project to establish an observatory to identify key threats to food security in Europe with special regards to risks posed by climate change and biodiversity loss. In these projects, IUCN secretariat were often part of consortia led by specialist consultancy firms or academic institutions. The second category were projects where IUCN were in the driving seat and had significant freedom in its design. Projects of this sort included two successive projects to promote sustainable agriculture funded by the Dutch government (2018-21 and 2021-24) featuring a series of roundtables and publications.

As discussed elsewhere, **mobilising funding within this context required skills and experience to identify and exploit opportunities within various structures while keeping in sight key policy objectives, suggesting an entrepreneurial mindset.** Personal connections with funders were key while senior managers were on occasion able to use their ties with their home country government to access funding. For instance, in IDR 2, successive Swedish Ocean team directors were able to access funding from Swedish government agencies for high seas treaty related policy work.

Nevertheless, the search for funding carries with it a number of risks and has had a number of unintended consequences. For instance, IDR 1 illustrates how IUCN's intentions to generate revenue from the NbS standard through certification enabled entities to game the process and 'greenwash'. Moreover, key informants in IDR 4 described a trend towards **becoming a consultancy firm**, uncritically seeking a constant stream of projects, rather than maintaining a focus on high quality policy work - which could affect its credibility in the longer term.

Securing a constant stream of funding meant investing in relationships (with funders and collaborators), writing proposals, producing deliverables (which weren't always directly in line with policy goals) and satisfying administrative requirements. **This had the potential to take IUCN away from strategic issues and ways of working and fragment its policy work.** For instance, IDR 4 illustrated how any ad hoc, strategic demand oriented work (such as responding to opposition to the nature restoration law) had to take place in between/in the margins of less strategic paid project work, which could leave the policy team somewhat stretched, especially during key policy windows. Further, projects risked encouraging policy influencing interventions over shorter time horizons in a context where change could take decades to bring about.

Funding might come from donors or other parties who were also participants in an influencing or negotiation process, creating conflicts which had to be managed. This was described in IDR 2, where IUCN actors were funded by governments as well as a civil society coalition, the High Seas Alliance. When a state, in particular, provided funding to IUCN to inform their views on a topic, this presented a huge opportunity to inform not only that State but also their regional group, while there weren't always other sources of funding.

The absence of funding meant people worked voluntarily and/or potentially influential activities didn't happen. On the latter, IDR 2 highlighted how a matrix of suggestions for a marine biodiversity agreement was done voluntarily while 1 IUCN Secretariat staff made their own arrangements in attending IGC sessions. The absence of funding also meant fewer IUCN led off-site meetings around the fringes of formal UN meetings during the IGC process to bring together experts and governments.

Finally, we find across IDRs that Commission Members undertook significant amounts of unfunded work. The Commission's voluntary contributions are worth far more than the funding allocated to them by IUCN. Indeed, the Commissions have operated and been recognised as voluntary associations of scientific peers. However, **the majority of Commission members have been able to merge their work on Commissions into their salaried positions at academic and other institutions** (IUCN, 1999). But this possibility is usually more open to Members in the Global North

than it is to those in the South, which as we have highlighted earlier creates disparities in who can and can't participate in IUCN's policy work.

3.2.6 - What motivates IUCN affiliates to do policy work?

Good policy work requires skilled and motivated personnel who are retained for the long term and have opportunities to learn and improve. This section describes (limited) evidence from the IDRs about the extent to which IUCN actors are sufficiently motivated and the factors which might shape this.

IDR 4, describes how, although the ERO team was able to develop a 5 strong team of policy specialists, at the time of writing, most of them had left. Although their reasons for leaving were not directly linked to the work or IUCN, news of their departures resonated with a broader trend within the ERO of high staff turnover over the last decade or so, which had hurt its capacity to engage with policy on a sustained basis. Organisational restructures, departure of key leaders, the loss of funding together with limited autonomy might go some way to explaining longer term staff turnover.

Moreover, the environmental sector has grown to incorporate consultancies, NGOs, industry groups amongst others, giving staff more choice in the job market. IUCN's inability to be more dynamic in the policy arena might also be a cause, while Brussels is generally a transitional place especially amongst younger people, who are frequently looking to 'move on and up'. This suggested the ERO (and IUCN more generally) **needed to consider how they retain staff, which involved having an understanding of what motivates policy specialists, how they learn and what can be done to manage their workload effectively.**

As we say above, Commissions have been recognised formally as voluntary associations of scientific peers but Commission members have often managed to merge their work on Commissions into their salaried positions at academic and other institutions. In addition to a desire to conserve and protect nature, **Members are motivated by the acquisition of knowledge in their specific fields of interest.** Access to policy processes was often key while so too was academic credit. This might take the form of being acknowledged in papers, securing authorship of papers and being asked to provide oral testimony at key meetings.

However, this often left the Secretariat in a bind, as they couldn't attribute IUCN material to certain individuals, especially during formal negotiation processes (even if attribution was not a formal policy goal). They instead found moments and means to give individuals credit through e.g. including a university's logo during a webinar and providing public recognition using social media. **Ownership of intellectual property could be crucial for some too.** IDR 2, for instance, describes how signing away ownership of intellectual property was a challenge for some academics when being contracted by headquarters.

3.2.7 - IUCN's collective identity

A robust collective identity can help IUCN foster a shared purpose, promote collaboration, instil a sense of belonging as well as a culture of learning. **IUCN's complex and expansive governance structure created challenges for IUCN in creating a 'we' identity.** For instance, IDR 6 illustrated how KBA partnership member organisations did not see the benefits of Membership and did not see themselves as being part of IUCN. IDRs 4 and 6 described the limited formal engagement between the Secretariat (especially regional offices) and Membership, which could be remedied through improved communication (requiring funding).

Finally, Commissions have their own distinct branding, protocols and networks, while Commission members often had multiple identities in addition to representing their Commission. These included that of their academic institution, or another party which may have provided them with funding. It wasn't easy to know whether Commission

Members were talking on behalf of IUCN or not. In some cases, they could choose not to talk on behalf of IUCN if e.g. they were taking an ambitious position in a negotiation. But this wasn't always made explicit. **This complicated picture made working across the Union in pursuit of shared objectives somewhat challenging.**

3.3 Activities and outputs

Section 3.3 synthesises the findings on the implementation of IUCN's work within the sphere of control – activities and outputs both in projects and across Commission and core-funded activities – across the six IDRs to show some clear patterns in IUCN's work. The data in Miro for each IDR has been analysed and clustered into seven categories. Each area of activities tended to generate a number of outputs. The sum total of activities and outputs reveals that IUCN tends to support similar activities and generate similar outputs across the six topics of the IDRs. The following analysis is non-exhaustive; it was simply beyond the scope of this evaluation to account for all activities and all outputs generated by IUCN policy influencing activities. **Table 3** below summarises the data drawn from the Miro board for each IDR. [MASTER IUCN Policy Influence Evaluation EXTERNAL - Miro](#)

The table shows that IUCN's policy influencing activities and outputs are clustered around seven areas, which are then summarised in turn:

- 3.3.1 The World Conservation Congress Motions and Resolutions, in which the Members set the general policy direction of IUCN.
- 3.3.2 Knowledge generation, including standards, tools, data and indicators and scientific publications that underpin IUCN's policy work.
- 3.3.3 Participation in alliances, partnerships and supporting Members.
- 3.3.4 Consultation and position setting, knowledge sharing, informing.
- 3.3.5 Participation in formal negotiations and other policy meetings, including UNCBD, UNEA, UNCCD, UNFCCC and others.
- 3.3.6 Projects and field demonstrations, which can resource IUCN's policy work, support knowledge generation, policy implementation, support convening and dialogues and demonstrate conservation techniques.
- 3.3.7 Providing secretariat and governance services, including regional centres of excellence and governance mechanisms for IUCN standards such as the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Table 3: Activities and Outputs identified across the IDRs

Activity	IDR1 Outputs	IDR2 Outputs	IDR3 Outputs	IDR4 Outputs	IDR5 Outputs	IDR6 Outputs
1 - WCC Motions and Resolutions process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolutions related to NbS definition and uptake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolutions on marine biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolutions on restoration, including Bonn Challenge and UN Decade on Restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolutions on agriculture and land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple resolutions; from the Marseille Congress (22); one particular Resolution (RES116) providing general guidance on the development and also implementation of the GBF when adopted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolutions related to the Red List of Threatened Species and KBAs
2 - Knowledge generation – what is most influential and strategic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NbS Standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and legal analysis Science generated from projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates for ROAM standard ROAM assessments Restoration Barometer assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards, tools, indicators and data, assessments, scientific papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KBA standard KBA database IBAT database Scientific papers
3 - Participation in alliances and partnerships, supporting Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships around EbA, FLR and eco-DRR ENACT partnership Nature-based Solutions Hub for Asia and the Pacific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Seas Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Partnership for Forest Landscape Restoration National Forest Landscape Restoration National Roundtable Central American Commission of Environment and Development (CCAD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EUPAG EU policy advisory group (EUPAG), set up in 2016 and made up of IUCN councillors, commission members, chairs of national committees, as well as representatives from governments, NGOs and other organisations ECO-READY: where IUCN is part of a consortium of 16 organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various, including the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, and those under IDR1, IDR3 and IDR6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KBA partnership IBAT partnerships

4 - Consultations and position setting, knowledge sharing, informing, capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positions related to UNEA, UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD • Public consultations • Webinars • Communications pieces • NbS Certification course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing workshops • Positions related to BBNJ negotiations • Commentary on specific parts of the treat • Webinars • Communication pieces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roundtables, i.e., El Salvador: intersectoral high level roundtable at national level (Gabinete de Sostenibilidad) led by the Min. of Environment workshops • Public statements in open letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positions and publications related to sustainable agriculture, restoration • Roundtables • Public consultations (EU hosted) • Provision of scientific knowledge to DG-ENV and Forum for Future of Agriculture • Communication pieces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positions and information papers related to almost all KMGBF targets • Capacity building related to RLS, RLE, NbS, KBA, IBAT, etc. • Side events and pavilions • Webinars • Communications pieces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positions related to UNFCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD • Webinars • Communication pieces
5 - Participation in formal negotiations and other policy meetings (UNCBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD, UNEA and others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position and information papers, commenting on specific negotiating points • Side-events and pavilions • Sensitization events • Bilateral meetings • Participation in high-level events • Documented results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in BBNJ negotiations (not as a Party, but as a trusted partner) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy planning for restoration • PROBOSQUE regulation (Guatemala) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the European Habitat Forum, the Forum for the Future of Agriculture, the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform and the EU Biodiversity Platform which provide inputs into EC policy making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position and information papers, , commenting on specific negotiating points • Side-events and pavilions • Sensitization events • Bilateral meetings • Participation in high-level events • Documented results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position and information papers, commenting on specific negotiating points • Side-events and pavilions • Sensitization events • Bilateral meetings • Participation in high-level events • Documented results

6 - Projects and field demonstration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AfD and SIDA supported NbS Standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science generated from projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project demonstration a key part of influencing uptake of restoration approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects that enabled IUCN's work and publications on agriculture Review of EU's Biodiversity Strategy, Impact assessment of the nature restoration law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIODEV demonstrated how to secure voluntary commitments across sectors based on multi-stakeholder dialogues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data generated from KBA assessment projects and published via the KBW World Database. Projects reviewed in the PDR
7 - Secretariat and governance services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Standard Committee for NbS governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ORMACC implemented project portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asia Protected Areas Network Proposed KMGBF Centres of Excellence Governance mechanisms for Red List of Species, Ecosystems, Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KBA Secretariat IBAT Secretariat

3.3.1 - The World Conservation Congress and the Motions and Resolutions Process

IUCN formally receives its policy influencing mandate from the Membership at the World Conservation Congress through the Motions and Resolutions process, and through adoption of the IUCN Programme and Commission Mandates. Motions, once voted in by the Membership become Resolutions which give guidance to IUCN on policy directions and the work that is expected of IUCN in the intersessional period, along with the Programme.. All six IDRs were supported by Member-adopted Resolutions. For IUCN’s position on the CBD Post-2020 negotiations, Resolution 116 summarised the Members’ views, including the “Nature-positive” message and was supported by 20+ and many other Resolutions articulating the Members’ views on aspects that shaped IUCN’s position. In some cases, the supporting Resolution was simple: “support the UN Decade on Restoration” or “develop the definition and standard for Nature-based Solutions,” however, these nevertheless gave clear mandate to IUCN – the Secretariat and Commissions – from the Members.

3.3.2 - Knowledge generation activities

The quality of IUCN knowledge is widely praised as essential, timely and useful for decision-makers. IUCN generates a wealth of knowledge – standards, tools, assessments, indicators and data and scientific publications – across all six IDRs. Some of the most notable outputs produced by knowledge generation activities include the IUCN Standard for Nature Based Solutions (IDR1); new knowledge, information and legal analyses on high seas and marine protected areas (IDR2); updates to the Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology, national and sub-national ROAM assessments and Restoration Barometer assessments in Central America (IDR3); information papers and new science on agriculture and biodiversity (IDR4); data, science and assessments related to most Targets of the KMGBF as an input to the CBD negotiation processes as well as inputs into the IPBES and Global Biodiversity Outlook assessments (IDR5); and the Key Biodiversity Areas Standard, tools, data and science on KBAs and the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool and database (IDR6). For example, in the context of the development of the KBA Standard, IUCN led a vast consultation process to build support and trust for the Standard, making it more likely to “stand the test of time” and have wider buy-in from a wide range of experts and organisations.

3.3.3 - Participation in alliances and partnerships; support to the IUCN Membership

As IUCN is essentially a large network itself, activities undertaken with and in support of Members represent a substantial area of work and are present in all six IDRs. Some specific examples of IUCN’s work in networks includes participation in partnerships around Ecosystem-based Adaptation, Forest Landscape Restoration and Eco-Disaster Risk Reduction (IDR1), the High Seas Alliance (IDR2), national level forest landscape restoration roundtables in Central American countries and the Central American Commission of Environment and Development arm of the Central American Integration System (IDR3), the EU Policy Advisory Group, (IDR4) various alliances including the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (IDR5) and the KBA and IBAT partnerships (IDR6).

3.3.4 - Consultations, position setting, knowledge sharing, informing and capacity building activities

At the heart of IUCN’s influence in formal negotiations is a series of activities which result in a shared IUCN position. Knowledge sharing, communicating, informing, persuading, consulting and capacity building are tools used by IUCN delegations (Secretariat and Commissions) to sensitise and persuade Members and Parties to align to IUCN’s position. All six IDRs are supported by an extensive number of activities in this area. In terms of outputs, IUCN generated positions related to UNEA, UNFCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD (IDRs 1, 5, 6),) undertook public consultations and roundtables (IDRs1 and 4), produced communications pieces and press releases (all IDRs), conducted webinars to share knowledge (IDRs 1, 2, 5 and 6), supported capacity building related to the IUCN Red List of Species, the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems, the IUCN Standard for Nature-based Solutions, the Key Biodiversity Areas Standard and the Integrated Biodiversity

Assessment Tool (IDRs 1, 5 and 6). IUCN **organised workshops** in collaboration with other institutions, bringing together scientists and legal experts to **advance knowledge about protected areas and the BBNJ process**, which resulted in several publications including a series on gaps and options. This in turn informed the EU's strategy to advance short, medium and long term measures to protect the high seas. IUCN's work on preparing stakeholders for roundtables on sustainable agriculture in Europe showcased the IUCN Secretariat's ability to convene discussion spaces that were considered to be "safe" by both environmental and agriculture stakeholders, facilitating discussion around a contentious issue.

3.3.5 - Participation in formal negotiations and other policy meetings

IUCN's observer status, both as IGO and as UN Observer, confer some privileges in formal negotiations and at the UN General Assembly, such as being able to intervene and provide information more easily than NGOs or civil society.

At policy meetings themselves, such as the CBD Conference of the Parties meetings, IUCN shared knowledge and positions via officially sanctioned side events and through pavilions or information booths (IDRs 1, 2, 5, and 6), as well as through direct correspondence with governments, and IUCN Members). IUCN's delegation, composed of the Secretariat, Commissions, and at times Councillors, also routinely worked bilaterally with Parties and Members to sensitise them to IUCN's positions and clarify any concerns (IDRs 1, 2, 5 and 6). IUCN often participated in high-level events with Ministers and other high-level negotiators (IDRs 1, 5 and 6). A key output of IUCN's participation in these meetings was the "after action" reports, which provided rich detail on how IUCN deployed itself, the results of the negotiations themselves, IUCN's analysis of success or not and next steps for IUCN (IDRs 1, 5 and 6). In the ORMACC IDR, it was clear that IUCN supported key policy outputs such as national and sub-national restoration plans and formulation of law and regulations, such as PROBOSQUE in Guatemala (IDR3). In Europe, IUCN participated in a number of forums, including the European Habitat Forum, the Forum for the Future of Agriculture, the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform and the EU Biodiversity Platform, which in turn, provided inputs into EC policy making (IDR4).

3.3.6 - Projects and field demonstrations

Project restricted funding does include some useful examples of how projects can support policy work directly, generate knowledge, test new methodologies, support policy implementation, generate voluntary commitments, formulate law and regulatory mechanisms and undertake monitoring. However, there is space for improvement.

Projects are documented quite unevenly in terms of project documents (objectives, theories of change), project reporting and evaluations. There are some very good reasons for this: size, nature and donor requirements are three. Smaller projects tend to have lighter requirements for planning and reporting and seldom require evaluations. Projects which are in the category of "service level agreement" likely have minimal planning and reporting requirements. Donors have their own requirements.

It is hard to see the programmatic intent from the sample of projects, even at the IDR level. For example, the BIODEV 2030 project aligned well with the IUCN position on means of implementation and demonstrated an innovative approach, but it is not clear how well the project and the IUCN policy position were connected. Conversely, the 30x30 Challenge project is clearly linked strategically to IUCN's position on the 30x30 target of the GBF. The evaluation did not review the portfolio systematically, nor did it review IUCN's requirements for project planning and reporting. However, there is a sense that more could be done to improve and strengthen relationship between programmatic goals and how projects are conceived and planned as a coherent set of projects supporting a set of programmatic goals, of which policy influencing ought to be one.

The evaluation's Project Desk Reviews (PDRs) revealed a dearth of lesson learning. Again, size and nature of the projects could be one explanation as to why lessons were not systematically captured. That said, for larger projects a clearly articulated theory of change could serve as a set of working hypotheses against which lessons could be learned.

In most of the IDRs, the role of projects was very clear. Some examples include the AFD and SIDA support for the development of the NbS Standard (IDR1), research projects that generated new science in support of the BBNJ negotiations (IDR2), and projects that supported new work on agriculture and biodiversity, generating new science (IDR4). The BIODIV 2030 project supported an innovative approach to test a methodology for a "whole of government response" to the proposed targets of the KMGBF. In a number of countries, IUCN supported multi-stakeholder dialogues that included productive sectors that impact biodiversity and was able to secure voluntary commitments to implement the KMGBF. This unique project showcases two parts of IUCN's position on means of implementation in terms of whole of government responses and generating voluntary commitments (IDR5). In ORMACC, IUCN implemented a series of forest landscape restoration projects aimed at demonstrating the viability of restoration (IDR3)- the results of which have already been used by ORMACC and country office staff in discussions to persuade or bring key decision makers 'on side' and demonstrate the opportunities to use FLR approaches.

3.3.7 - Secretariat and governance services

In some cases, the IUCN Secretariat with essential technical expertise provided by the Commissions, provided secretariat services for entities such as the Asia Protected Areas Network and IUCN regional offices have been shortlisted to provide support for the KMGBF's implementation through proposed regional "centres of excellence,"; these will provide technical support to Parties and implementing partners at regional and national levels (IDR5). IUCN is also partially hosting the KBA and IBAT Secretariats to support the standards, tools and datasets (IDR6). This role encourages closer engagement and ongoing communication with the KBA Partnership and IBAT Alliance partners, for instance linking key IUCN experts and implementing partners to use and/or promote the Global Standard and the IBAT. IUCN provides governance support to a number of IUCN Standards, including the International Standard Committee for NbS Governance, and governance mechanisms for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems and the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas (IDR5). The National FLR Roundtable in Guatemala was formed in 2013. It was created by INAB (National Forest Institute) with direct support from IUCN and the FAO to promote national dialogue and institutional articulation of FLR. INAB and IUCN act as the technical Secretariat for the Roundtable. "IUCN helped to ensure a good relationship between the technical group and the General Assembly."

4. Sphere of influence - IUCN's policy influencing outcomes

Chapter 4 presents a synthesis of the evidence of IUCN's policy influencing outcomes (immediate and intermediate) associated with the Sphere of influence domain of the evaluation conceptual framework.

This chapter first presents a summary of the most significant immediate and intermediate outcome results under each IDR. The IDR-specific outcomes identified are described in more detail and in context under each of the six IDRs in the Miro platform. It is important to note that the distinction between immediate and intermediate outcomes can be arbitrary and difficult to define. Therefore this distinction is applied only as an organising structure for the purpose of this evaluation.

The chapter then presents a synthesis and analysis of the common immediate and intermediate outcome findings across the IDRs. This attempts to establish a set of links or 'mechanisms' by which IUCN and its partners commonly deliver policy influencing outcomes.

4.1 Summary of IUCN's policy influencing outcomes

In a broad sense, the conceptual frameworks defines outcomes as:

- **Immediate outcomes** - How did audiences respond to IUCN's policy influencing activities and outputs? These sit between outputs and more meaningful intermediate outcomes and relate to changes in knowledge, shared understanding, capacities, confidence, behaviours, networks and relationships etc.
- **Intermediate outcomes** - What meaningful policy influencing changes emerged, both positive and negative?

Table 4: Summary of Immediate and Intermediate policy influencing evidence by IDR

IDR	Immediate outcome	Intermediate outcomes
1 - NbS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increasing recognition of the NbS concept by governments, donor countries and financial institutions, private funders and businesses to recognize NbS ● Broad-based and diverse adoption and uptake of the NbS Definition across and beyond the Union ● Increasing buy-in to and use of the IUCN NbS Standard by the stakeholder groups above, particularly those which are also IUCN Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NbS recognition in texts of all 3 Rio Conventions achieved in 2022 ● So what? IDR KII 1 summarised this outcome as <i>"NbS is as much a communications device as anything else. NbS to global societal challenges comes across easily and enables large-scale commitments. Suddenly everyone wants to do NbS."</i> ● From NbS policy alignment to NbS investment & action
2 - BBNJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BBNJ Treaty negotiators informed and influenced by high quality independent scientific and legal information ● Building relationships and providing a negotiating bridge between e.g. 1) the positions of 'rich countries' and those of 'under-resourced countries'; and 2) between states and civil society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BBNJ Treaty finalised in March 2023 and formally adopted in June 2023
3 - FLR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members across the Union - Secretariat HQ and ORMACC Regional Teams, Commissions, and ORMACC Regional Members - adopted the concept of FLR, taking the first steps of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting the emergence of Mesoamerican regional FLR 'champions' instrumental in the UN adoption of the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration

IDR	Immediate outcome	Intermediate outcomes
	<p>translating the concept into a 'movement'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries throughout the ORMACC region are seen as early FLR adopters and leaders • Uptake & application of tools such as the ROAM and Restoration Barometer address the knowledge needs and gaps of various national decisions makers • Creating wider national and regional FLR interest and demand through demonstration of FLR's potential and its application by observer decision makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolving the concept - from forest to functional landscape restoration • Fostering NGO and community engagement and local FLR ownership to generate a robust understanding of local-level restoration needs and local buy-in in parallel to national level policy influence • FLR used to promote investment through project funding (project designed and negotiated); and to orient public investment (PROBOSQUE Guatemala)
4 - ERO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IUCN Europe's work on sustainable agriculture has contributed to a better focus on agriculture across IUCN globally • Roundtables on sustainable agriculture helped to bridge divides among stakeholders, helped them to find common ground and work towards building some consensus • IUCN's work with the Forum on the Future of Agriculture has influenced its strategy and programme. It also helped diverse stakeholders within the Forum to find common ground in support of the nature restoration law, resulting in the issuance of a statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU parliament approved the nature restoration law in early 2024 – a big statement in itself. If this wasn't agreed, there was a fear that it would get lost in change of institutions. IUCN's letters and statements issued in support of the nature restoration law, along with those of other stakeholders, in mid 2023 before key votes at the committee stage, may have been used a resource by moderate MEPs who were voting on the law (even if the quality of the law was questionable)
5 - GBF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear convergence of IUCN's position and the Goals and Targets of the GBF - for 16 of 23 (70%) of the GBF Targets there is clear convergence between the Decision and IUCN's position • IUCN standards and concepts, the concept of "nature-based solutions" is present in Targets 8 and 11 on climate change and benefits from ecosystems, respectively. The concept of Key Biodiversity Areas and the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas is referenced in the monitoring framework, as are the Red List Standards (and indicators) related to Species and Ecosystems • IUCN is noted, appreciated, and requested to do things dozens of times across the COP15 decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediate outcomes can be seen in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) which represent the national plan which guides implementation of the GBF by governments. Some governments have revised their NBSAPs to align with the GBF and IUCN's influence, particularly through the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems and Nature-based Solutions can be clearly seen. IUCN has tremendous potential to influence NBSAP revisions and has been requested to do so in Marseilles Resolution 043
6 - KBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is interest from donors to fund further KBA assessments or reviews, as long as clear proposals are made and budget requests are reasonable • IDR 6 KII - " <i>Having the IUCN stamp on the KBA product has clout due to its reputation and the fact that it is a shared Standard, agreed and</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing number of National Coordination Groups - NCGs coordinate initiatives at the national level to identify KBAs to ensure the development of a single KBA list and to review proposals from individual proposers - Some were established using the KBA Guidelines, though some early adopters like South Africa

IDR	Immediate outcome	Intermediate outcomes
	<p><i>approved by multiple organisations- gives confidence to governments."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take off and rapid growth of private and investment sector interest in KBAs through IBAT - IBAT interest has exploded by all metrics: revenue generation, reinvestment into biodiversity, number of users/subscribers, number of organisations contacting etc. IBAT recorded views increased from 1.2 million (2020) to 5 million 2024. Subscriptions have increased from 6000 to 26,000 users in that period. 	<p>and Canada were able to feed into the guidance note by sharing lessons learned from their process - Canada, Greece, South Africa, UAE, Madagascar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KBAs in the SDG indicators - IUCN used its UN observer seat to engage directly in the SDG indicator development process - SDG 6 Clean Water & Sanitation, SDG 14 Life Below Water, & SDG 15 Life on Land but no mention of KBAs in CBD Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

The summary of the immediate and intermediate outcomes by IDR demonstrates some relatively simple overall findings:

- All six policy influencing processes illustrated by the IDRs have progressed to and delivered immediate outcomes. In fact, there is evidence of numerous immediate outcomes for all 6 IDRs.
- Although there is less evidence, there is some evidence of progress to the intermediate outcome level in all six policy influencing processes.
- The strongest evidence of progress in terms of intermediate outcomes is associated with IDR 1 NbS, IDR 3 FLR, and IDR 5 GBF.
- These three IDRs are also generally where IUCN as a Union has been able to make the greatest contribution.
- IDR 2 BBNJ and IDR 4 ERO demonstrate that IUCN has made a clear and tangible policy influencing contribution. But because these are 'shorter' and more recent policy influencing processes for IUCN, evidence of intermediate outcome progress and IUCN's contribution may not yet be fully evident.
- IUCN has been relatively less successful in influencing the IDR 6 KBA process when compared to the conceptually similar (standard-based) IDR 1 NbS process. The reasons for this are explained by the underlying enabling and constraining factors specific to each IDR.

4.2 IUCN's policy influencing outcome 'mechanisms'

This section presents a synthesis of the policy influencing outcome findings in terms of the emergent 'mechanisms' by which IUCN influences and informs policy:

- 4.2.1 A common, relatively linear IUCN policy influencing process
- 4.2.2 Changes in knowledge, shared understanding, capacities, confidence, behaviours, networks and relationships
- 4.2.3 The long and continuing evolution of IUCN-led and informed definitions and concepts
- 4.2.4 The agreement of approaches, frameworks and standards
- 4.2.5 The contextualisation and uptake of frameworks and standards through IUCN convening and technical advisory roles
- 4.2.6 The development and use of tools and methods to enable policy formulation and piloting
- 4.2.7 The proliferation of policy adoption (and implementation) processes at multiple scales and in multiple locations

4.2.1 - A common, relatively linear IUCN policy influencing process

At the heart of the IDRs there tends to be a core, relatively linear policy influencing outcomes process:

- **Stage 1 - Acceptance and uptake of a concept or definition** - The initial generation and sharing of scientific evidence and new knowledge often associated with the emergence and collective definition of a new or evolving conservation idea or concept, and frequently resulting from one of IUCN's Commissions or the Secretariat working with the Commissions;
- **Stage 2 - Co-development of frameworks and standards** - The translation of this definition or concept into more formally agreed approaches, frameworks or standards, often responding to a WCC Resolution instructing the Union;
- **Stage 3** - Often interlinked and in parallel:
 - **Policy development & approval** - The formal recognition and integration of these approaches, frameworks and standards in to national, regional and international policy processes - recognition in a Convention text, the signing of a Treaty, and/or the creation of a national, regional or international policy ;
 - **Support in the development and use of practical tools and methods** - The development and application of a range of practical tools and methods to support or enable policy formulation and/or policy implementation; and
- **Stage 4 - Investment, implementation and action** - Policy implementation by a range of actors across a range of scales and in a range of contexts. This very broad range of conservation actions covers financing, programming, and policy enforcement, and often relates to IUCN's (sometimes implicit) underlying policy influencing objective or nature-positive impact.

All the IDRs broadly cohere to this relatively linear and staged policy influencing process. **IDR 1 NbS** most clearly illustrates all 4 stages: 1) Concept emergence and NbS Definition, 2) NbS Standard development, 3) Recognition of NbS in Rio Conventions, 4) Take up in national and regional level commitments, planning and reporting, and in parallel, initial investment and action by funders, the private sectors, NGOs and CSO, and communities.

Although IUCN's core policy influencing process is frequently described in this common and linear way, an important finding illustrated in the six IDRs is that important outcomes can occur at each stage, with different combinations of IUCN's stakeholders – Commissions, IUCN Members (States, government agencies, NGOs, IPOs), partners, and wider target stakeholders and audiences. However, for the purpose of this synthesis, and in line with the Conceptual Framework, we assume that Stages 1 and 2 are associated with immediate outcomes, stage 3 is associated with intermediate outcomes, and stage 4 is associated with impact.

4.2.2 - Changes in knowledge, shared understanding, capacities, confidence, behaviours, networks and relationships - enabling subtle yet critically important immediate outcomes with direct audiences and stakeholders

The IDRs demonstrate that a crucial yet often intangible and under-reported element of IUCN's policy influencing support relates to immediate outcome-level changes with direct audiences and stakeholders. These relate to changes in knowledge, shared understanding, capacities, confidence, behaviours, networks and relationships etc.

In particular, IUCN is recognised for:

- Strengthening relationships between stakeholders (important due to IUCN's focus on convening and brokering),
- Building confidence amongst decision makers in developing proposals such as having a resource (like a statement from IUCN) to defend your position (for example, in the IDR 4 ERO case of EC policymakers and passing the nature restoration law), amongst others.

Or as illustrated in the IDR 2 BBNJ case - which explains IUCN's contributions to these immediate outcomes:

- Supported shifts in attitudes amongst key actors. During a 2011 seminar at the Pocantico Center, key groups, such as the EU and G77, as well as individual states (such as Australia, NZ and Sri Lanka) were both supportive of a new agreement while consensus was built around the need for serious dialogue at upcoming UN meetings.
- Helped deepen discussions at the PrepCom on ways to inject climate change concerns into specific elements of a new treaty, such as marine protected areas, spatial planning and environmental impact assessments;

- Developed camaraderie amongst participants, which is central to building trust and working through difficulty
- Helped to find solutions, unlock difficulties in the negotiation. One particular negotiator (from France) said he left a workshop in Switzerland feeling more confident, more knowledgeable in making proposals to the EU
- Provided a platform for the more marginalised voices to be heard. E.g. featuring people from the federated states of Micronesia in a film about the BBNJ process; and,
- Contributed to raising public consciousness/awareness about the BBNJ process and its importance.

4.2.3 The long and continuing evolution of IUCN-led and informed definitions and concepts

"Continuing the science and generating the evidence." - IDR 1 KII

Several of the IDRs illustrate that many of the concepts and definitions on which IUCN's policy influencing processes are built can take several years, if not decades, to emerge before they are formalised. They are the products of on-going, dynamic and inter-related conservation science discourse and debates, which are continually evolving. IUCN's policy influencing work takes place within complex, dynamic, unpredictable and contested systems and contexts.

In IDR 1, the first reference to NbS was in 2008, with the IUCN NbS definition being formally adopted at the WCC in 2016. Similarly in IDR 2, IUCN Members had called for the protection of the High Seas in its resolutions from as early as 2000. Yet the BBNJ treaty text was finalised in March 2023 and formally adopted in June 2023. In IDR 3, IUCN and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) coined the term Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) in 2000 as a framework for managing landscapes, complementing both forest conservation and sustainable management. And in the last 5 years, FLR itself has evolved from a focus specifically on 'forest landscapes' to the broader concept of 'functional landscapes', recognizing the value of establishing multiple ecosystem functions and services - both ecological and productive. IDR 6 on KBAs has a similarly long evolution and definition process which has its origins in the 2004 WCC, with the Global KBA Standard adopted in 2016.

The policy influencing work of the IUCN Europe office, which is the subject of IDR 4, through its involvement in promoting sustainable agriculture and supporting the passage of the EU Nature Restoration Law, has one of the shortest time horizons beginning in 2018, which is similar to that of IDR 5 which follows IUCN's engagement in the negotiations from before COP14 in 2018 where the Parties agreed to start negotiations in earnest on a Post-2020 Framework.

IUCN tends to play two interlinked roles facilitating outcomes associated with definitions and concepts:

- 1. Drawing on IUCN's conservation science 'thought leadership' from across the Union, particularly integrating experts from the Commissions and Secretariat** - This role is illustrated in all the IDRs and nicely summarised in IDR 2 with IUCN's early inputs on the BBNJ process defined as *"IUCN generated and shared high quality independent scientific and legal information on the management aspects of MPAs and EIAs... Information was shared orally and through the production and dissemination of a range of outputs (commentaries, briefings, background papers) and activities, such as workshops, webinars, seminars, satellite/lunchtime meetings during negotiations and 1-2-1s to facilitate sharing and discussion."*
- 2. Facilitating and building broad-based and inclusive awareness, shared understanding and buy-in to these concepts and definitions across the Union and with key policy audiences** - IDR 3 provides a clear example of the complementary role IUCN plays in generating awareness, understanding and buy-in to these definitions and concepts - Members across the Union - Secretariat HQ and ORMACC Regional Teams, Commissions, and ORMACC Regional Members - adopted the concept of FLR, taking the first steps of translating the concept into a 'movement'. IUCN Secretariat Team Members, particularly Members of IUCN's Forest Conservation Programme, helped demonstrate and prove FLR to be an effective mechanism for integrating multiple objectives, including those aligned with REDD+, increasing adaptation, facilitating sustainable rural development and unlocking climate-smart private sector investments.

4.2.4 The agreement of approaches, frameworks and standards

Following the definition of a concept, often in direct response to an IUCN Resolution, several IDRs demonstrate IUCN's role in the subsequent development of a more formal approach, framework or standard. **IDR 1 on the NbS Standard** and **IDR 6 on the KBA Standard** are the two most obvious examples.

The process of developing and drafting the NbS Standard unified a small group of key Union actors. Each not only brought their expertise but also views, perspectives and priorities of their respective constituencies:

- ISC - CEM - Angela Andrade & Emmanuelle Cohen-Shacham
- WWF/CCC - Manuel Pulgar Vidal
- WCEL - Cristina Voigt
- IUCN Secretariat - Radhika Murti & Veronica Ruiz with Stewart Maginnis

In July 2020 the Standard was launched following approval by IUCN's Council. And so began an IUCN Secretariat and Commission-led, multi-dimensional process of communications, knowledge sharing, lobbying, coalition building and influencing around the Standard - to ensure its adoption and use, as well as more broadly to try to ensure that NbS as defined by the Standard are recognized in the Rio Conventions and beyond.

One immediate outcome perspective on the NbS Standard is that, as a practical tool or method, it adds value and use to IUCN's foundational purpose and core strength of generating clear and robust conservation science, through its application. The development of the NbS Standard has allowed a wide range of stakeholders globally to engage with and apply IUCN science, many of whom are policy or decision makers at some scale or context.

IDR 6 KBA Standard process had narrower stakeholder consultation. Consequently, the attention generated on and uptake of the KBA Standard has been comparatively slower and less broad based. In 2009, the IUCN WCPA and IUCN SSC established a Joint Task Force on Biodiversity and Protected Areas to action the 2004 WCC Resolution 3.013. They led extensive consultation involving many organisations and individuals, which led to the development of [A Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas](#). It was approved by IUCN Council Decision C/88/25, April 2016. Consequently, the attention generated on and uptake of the KBA Standard has been comparatively slower and less broad based.

4.2.5 The contextualisation and uptake of frameworks and standards through IUCN convening and technical advisory roles

When it comes to the development and adoption of frameworks and standards, the synthesis shows that IUCN plays a number of cross-context outcome-enabling roles:

- **Helping to build and convene broad-based coalitions and movements around frameworks and standards**
Under IDR 3 FLR - IUCN State Members (initially Costa Rica, through INAB and MARN in Guatemala, and El Salvador) adopted the concept of FLR, taking the first steps of translating the concept into a 'regional movement'. Thus creating the political momentum necessary to drive wider interest in FLR as a policy option and solution. In a totally different context, **IDR 4 ERO** - IUCN ERO has done much to convene stakeholders, brokering different, often opposed, parties and vested interests to facilitate discussion and to mediate between opposing sides. The series of roundtables hosted by IUCN on sustainable agriculture were well attended and well received by participants as well as EU officials. EU officials were surprised that IUCN succeeded in bringing agricultural and environmental stakeholders together given the animosity between them.
 As one **IDR 3 KII** explained, *"We can consult and unite the discourse of 1500 Members and the expertise of the Commissions. It represents a big voice, and not working in a vacuum. IUCN is both a democratic Union and a neutral platform. We work in the service of this Union. And being able to say a definition or Standard has the approval of the Union is a massive advantage, a policy influencing head start."*
- **Providing multiple enabling and advisory functions to facilitate the uptake of these approaches, frameworks and standards** - For example, **IDR 4 ERO** - IUCN Secretariat team members sit on the boards and advisory panels

of Initiatives, Forums, and Regional Organisations such as the Forum for the Future of Agriculture in an EU setting, as well as actively participating in a range of other fora/platforms/networks. IUCN is a strategic partner, with influence on the forum's strategy and programme, acting as a sounding board, providing counsel on leadership activities and positions and exchanging knowledge and expertise. Similarly in **IDR 5 GBF** - IUCN provides 'secretariat functions' to bodies such as the Asia Protected Areas network and has proposed to serve as a Regional/Sub-Regional Support Centre for Technical and Scientific Cooperation under the CBD/GBF.

4.2.6 The development and use of tools and methods to enable policy formulation and piloting

"ORMACC's most significant contribution are the ROAM maps. They did a fantastic job - to identify priority areas for restoration - because it gives policy makers just what they need, including the costs, and then networks and connections required. These provide the tools for a policy maker to implement a policy." **IDR 3 KII**

IUCN has played an outcome-enabling role through the co-development and application of tools and methods which facilitate and enable national and local level policy formulation and piloting. This has been particularly the case in **IDR 1 NbS** (the NbS Standard), **IDR 3 FLR** (ROAM & Restoration Barometer), **IDR 5 GBF** (IUCN Standards, IUCN Red and Green Lists, indicators and data), and **IDR 6 KBA** (KBA Global Standard).

IDR 3 is the clearest example of a sequence of these policy enabling tools, with an opportunity assessment and prioritisation tool was followed up with an implementation assessment and reporting tool. Developed by IUCN and WRI in 2014, the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) is a framework developed for countries to conduct forest and landscape restoration opportunity assessments and to identify specific priority areas at a national or sub-national level. Between 2016-17 IUCN-ORMACC conducted and finalised four national (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) and two subnational (Autonomous Region of the North Caribbean Coast - RACCN Nicaragua & the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico) FLR assessments using ROAM. Key to the success of the ROAM process across ORMACC has been its application both as a technical methodological tool and also as a wider engagement, governance and investment process.

Following a sequence, IUCN developed and launched the Restoration Barometer in 2017 to support pledgers in meeting the critical need of assessing and reporting on the implementation of national and subnational FLR pledges. The Barometer allows countries to track substantive implementation progress more accurately, in terms of hectares brought into restoration and delivery of associated ecosystem benefits, in terms of carbon sequestered, biodiversity and jobs created. It provides an opportunity for national and sub-national governments to simplify and streamline reporting on their restoration commitments, and can help track and record progress towards global goals. Application of the Barometer by the ORMACC team has allowed countries across the ORMACC region to apply and report against the methodology, and also to build capacity to apply more harmonised methodologies in the region, allowing these countries to individually and collectively define where, how, and when to do restoration.

4.2.7 - The proliferation of policy adoption (and implementation) processes at multiple scales and in multiple locations

"Countries throughout ORMACC region are seen as early FLR adopters and leaders, driven by a combination of their natural forest endowments, recognition of the societal threat posed by their severely degraded and deforested landscapes, exacerbated by climate change, and the promotion by IUCN ORMACC and others of FLR as a viable and attractive solution." **IDR 3 KII**

Both a resourcing challenge and an influencing opportunity for IUCN, several IDRs demonstrate the proliferation of policy influencing arenas (scales, contexts and audience groups) in which IUCN has the opportunity to engage and influence once a national, regional or international policy has been successful as discussed above. This is the case in **IDR 1 NbS** once NbS text was included in the 3 Rio Convention wordings and similarly **IDR 2** in the BBNJ Treaty as well as **IDR 4** - The EU parliament approved the nature restoration law in early 2024.

Under **IDR 5** take up of the GBF Goals and Targets in national level planning and reporting can be seen in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) which represent the national plan which guides implementation of the GBF by governments. Some governments have revised their NBSAPs to align with the GBF and IUCN's influence,

particularly through the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems, the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems and Nature-based Solutions can be clearly seen. Most countries also recently completed their 6th National Reports and again, IUCN standards are clearly visible. IUCN was routinely named in COP Decisions, alongside IPBES and other UN Specialized Agencies.

5. Sphere of interest - IUCN's policy influencing impact

Chapter 5 presents a synthesis of the evidence of IUCN's policy influencing impacts associated with the Sphere of interest domain of the evaluation conceptual framework. According to the conceptual framework, the sphere of interest aligns with IUCN's policy influencing impact. We define this as the ultimate changes that have occurred to biodiversity, climate and human wellbeing. **Table 5** below presents a summary of the impact-level policy influencing evidence across the six IDRs.

Table 5: Summary of the impact-level policy influencing evidence

IDR	Impact
1 - NbS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From policy recognition to uptake - wider national level uptake of NbS - Following as well as in parallel to recognition in the 3 Rio Conventions, NbS is increasingly being included in national planning processes, namely Nationally Determined Contributions under the UNFCCC, in NBSAPs under the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework and in United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. Nationally Determined Contributions: According to a report commissioned by WWF, 92% of countries' new climate action plans now include measures to tackle nature loss. National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans: Post agreement to the Global Biodiversity Framework, Parties will be revising their National Biodiversity and Strategy Action Plans. Targets 8 and 11 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework specifically refer to nature-based solutions, so there is an expectation that Parties will include NbS in their updated NBSAPs. It is important to note that the inclusion of NbS in NDCs and NBSAPs does not formally or practically meet our definition of impact in terms of positive changes to biodiversity, climate and human wellbeing.
2 - BBNJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence, at present, of policy influencing impact. There is a clear impact potential pathway through implementation of the Treaty.
3 - FLR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bonn Challenge is a global goal to bring 350 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2030. Currently, more than 70 pledgers from more than 60 countries are restoring 210 million hectares of degraded and deforested lands. Through the Restoration Barometer, the ORMACC office is able to help monitor the quantity (Ha) and quality of FLR implementation across the Mesoamerican region. Although it may be too soon to assess both the quantity but particularly the quality of these land restoration efforts, it does nevertheless indicate genuine impact-level progress in FLR.
4 - ERO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence, at present, of policy influencing impact. There is a clear impact potential pathway through implementation of the nature restoration law.
5 - GBF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence, at present, of policy influencing impact through the direct IDR policy influencing objective to influence a strong Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework Following the modest progress / impact reporting through the Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 against the Aichi Targets, there is a clear impact potential pathway through the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework agreement
6 - KBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence, at present, of policy influencing impact. There is a clear impact potential pathway through the KBA assessment and uptake process, particularly with early adopters like Greece, South Africa and Canada

Of all the policy influencing processes illustrated through the IDRs, only IDR 3 FLR can claim to have contributed to genuine impact in terms of positive changes to biodiversity, climate and/or human wellbeing. This is an important

wider point which illustrates that positive policy influence is often still a long way from genuine impact. This is a particularly salient point in the context of the urgency to address the related global societal challenges - biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution and degradation, and poverty, inequality, and social justice.

6. IUCN's contribution relative to others

Chapter 6 assesses IUCN's contribution relative to others and other factors, and in particular, within the complex, dynamic and frequently contested wider mosaic of influences and contributions. In line with the Conceptual Framework we briefly assess:

- How does IUCN's particular contribution sit alongside (and interact with) the wider mosaic of influences and contributions?

6.1 IUCN's contribution relative to others and other factors

The IDRs establish and define IUCN's credible contribution to each of the six policy influencing processes explored, whilst recognising that attempting to 'quantify' IUCN's relative contribution would be a futile exercise. Table 6 presents a simple classification of the relative contribution issues as identified across the six IDRs.

Table 6: Summary of IDR contribution issues

IDR	Contribution issues - IUCN and others
1 - NbS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual interactions and evolution - EbA within NbS - There is a long, broad and continually evolving conceptual underpinning and dynamic contribution of multiple interrelated concepts which have informed and continue to inform NbS as a concept. In particular, the relationship between NbS and Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) remains dynamic, with discussion and discourse still in parts confused between proponents of EbA and NbS. NbS seems to be crystalising as a broader umbrella term, taking place at the landscape scale and highlighting the value of conservation co-benefits to address the three global societal challenges - climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution/degradation. EbA is a more local concept, focused on climate change adaptation and consequently is attracting more specific CCA financing. For IUCN's work on EbA see the Friends of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (FEBA).
2 - BBNJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadening and deepening groups of actors over time / operating in a crowded field - During phase 1, during discussions about whether there should be a treaty and if so what its core terms would be, IUCN was one of a smaller group of actors (both state and non-state) and subsequently had more involvement. However, during the IGCs, the number of active negotiators increased whilst non-state actors organised around the HSA grew. The active role of civil society was unusual for a UN treaty. After they received a large injection of funding the HSA had the capacity to work more closely with delegations. Like IUCN, but on a wider scale, they played an important 'inside track' role, brokering role, bringing together key groups such as CARICOM and the EU and facilitating meetings. They combined this with an 'outside track' role, through its media and public engagement work. The HSA high seas dialogues during the inter-sessional period were seen as particularly influential. Other think tanks and research centres, such as IDDRI which did not have a 'seat at the table' engaged directly with members of the HSA Secretariat.
3 - FLR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual interactions and evolution - from 'protected areas' to 'landscapes' - Around 2009, there was a shift in the global vision on conservation. Three main processes emerged: REDD+ led by the UNFCCC, traceability of forest products (EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade - FLEGT), and FLR which was initiated as a practical way to tackle restoration and linked with the Bonn Challenge. The first two processes have developed less rapidly and, to a certain extent, been superseded by the growth of FLR which IUCN ORMACC have been active proponents of. • Broadening and deepening groups of actors over time / operating in a crowded field - The VFM assessment for DFID KNOWFOR found that IUCN's overall contribution to Guatemala's FLR policy processes during 2012-2016 was 12%. The most significant contribution came from Government (45%), while FAO (11%) and the private sector (5%) were also well represented. Other actors, including the Association of Non-Government Organizations for the Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala, and academia accounted for 27%. • IUCN support to, or working through, other key organisations including IUCN Members - In several cases IUCN has supported, enabled and enhanced the capacity and voice of specific national and regional bodies

	<p>and organisations. Implicit in this has been to raise that organisation's relative contribution to FLR policy influencing. An example is IUCN's work with Guatemala's National Forest Institute. One informant noted that in 2015-16 the National Forest Institute was a bit weak so IUCN led the Secretariat of the National Roundtable on FLR and kept things going on restoration during this time. The difference between IUCN and other organisations is that IUCN support is consistent (others come and go).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IUCN support to, or working through, other key organisations including IUCN Members - Dialogue and participation - IUCN's Membership is large and particularly active in the Mesoamerican region. The ORMACC team's ability to engage broadly with IUCN's Membership (government and NGO Members) has enabled active, more aligned and amplified dialogue at local, national and regional levels.
4 - ERO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadening and deepening groups of actors over time / operating in a crowded field - There are a multitude of actors comprising individual organisations as well as collectives who have intentions to influence policy and practice in IUCN Europe's impact areas. Many of them are able to do so with significantly more resources than IUCN and the freedom to take hard positions and exploit policy windows on a timely basis. • Broadening and deepening groups of actors over time / operating in a crowded field - On the issue of agriculture, on one side of the debate there is the farmers' association, COPA COJECA, the European Landowners Organisation, while on the other, there are environmental NGOs, organised around the G10. There are also grain traders, input providers and machinery related actors represented by various associations. IUCN, like the Forum for the Future of Agriculture, in playing a convening and brokering role, has done well to identify what is still a niche area in what is a very crowded and now somewhat polarised policy arena. • Broadening and deepening groups of actors over time / operating in a crowded field - On the topic of biodiversity, IUCN was often a 'go-to' organisation for policymakers a decade ago. While IUCN remains a 'go to' organisation in relation to the Red List, the broader field is now more competitive with policymakers and shapers drawing on the expertise of a broader range of organisations.
5 - GBF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual interactions and evolution - IUCN contributes a considerable volume of knowledge to the CBD processes and also to assessments under the Global Biodiversity Outlook and IPBES. For example, an Species Survival Commission Invasive Species Specialist Group member co-Chaired the IPBES assessment on Invasive Alien Species, over a four-year period. As noted in other places, IUCN's standards, tools, guidelines, assessments, indicators and data are widely cited in COP decisions and SBSTTA recommendations, and IUCN is requested by the Parties to continue providing this knowledge. • Conceptual interactions and evolution - IUCN knowledge that was not taken up: some key standards and tools that IUCN was promoting were not acknowledged in the GBF, such as the Key Biodiversity Areas standard and the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, although indicators related to both are acknowledged in the monitoring framework for the GBF. • IUCN support to, or working through, other key organisations including IUCN Members - IUCN and the BINGOs: Nature Positive: IUCN did not participate in the WWF convened coalition around Nature-positive, although the term is in the IUCN Position for COP15 at the request of Resolution 116, passed by the Membership at the Marseilles World Conservation Congress. This is an example of the circular nature of IUCN which can both influence and be influenced by its Membership.
6 - KBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IUCN support to, or working through, other key organisations including IUCN Members - IUCN is not always credited when KBAs are discussed. Often they are referred to as a concept without an organisational affiliation. However, this is in line with the KBA Partnership Agreement which requires that KBAs are not presented as belonging to any one partner. • IUCN support to, or working through, other key organisations including IUCN Members - IUCN's role / involvement in KBAs is not always clear in nationally driven efforts, nor easily distinguishable from the other KBA Partnership organisations. Difficult for respondents to attribute specific actions or outcomes to IUCN. • IUCN support to, or working through, other key organisations including IUCN Members - The visibility of IUCN to the wider Membership is not always clear, e.g. national experts may be unaware whether they are collaborating with IUCN Members, or even whether their own organisation is an IUCN member!

What the analysis above illustrates is that the contribution issues identified across the six IDRs broadly relate to three areas:

- **Conceptual interactions and evolution**
- **Broadening and deepening groups of actors over time / operating in a crowded field**
- **IUCN support to, or working through, other key organisations including IUCN Members**

This, in turn points to two headlines in terms of how IUCN's contributions sit alongside (and interact with) the wider mosaic of influences:

- **IUCN's contributions can be small but also catalyse significant changes** - When it comes to changes in perceptions or behaviour of policymakers, it is key to note that their attention lurches unpredictably from issue to issue driven by spontaneous events, their networks and contextual issues, as well as more explicit political and economic considerations. They often base their decisions on a mixture of core beliefs, personal knowledge, evidence and new knowledge they find the time and opportunity to consume, and other 'shortcuts'. In this context, IUCN's 'opportunity to influence' is limited, competing with a multitude of competing interests, and contains an element of serendipity. This adds credence to IUCN's informal strategy and natural capacity to provide on-going, ad hoc and responsive 'trusted advisory partner' to government throughout policy influencing processes.
- **IUCN's contribution is often important yet under-valued or unrecognised** - if the organisation or individual making a contribution happens to work for an organisation which is an IUCN Member and/or the individual is a Commission Member. Frequently, and in both cases, any contribution to policy influencing outcomes will be attributed to their 'primary employer' rather than IUCN. This is entirely understandable and OK but does not recognise the benefits that individual or organisation receives through Membership of and participation in the IUCN Union.

6.2 IUCN policy influencing 'roles'

By exploring and illustrating IUCN's policy influencing processes through six IDRs, it allowed us to generate an emergent understanding of the various roles and combination of roles IUCN plays throughout these complex change processes. From the evidence and our understanding of how change happens within and across these processes, we were able to define a simple, 'emergent' framework of IUCN's 10 policy influencing roles. IUCN plays these roles in different combinations, engaging different combinations of Union constituents - Secretariat, Members, Commissions, funders and partners - depending on the context and the stage of a policy influencing process. **Table 7** below provides short descriptions and examples of each role. This is followed by **Figure 4** - two examples, taken from the Miro platform, of how these role tags have been applied to the observed policy influencing process under IDR 3 - FLR.

As an emergent framework, drawn from the observed evidence, it was not possible to systematically analyse and synthesise the evidence through it. Rather, it is hoped that the roles framework may be useful to IUCN when it comes to planning, learning and adapting future policy influencing processes, perhaps starting with informing a future IUCN policy influencing Theory of Change. The role tagging exercise did provide some headline conclusions and insights which are presented in **Chapter 11**.

Table 7: How IUCN influences policy – playing combinations of policy influencing roles throughout a policy process

Policy influencing roles	Role description
1 - Generating research, evidence & new knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing research / science / data and evidence e.g. datasets • Packaging evidence and new knowledge • e.g. scientific publications, reports and briefs
2 – Building shared awareness, understanding and buy-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a shared foundational understanding of a concept and then building consensus, shared policy positions • Using the WCC to agree and adopt Resolutions and Recommendations
3 - Developing evidence-based methods, tools and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing and developing practical science and evidence based methods, tools and standards
4 – Facilitating Union Member and partner collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Leveraging the Union” • Working with or through IUCN Members on a shared policy position and aligned collective actions
5 – Communicating, disseminating and knowledge sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive ‘supply push’ communications of evidence and new knowledge - both broad on-going and more discrete and focussed • e.g. sharing of knowledge products via IUCN communications channels • e.g. dissemination via websites and portals, social and professional networks, community groups and lists, webinars and other online events • e.g. In-person communications and knowledge sharing at events - workshops, conferences, meetings, side events
6 – Policy advocating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming and advancing an explicit IUCN policy position • Making a case (publicly) e.g. through events, meetings, open letters and statements • More informal policy advocacy and influencing
7 – Engaging and convening networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening relevant elements of the IUCN Union - Commissions, Members, Experts & Secretariat - on policy orientated issues
8 – Providing technical assistance and capacity building services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractual engagement of IUCN teams for the design and delivery of discrete services relating to policy-related knowledge generation, knowledge sharing, policy influencing, and/or policy-related training and capacity building • Technical assistance & capacity building services related to the uptake or implementation of a policy • Technical assistance related to quality assurance, critical evaluation or expert review of a policy process or policy implementation

9 – Piloting & demonstration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding IUCN to design and deliver projects / a programme of projects that generate evidence and new knowledge to inform policy • Using project / programme evidence and new knowledge for demonstration effect to support deeper and wider policy influence - uptake, replication, policy refinement
10 – Playing an on-going ‘trusted partner’ role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing long term, ‘on demand’ & often informal advice & advisory support to decision makers throughout the policy process, playing the role of a trusted, independent and experienced critical friend
11 – Other roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and emergent IUCN policy influencing roles • e.g. Identifying and creating policy ‘champions’

Figure 4: Examples of role tagging in IDR 3 - FLR

6 - Policy advocating	8 - Providing technical assistance & capacity building services	10 - Playing an on-going trusted partner role
<p>Supporting policy planning & capacity building of decision makers</p> <p>One of the IUCN ORMACC team's key ways of working (and frequently referenced in KIIs as one of IUCN's most valuable attributes and skills in policy influencing) is supporting decision makers in policy planning processes through an on-going, informal and iterative capacity support process. This often informal long-term process not only enhances decision makers' technical knowledge and capacity on an issue such as FLR, but also helps build the trust, confidence and ability of decision makers to navigate often complex, dynamic and contested policy processes. The support provided by key individuals in the ORMACC team (particularly in the Regional HQ and Guatemala Country Office) is characterized as being flexible, iterative and responsive. This has been enabled by two wider processes uncovered and illustrated by this In Depth Review:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That the ORMACC team have managed to turn a series of projects into an on-going and evolving programme of support, 2) That the ORMACC team have managed to create deep, long-term and trusted relationships with key decision makers, particularly in Costa Rica, Guatemala and El Salvador. <p>The ORMACC team have worked in comparable ways with Ministers of Environment of Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala. Informally, all the former Ministers interviewed talked about the genuine commitment and passion IUCN bring to these restoration policy processes.</p>		

3 - Developing evidence-based methods, tools & standards	5 - Communicating, disseminating & knowledge sharing	6 - Policy advocating
<p>ROAM & subsequent FLR in Guatemala - ROAM was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN), and the National Forest Institute (INAB), part of the Ministry of Agriculture. ROAM was used to map potential areas for FLR, and to inform and develop Guatemala's National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy (and related implementation plan) and Guatemala's PROBOSQUE Law. The Guatemalan Restoration Roundtable proposed 17 restoration actions, with a strong focus on agroforestry and silvopastoral systems as well as increasing reforestation of mahogany.</p> <p>This process led to the development of the new Forest Incentive Programme: the PROBOSQUE, built on a previous national incentives programme. The role of PROBOSQUE is to serve as an instrument to execute forest laws and follow proposals presented by civil society. PROBOSQUE invests in the protection, production and recovery activities for forest ecosystems and plantations. In doing so, it will help recover tree cover and generate more than 900,000 new rural jobs in tree cover protection and restoration. Through PROBOSQUE, the Government will make an annual investment of US\$ 39 million, in addition to the US\$ 76 million expected from the private sector to support reforestation, restoration and sustainable forest management.</p> <p>The MARN and INAB have built their internal capacity to use ROAM and are still using its inputs, building on these each year.</p>		

7. Factors constraining and enabling IUCN's policy influencing

Chapter 7 provides a synthesis of the factors constraining and enabling IUCN's policy influencing processes. It largely draws on those sections of the IDRs in the Miro platform, integrated with the Sense-making 1 contributions and discussions. The factors are explicitly not split by a simple enabling and constraining dichotomy as the evaluation team found that many of the emerging factors tend to be thematic, containing both enabling and constraining elements.

7.1 - IUCN's ability to work as a Union

A key enabling feature common to most of the IDRs is IUCN's ability to work as a Union, combining the strengths of the Commissions, Members and Secretariat. Commission expertise and volunteerism drove the science behind at least four of the IDRs, including NbS, BBNJ, KMGBF and KBAs. The Commissions represent a stable source of expertise which support the highly technical nature of IUCN's scientific offering. For the work in ORMACC, the Secretariat and Members worked closely together. Without the breadth of Commission expertise and the volunteerism, the generation of knowledge and subsequent influence simply would not be possible.

A Union-wide approach to developing the Standard for NbS, for example, provided the basis for a unified and focused application of the Union's collective conservation science and knowledge. The comparative advantage of IUCN is the credibility of its science and knowledge because of its Membership. But the downside is the amount / quantity of knowledge that is being produced across the Union, and how this is contained, tagged and tracked, quality assured, synthesised, knowledge managed / brokered, shared, and used. This issue of consistent, high quality, unified knowledge sharing is something that the Secretariat Knowledge Management team is continually addressing - unifying the quantity, quality, clarity and consistency of IUCN 'messaging'. The Standard provides a strong example of how this can be enabled.

7.2 - IUCN's Status as a UN Observer and Intergovernmental Organization

IUCN's status as a UN Observer gives IUCN special access to, and influence over the sessions and the work of the UN General Assembly. While this status with the UN General Assembly does not automatically confer the same status in other processes, IUCN benefits, nevertheless, of an IGO Observer status in other UN Conventions. In the BBNJ negotiations, IUCN's role as an intergovernmental body with observer status at the UN gave its experts privileged access to key meetings from the very beginning of the process, enabling its Commission Members to accumulate knowledge about the process, the discussions and the key actors. Similarly, IUCN was able to intervene at many points in the Post-2020 negotiations that led to the KMGBF by providing technical advice, participating in contact groups, making interventions during negotiations, working bilaterally with Parties to sensitise them to IUCN's position and with individual Members in a mutually supportive manner so that everyone could "pull in the same direction."

7.3 - Perception of IUCN as a trusted provider of knowledge and advice

IUCN is generally perceived to be a trusted provider of knowledge and advice. In each of the IDRs, IUCN played the role of advisor and knowledge provider. For the KBA IDR, IUCN is praised for its network of KBA experts and their availability to provide technical support, however, some cautioned that this network has finite limits that this can impede the ability of governments and private sector entities to use the KBA Standard.

7.4 - IUCN's ability to crystallize and clearly communicate complex topics

IUCN is able to crystallize and clearly communicate complex topics for policy stakeholders. NbS is a relatively easy concept to convey which is attractive to multiple audiences in a time of societal challenges - the idea of working with nature to produce a 'win-win' solution. NbS as a concept has the capacity to enhance cross-institutional collaboration. This has enabled the broad growth in interest in NbS and the relative ease of uptake, such as getting references to NbS written into NDCs and NBSAPs, for example, ten references to NbS in the new EU NBSAP.

Similarly, the position of IUCN leading into the Post-2020 negotiations was simple and powerful. From the start of the negotiations, the position was a bit more complex and wide-ranging, but by the time of COP15, IUCN had simplified its main position into less than a dozen must-haves with supporting positions on technical issues and means of implementation.

7.5 - IUCN and policy networks

In addition to facilitating the network that is the Union, IUCN routinely participates in networks with diverse stakeholders seeking to influence policy. The Key Biodiversity Areas partnership is one such example. The BBNJ process was unusually inclusive, especially of civil society with their inputs highly valued. They were organised primarily through the High Seas Alliance. This was an important network which over time facilitated a great deal of information exchange and provided a site for negotiation between experts, advocates and state representatives.

7.6 - Context and time

Some of the most context-specific enabling and constraining factors relate to the length of engagement: leadership changes over time, civil society alliances are formed, certain actors (such as the environmental movement in Europe) strengthen or wane, governments change, all of which have an effect on IUCN's ability to influence policy. The timing of certain negotiations can also play a role, bringing advantages and disadvantages to IUCN's position depending on the context. As seen in the ORMACC IDR, IUCN brought the right people to the right places at the right times, enabling considerable influence.

Some of these effects are positive and some of them are constraining. In ORMACC and Europe, there is a fear that a shift to a more right-wing orientation will slow recent gains in restoration policy and conservation in general. In Europe, a key administrator was a staunch supporter of IUCN, however, this position is now filled by another, who is less supportive. In two cases, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown was cited as slowing negotiations and results, however in the case of recognition of NbS by the Rio Conventions, the timing lined up well.

7.7 - Formal nature of policy negotiations

A key constraining factor for IUCN is the nature of some policy negotiations, sometimes its formality, the degree to which issues are contested and the extent to which the stakeholder mix is crowded and diverse. For the UN and the European Commission, the field is quite crowded with advocacy organisations and IUCN's voice is perhaps not heard as clearly. For both the UN and European Commission, IUCN has both an insider and outsider perspective, as a trusted advisor on the one hand, but also not as a Party to either body, thus somewhat constraining IUCN's ability to influence as this must be done via the Parties to the conventions. Nevertheless, at least in the case of the KMGBF, IUCN Commissions and Members (supported by the Secretariat) appeared to have an outsized influence over the result, evidenced by the close alignment between IUCN's position and the result, and evidence that IUCN contributed and will contribute considerable science to support implementation and monitoring of the KMGBF. IUCN Commissions also contributed considerable expertise into assessments that the Parties considered in the negotiations, such as the IPBES assessment on invasive alien species. The assessment was completed after the KMGBF, however the strong contribution of the SSC-ISSG was noted and praised by the Parties to the Convention.

In Europe, there is a difficult political context. The field of sustainable agriculture is highly contested and features powerful interests who are well organised and are able to shape key decisions often behind closed doors. In a polarised context, decision makers are often forced to take sides. However, this provides opportunities for IUCN to play the role of broker and mediator. Also, the way in which some large policies are revised in the EU - such as the Common Agricultural Policy - leaves little to no room for substantive change to occur. Also, an overall strengthening of the environmental field in terms of players in Europe, while a success in its own right, has nevertheless given IUCN less space to operate.

7.8 - Opposition to ideas

In some cases, there was opposition to ideas introduced by IUCN or there were challenges around framing of the issues. In four of the IDRs this was identified as a constraining factor. Key Parties opposed or tried to subvert the concept of Nature-based Solutions and Key Biodiversity Areas. In the context of the BBNJ negotiations, the idea of marine protected areas for the high seas took some time to gain consensus amongst negotiators. The final text of the KMGBF did not include KBAs as a standard for spatial planning, even though the concept of spatial planning was included. However, the fact that the KBA designation is not legally binding was also attractive to some Parties. The IUCN Secretariat produced a stakeholder map to support its work on the KMGBF that “named names” target by target, identifying where the support and opposition to the IUCN position lay in the Parties.

Specifically in the case of NbS, oil-producer states (among others), oil companies, other corporate green washing groups have all tried to adopt distorted versions of NbS either to promote false green credentials or as part of a more sophisticated strategy to enable business as usual fossil fuel extraction and consumption, balanced or offset by NbS. IUCN has learned to be vigilant to recognizing these false narratives by vested interests, and an active debate is ongoing within IUCN's NbS core group over the extent to which it is IUCN's role, through the Standard, to explicitly 'call out' bad NbS strategies and solutions being promoted and claimed by these groups.

For the BBNJ negotiations, key tensions which delayed the treaty arose between negotiators from rich countries and those from resource poor countries. These tensions often reflected how the high seas was framed, with rich countries seeing it primarily as a conservation and protection issue and those from more resource poor countries seeing it as one of access to and control over resources.

7.9 - Diversity of views within the Union

The diversity of the Membership and Commission experts is simultaneously a source of IUCN's strength and a tremendously complicating factor, the sheer diversity of viewpoints ensure that attaining an IUCN position is a complex exercise. In the KBA context, multiple opinions were captured across the Union regarding the best ways to promote KBAs, whether to take a perfect-science or practical- based approach of the Global Standard, and whether KBAs should mandate political commitments.

7.10 - Financing

IUCN's ability to support policy influencing activities and policy implementation is naturally constrained by its business model that has a high ratio of restricted funding to unrestricted funding. Throughout the IDRs, there are examples of IUCN struggling to fund its policy influencing work (such as in Europe) or secure financing for implementation (such as in ORMACC). On the other hand, the project on the 30 x 30 Challenge provided an example of IUCN using a modestly funded project to secure commitments and raise substantial funding for protected and conserved areas.

7.11 - Events as critical junctures

The role of events or critical junctures, such as WCC or leaderships changes are key contextual factors in understanding IUCN's policy work. These events can be helpful or disruptive to IUCN's overall approach to policy. The World Conservation Congress results in a Programme and body of Resolutions that guide IUCN's policy direction. Changes in leadership featured in IDR2 and IDR3 and change in Directors General always have an influence on IUCN's approach to policy influencing. And of course, COVID, disrupted the timing of the KMGBF negotiations, delaying the agreement for nearly two years.

PART B - IUCN'S POLICY INFLUENCING CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions (positive and negative) are driven off the Part A findings. They are a team-level synthesis drawing on multiple sources from across the IDRs, insights and conclusions generated from participants at the first sense-making workshop (see the SM1 section of the [Miro platform](#)), and our own collective knowledge and understanding as the Evaluation Team. We have organised the conclusions around the conceptual framework spheres and components.

8. Conclusions from the sphere of control

8.1 Strategy and direction

Here we bring out the main conclusions related to the strategy and direction of IUCN's policy work.

- 8.1.1 IUCN – the secretariat as well as its Commissions - demonstrates good capacity and aptitude in policy analysis to inform strategy.** However, with some exceptions, this has tended to be done tacitly through conversation on an ad hoc basis, which while pragmatic, doesn't facilitate review and feedback from people beyond a core group of people involved in policy work.
- 8.1.2 IUCN's objectives generally responded to broader conservation and development objectives and contributed to ensuring new issues were put on the agenda.** The relative emphasis within problem definition, objectives and narratives on the conservation versus socio-economic dimension varies across IDRs, and sometimes evolves over time. How objectives are framed can determine its institutional location as well as the receptivity of target audiences.
- 8.1.3 Much of IUCN's policy work across IDRs is at a global level in the negotiation of technical and legal instruments where primary audiences include policy makers and negotiators.** With changes in practice ultimately made in national and local spaces, Members and Commission members are expected to bridge the gap between international and local level change. However, the role of Members in doing this was beyond the scope of this review.
- 8.1.4 Policy and practice are the result of an interweaving of the intentions and actions of a multitude of actors in specific spaces and places shaped by politics and power, resulting in an 'entanglement'.** IUCN has shown itself in finding and engaging with individuals and collectives who are embedded in this entanglement, especially the most influential, using evidence they respond to best - a process which is demanding and labour intensive.
- 8.1.5 Much of IUCN's policy work draws on insider and technical approaches to engagement.** But this hasn't stopped IUCN from taking positions and being ambitious. On occasion political engagement was just as important as technical engagement, which IUCN has proven it can do well. IUCN has also taken outsider approaches to its policy work, responding to pressures, possibly to receive more public recognition.
- 8.1.6 Much of the knowledge generated and shared by IUCN falls into the category of research and expert advice.** However, our analysis highlights the importance of generating and sharing policy implementation experience and stakeholder perspectives in its policy work.
- 8.1.7 IUCN has tended to learn from and adapt its strategy, ensuring it takes a context specific and responsive approach.** Collection, analysis and making sense of relevant information has taken place in ad hoc, tacit ways through conversation and communication within core groups of people involved in policy influencing work.
- 8.1.8 A lot of IUCN's work takes place with and through networks, routinely and on an ad hoc basis, acknowledging that it cannot bring about change on its own.** Working in networks enabled IUCN and its collaborators to provide each other with mutually reinforcing support enabling them to more effectively deliver collectively on their policy goals. This made being recognised for its individual contributions, especially externally, harder. Moreover, differences within the networks that IUCN operated in could put pressure on its Members and their relations with one another, requiring time and energy to find common ground. This picture is further

complicated by the fact that IUCN is itself a network, or Membership organisation that includes in its Membership often the same states and nongovernmental organisations that it engages with in its policy work – thus blurring the boundary between its internal and external worlds. The need for legitimacy from its Members in its policy work made signing off on relatively ‘hard’ collective actions or policy positions challenging.

- 8.1.9 IUCN’s policy influencing has been particularly successful when the Secretariat - Members - Commissions and Framework Partners have been aligned on a shared policy influencing objective (and long term commitment) from the outset.** Both IDR 1 NbS and IDR 3 ORMACC FLR are clear examples. NbS was enabled by the long-term and aligned commitment and financial support of some of IUCN’s framework donors (AFD & SIDA initially and then BMU & EC more recently). ORMACC FLR’s policy influencing success rests on alignment and collaboration between the ORMACC office and a set of Mesoamerican Ministries of Environment who are also IUCN State Members.

8.2 Governance and management

Here we provide the main conclusions in relation to the governance and management of IUCN’s policy work:

- 8.2.1 Resolutions and Recommendations drive IUCN’s policy mandate.** IUCN’s policy work generally responds to the needs of its Members through its Resolutions process. However, the diversity of IUCN’s Membership is both a strength and a challenge – where reaching an IUCN position could be a complicated exercise. Our analysis, nevertheless, illustrated that there may be significant reasons to pursue policy work in a certain area, but without the necessary internal legitimacy, in the form of a resolution or recommendation to do so – e.g. sustainable agriculture in the European region in the late 2010s (but operating within the framework given by the statutory objectives and mission of IUCN). While Resolutions provided guidance, they left those doing policy work on the ground with sufficient room for manoeuvre during policy influencing processes.
- 8.2.2 IUCN’s policy influencing strategy, process and results generally and naturally starts with and through IUCN’s Members.** IUCN’s broad and diverse Membership is a unique comparative and strategic advantage when it comes to policy influencing. IUCN frequently embarks on policy influencing processes from the broad foundation of an engaged, informed and (generally) aligned Membership. The WCC Resolutions process is critical to providing both the foundation and the strategic direction / objectives of any policy influencing process IUCN undertakes. Once a Resolution is in place, IUCN teams (Secretariat with Commissions and Member support) have become adept at ‘leveraging’ Union alignment to inform, influence and advocate for policy recognition, formulation and adoption.
- 8.2.3 Leadership for policy work tends to be located in a small group of committed individuals whose roles include a range of tasks, of which engaging/influencing policy is just one.** In some cases, these groups were overwhelmed as they took on multiple roles in high pressure situations. Core groups have often coalesced around a particular personality – a skilled and experienced individual who we might call a policy entrepreneur possessing both ‘hard’ technical skills and ‘soft’ influencing related skills. There is often a lack of transparency around who is ‘recruited’ to a core group, which can create tensions especially amongst those who are not selected. A review of the European office showed how the successive ‘policy entrepreneurs’ have grown policy teams paid for through donor-funded projects.
- 8.2.4 Senior leaders (i.e. directors within the Secretariat) can and have played an important role in shaping and enhancing IUCN’s policy work, and are best able to do so, when supported by their colleagues, staff and managers.** Operating successfully, and adhering to IUCN’s one programme charter, meant finding the right balance between the degree of control the centre needs to retain and the autonomy required by those doing the work so they could manoeuvre successfully and put their ideas into action in complex and dynamic contexts and thus remain motivated. Our analysis highlighted the need for different parts of the Union (e.g. Commission Members, headquarters) to negotiate ways of working to avoid/manage difficulties arising from competition and ensure sustainability.

- 8.2.5 Across IDRs, IUCN has consulted both internally and externally on its policy work using a variety of methods; this is especially strong at a regional level.** ORMACC has run formal consultation processes, while the ERO has established a EU Policy Advisory Group comprising a variety of IUCN Members, which is consulted for advice on an ad hoc basis. Formal policy pronouncements are formally signed off within the Secretariat while stakeholders were often consulted in the production and sharing of knowledge products. However, consulting effectively was challenging given the limited time and resources of those consulted, and consultation timelines also meant that IUCN wasn't always able to exploit policy windows on a timely basis.
- 8.2.6 IUCN's work involving large delegations at global events has tended to benefit from formal management and support from headquarters, which has been welcomed by those involved.** However, there is limited evidence, beyond an after action review, of IUCN actors taking time to formally learn from and reflect on their work together during such processes.
- 8.2.7 IUCN's capacity to influence policy is yet to be optimised through improved coordination.** There have been positive outcomes as captured in the IDRs, yet challenges remain to improve coordination efforts both across the Secretariat, regional and country offices, as well as across the Union.
- 8.2.8 We find across IDRs that Commission Members undertook significant amounts of unfunded work, motivated by factors including the acquisition of knowledge and recognition in their fields of interest, making ownership of intellectual property and receiving individual credit key.** The majority of Members have been able to merge their work on Commissions into their salaried positions at academic and other institutions - an option more available in the Global North than in the South, which creates disparities in who can and can't participate in IUCN's policy work. Challenges around ownership of intellectual property can arise due to IUCN's desire for a collective identity.
- 8.2.9 Some policy influencing efforts have benefited from a share of IUCN's unrestricted or core funding, yet this is a rarity with policy influencers having to mobilise donor project funding in support of a policy influencing strategy or at least elements of it.** However, donors were often reluctant to fund influencing work unless it benefited them directly, leaving IUCN actors to produce deliverables to satisfy requirements. Different funders and types of projects offer varying levels of flexibility. The continual search for funding risks turning IUCN into a consultancy firm, and brings its own challenges. IUCN Secretariat may find itself in competition for funding with other Members of its Union; or funding may come from donors or other parties who are also participants in an influencing or negotiation process, thus creating conflicts that need to be managed.
- 8.2.10 Project-restricted funding does include some useful examples of how projects can support policy work directly, and IUCN could take better advantage of this in a coordinated effort to support policy objectives.** The portfolio delivers outcomes at national level and at times beyond, and this can be a way to secure both funding and continuation of activities to push for certain policy objectives. ORMACC (IDR3) managed to build a policy influencing FLR 'programme' out of projects, to generate knowledge, test new methodologies, support policy implementation, generate voluntary commitments, formulate law and regulatory mechanisms and undertake monitoring. Mobilising funding within this context requires skills and experience to identify and exploit opportunities within various structures while keeping in sight key policy objectives, suggesting an entrepreneurial mindset. In some cases IUCN actors have not had the capacity to mobilise it effectively even with the availability of funding.
- 8.2.11 Good policy work requires skilled and motivated personnel who are retained for the long term and have opportunities to learn and improve.** Our analysis suggests this has been affected by organisational restructures, departure of key leaders, the loss of funding along with insufficient autonomy. Moreover, the environmental sector has grown (especially in the European region) to incorporate consultancies, NGOs, industry groups amongst others, giving staff more choice in the job market.
- 8.2.12 IUCN's complex and expansive governance structure created challenges for IUCN in creating a 'we' identity, with Members not always feeling a part of IUCN and its work** (despite the resolutions process), Commissions having their own brands and Commission Members often 'wearing multiple hats' and seeking individual credit.

8.3 Activities and outputs

Here we provide the main conclusions in relation to the activities and outputs of IUCN's policy work:

- 8.3.1 IUCN engages in a range of activities and generates many high quality outputs in support of its policy work directly related to the policy priorities under discussion.** The volunteerism and expertise of the Commissions is critical to this work. This includes the activities of knowledge generation; participation in alliances and partnerships, supporting Members; consultations and position setting, knowledge sharing, informing and capacity building; participation in formal negotiations and other policy meetings; projects and field demonstrations; secretariat and governance services and the World Conservation Congress' Motions and Resolutions process. Supporting outputs are numerous and can be characterised in terms of knowledge outputs, Resolutions that frame IUCN's positions, position and information papers, events, technical assistance to governments and other outputs designed to sensitise Parties and Members and a supporting project portfolio.
- 8.3.2 IUCN produces a variety and high volume of outputs related to its activities** in the form of knowledge (standards, tools, assessments, data and indicators, and scientific papers), inputs to policy negotiations (Resolutions that frame IUCN's positions, positions and information papers), communications pieces (media events, press releases, open letters), and outputs that inform (webinars, workshops, capacity building materials, roundtables). Outputs are designed to sensitise Parties and Members, inform a supporting project portfolio, or inform, guide or persuade other external actors.
- 8.3.3 IUCN's outputs were widely praised for their high quality.** IUCN is often requested to provide technical input and there are many examples of IUCN's knowledge being used to inform negotiations and policy implementation. Commission outputs, in particular, were widely praised for their high quality and there is evidence to suggest that IUCN has provided quality inputs to IPBES assessments, for example.
- 8.3.4 The scientific/research evidence-base and conceptual foundations underpinning the policy influencing processes illustrated in the IDRs have emerged from the Commissions and the world-class academic expertise of the Commission members.** This is particularly the case if the policy influencing process involves the creation of a Standard - IDR 1 NbS through the work of CEM / WCEL, IDR 6 KBAs through the work of the WCPA and SSC.
- 8.3.5 IUCN undertakes several activities and produces outputs aimed at sensitising governments to their positions and knowledge, and these need socialising across the Union.** IUCN's secretariat and governance services, hosting workshops and webinars, holding bilateral meetings, and the World Conservation Motions and Resolutions process are examples of how IUCN achieves this. Outputs include publications and timely briefs for policy makers. There are several examples of IUCN engaging in activities designed to prepare governments and other stakeholders to engage in IUCN knowledge and positions. Our analysis highlights the need to socialise knowledge products with stakeholders if they are to have any impact.
- 8.3.6 Small events are important for deliberation and discussion.** Our analysis highlights the influential role of workshops which allow representatives to attend in a private or relaxed capacity, allowing them to be 'vulnerable' and where IUCN experts can bring knowledge to bear, helping to unblock issues and work towards solutions.
- 8.3.7 Across the IDRs, there were several noteworthy examples of activities and outputs that were deemed to be particularly influential.** A non-exhaustive list includes preparatory activities in the context of ORMACC restoration, BBNJ negotiations, engagement with the European Commission. Key knowledge products, such as IUCN's input to the IPBES assessment on invasive alien species, as well as flagship knowledge products such as the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, among others.
- 8.3.8 Not all IUCN activities and outputs are successful.** Examples referenced where IUCN has been less successful include:

- Producing overall IUCN position papers ‘at the last minute’ for large global conferences and events (3 Rio Conventions) where insufficient preparation time sometimes means it is not possible to define a distinct and clear position and voice for the Union, and there is often a crowded field of influencing organisations all of whom are sharing and promoting ‘competing’ position papers.
- IUCN promotion of the uptake and use of a range of tools - understandably some are more successful than others.

9. Conclusions from sphere of influence

Here we provide the main conclusions from IUCN's policy influencing sphere of influence – immediate and intermediate outcomes:

- 9.1.1 Immediate outcomes are a crucial part of the process of linking *what IUCN does* to more meaningful change** - The IDRs demonstrate that a crucial yet often intangible and under-reported element of IUCN's policy influencing support relates to immediate outcome-level changes with direct audiences and stakeholders. These changes sit between outputs and more meaningful intermediate outcomes and relate to changes in knowledge, shared understanding, capacities, confidence, behaviours, networks and relationships etc. In developing an overall IUCN policy influencing theory of change, and/or more specific strategies to meet a particular policy influencing objective, the nature of the immediate outcomes anticipated should be explicitly discussed and defined.
- 9.1.2 IUCN's policy influencing comparative advantage is being able to integrate and balance 'hard' technical skills in conservation science with 'softer' knowledge intermediary skills & trusted partner relationships.** IUCN does this best as a Union - in contexts where they are able to unify their Membership and translate project funding opportunities into more coherent policy influencing 'programmes'.
- "The ORMACC team always wants to maintain and strengthen the technical capacity of partners - governments and communities. They have the necessary credibility on technical terms (quality of the staff) but then also the ORMACC team can speak the political language, and don't need to claim their inputs or have role recognition."* IDR 3 KII
- 9.1.3 Successful policy influencing programmes that are 'greater than the sum of their project parts', require a specific, contextualised and periodically updated policy influencing programmatic approach theory of change** that guides the Union's work (Secretariat, Regional Offices, Commissions and Members) in its sphere of control (strategy, activities and outputs) with expected outcomes in its spheres of influence and interest.
- 9.1.4 Balancing serving the Membership with adequate recognition** - The IUCN Secretariat exists to serve the Union, particularly the Membership. This unique attribute means IUCN does not need to claim credit, and sometimes even under-plays its own contribution to successful policy influencing processes. In fact, in certain contexts, IUCN may under-claim to its detriment in terms of recognition of the Union's collective aptitude and capacity in policy influencing, underplaying the value this offers and consequently not actively attracting donor funding for policy influencing work.
- 9.1.5 The right people, at the right time, in the right place** - As well as recognising the value of clear policy influencing strategy and planning, IUCN should also recognise how powerful the combination of bringing capable and influential people together around an issue at the right time. This combination, involving an element of serendipity, explains much of the success of the IDR 1 NbS and IDR 3 FLR cases. IUCN, as well as defining policy influencing objectives, should look for conditions and contexts which enable change - that right people, at the right time, and in the right place.
- 9.1.6 IUCN's structural governance is unique and uniquely enabling** - Taking the IDR 3 FLR as an example, working together restoration experts in Secretariat HQ and Regional Offices, combined with the IUCN's Membership, meant that government decision makers, NGOs and community-based organisations, and conservation activists "sat down together" in addressing the FLR policy influencing objective. This is enabled only by IUCN's structural governance, is pretty unique, and takes place in multiple contexts, settings and scales - sub-national, national, regional and global. It is IUCN's unique policy influencing 'secret sauce' and should be more explicitly defined, shared and explored.

10. Conclusions from sphere of interest

Here we provide the main conclusions from IUCN's policy influencing sphere of interest – impact:

- 10.1.1 **(Evidence of) policy influencing results takes time** - At headline value this is no surprise. But it is worth reflecting that several of the policy influencing processes can be traced back over 20 years. In contrast only one IDR - IDR 3 FLR - is considered to have delivered genuine nature, climate and human wellbeing impact. There are numerous implications of this including: the need to develop and revise long term policy influencing strategies and theories of change; the need to devise funded policy influencing 'programmes' comprised of sets of projects; and, developing a clearer sense of how IUCN responds in different policy influencing stages, spheres and contexts.
- 10.1.2 **Defining what success looks like in policy influencing** - only IDR 3 FLR can claim to have contributed to genuine impact in terms of positive changes to biodiversity, climate and/or human wellbeing. This is an important wider point which illustrates that positive policy influence is often still a long way from genuine impact. This is a particularly salient point in the context of the urgency to address the related global societal challenges - biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution and degradation, and poverty, inequality, and social justice.
- 10.1.3 **IUCN does not generally or always have a shared, clear and coherent strategy to address the "So what? And now what?" questions once they achieve policy influence.** IDR 1 illustrates that IUCN's policy influencing goal for NbS was achieving recognition in the text of the 3 Rio Conventions. But recognition in a Convention text is not nature positive impact. There remains a long change pathway to genuine impact. IUCN does not have a clear and coherent strategy (or theory of change) after policy adoption - neither the anticipated change pathways nor the roles IUCN should play after this. Or put another way, IUCN has a clear idea of its policy influencing strategy and roles when working within the sphere of control, but far less of an explicit and shared understanding of its policy influences strategies and roles in the spheres of influence and interest.

11. IUCN's policy influencing 'roles' conclusions

Exploring IUCN's policy influencing roles – Through a synthesis of the evaluative evidence ('tagging' the observed IDR results according to the policy influencing 'roles' IUCN as a Union plays), we were able to define a simple, 'emergent' framework. IUCN plays these roles in different combinations, engaging different combinations of Union constituents - Secretariat, Members, Commissions, funders and partners - depending on the context and the stage of a policy influencing process. The role tagging exercise provides some headline conclusions which are summarised below:

- 11.1.1 IUCN plays a broader range of policy influencing roles than it is generally recognised for** - playing a more, 'sophisticated', value-adding policy influencing roles beyond the generation and 'supply push' dissemination of scientific evidence.
- 11.1.2 Foundational roles common to all of IUCN's policy influencing processes are:**
 - 1 - Generating research, evidence & new knowledge
 - 2 - Building shared awareness, understanding and buy-in
 - 5 - Communicating, disseminating and knowledge sharing
- 11.1.3 IUCN then tends to work with Commission experts & Members to:**
 - 3 - Developing evidence-based methods, tools and standards
 - 4 - Facilitating Union Member and partner collaboration
- 11.1.4 The longer the duration of a policy influencing process the more sophisticated, dynamic & multi-layered the roles become.** As a policy influencing process progresses from the sphere of interest to more meaningful change in the sphere of influence, the policy influencing roles that IUCN plays change, involving a broader range of actors and multi-layered/multi-scaled policy influencing processes. These policy processes, and the combination of roles they entail, are no longer centrally controlled and coordinated by the Secretariat:
 - 6 - Policy advocating - advancing an explicit IUCN policy position or making a case (publicly)
 - 7 – Engaging and convening networks – developing or influencing policy by convening relevant elements of the IUCN Union together with aligned framework partners, NGO partners, and UN-system organisations
 - 8 – Providing technical assistance and capacity building services – where a series or combination of broadly aligned IUCN 'projects' from an informal yet coherent policy-influencing 'programme' (which is 'greater than the sum of its parts' in policy influencing terms)
- 11.1.5 From policy influencing projects to 'programmes'** - when an informal but coherent longer-term policy influencing programme has been created, this tends to be built and resourced around the combination of two roles:
 - 8 - Providing technical assistance and capacity building services
 - 9 - Piloting & demonstration
- 11.1.6 IUCN as an on-going trusted partner** - In the most successful policy influencing processes - those that reach the sphere of interest in terms of policy financing and implementation - IUCN plays this more informal, on-going, flexible and adaptive role. In policy influencing terms IUCN is not known for this role but it is the 'glue' that holds successful influencing processes together:
 - 10 - Playing an on-going 'trusted partner' role - on demand, often informal advice and advisory support to decision makers throughout the policy process, playing the role of a trusted, independent and experienced critical friend.

- 11.1.7 There is more analysis and reflection for IUCN and its partners to do on the nature of the policy influencing roles they play, at what points and in what contexts.** For example, roles 1-3 can be relatively easily projectized, indicators relatively easily devised, results relatively easily presented, and hence more easily and discretely funded. But these tend to deliver lower order, more tightly bounded policy influencing results within the sphere of interest.
- 11.1.8 There is a lack of shared understanding (or an IUCN policy influencing theory of change fragmentation) across the Union in terms of the roles it should play** – when it comes to effective policy influencing, *who is best placed to play what roles, when, in what combinations, and in what contexts?*
- 11.1.9 This policy influencing fragmentation is most acute when policy influencing processes reach the sphere of influence and interest.** Paradoxically, this is where IUCN can deliver its most significant policy influencing results. Yet the policy influencing roles required of IUCN to do this are also harder to define, demonstrate and fund.
- 11.1.10 Role 10 - playing an on-going ‘trusted partner’ role - is IUCN’s most unique, and value adding role.** It is the role where IUCN as a Union has a unique comparative advantage. Yet it remains the hardest to demonstrate and fund.

PART C - IUCN POLICY INFLUENCING RECOMMENDATIONS - FUTURE DIRECTIONS

12. Recommendations

Our recommendations aim to provide a systematic and holistic approach to the challenges faced by IUCN documented in the conclusions section. As such, we do not take the approach of matching conclusions to recommendations on a one-to-one basis, instead taking an approach of providing recommendations, if implemented evenly across IUCN, should improve IUCN's overall policy influence. As such, the recommendations are aimed at all parts of the Union – the Secretariat, Commissions and Members – seeking to address challenges around how IUCN plans and prioritizes its policy work and how IUCN documents and makes sense, supporting business processes around portfolio development, financing (from multiple angles), enhancing capacity competencies and leveraging all components of the Union.

The evaluation has produced 12 recommendations. The recommendations are driven off the evidence-based findings (Part A) and particularly the conclusions (Part B). This final set of recommendations has been refined through the two collaborative sensemaking workshops – Sensemaking 1 which brought IUCN stakeholder insight and experience to bear on the evaluation conclusions, and Sensemaking 2 which brought IUCN stakeholder insight and experience to bear on an initial draft set of recommendations. The outputs generated by both these sensemaking workshops are available for review in the evaluation in-depth reviews (IDR) [platform hosted on Miro](#). Each recommendation includes the relevant Union constituents at which the recommendation is directed.

The recommendations address:

- [Recommendation 1 IUCN policy cycle](#)
- [Recommendation 2 Planning for policy influencing driven off a shared theory of change](#)
- [Recommendation 3 Programme approach](#)
- [Recommendation 4 Documenting, sensemaking and learning](#)
- [Recommendation 5 Project standards](#)
- [Recommendation 6 Upstream activities to support downstream influencing](#)
- [Recommendation 7 Use of unrestricted or framework funding](#)
- [Recommendation 8 Framework Partners](#)
- [Recommendation 9 Competency and capacity in policy influencing for the Secretariat](#)
- [Recommendation 10 Managing and coordinating IUCN's policy work](#)
- [Recommendation 11 IUCN Members and policy influencing](#)
- [Recommendation 12 IUCN Commissions and policy influencing](#)

The recommendations directed at the following Union constituents:

- Secretariat: DG, Finance, HR, Strategic Partnerships, IPC, IPME, Regional Directors, Regional Offices, National Offices, relevant thematic team leaders
- Members: State and government agency, subnational, NGO and IPO
- Commissions: Chairs and knowledge experts
- Council: PPC
- World Conservation Congress: Motions and Resolutions process; Resolutions implementation
- Framework partners

Recommendation 1 IUCN policy cycle: Consider updating the IUCN Policy Cycle, as described in the last evaluation of IUCN's influence on policy ([2005](#)) to better represent the role of knowledge (standards, tools, assessments, data, indicators and meta-data and scientific publications) in IUCN's work on agenda setting, policy development, policy implementation, and policy review. (For IPC)

- Without IUCN's knowledge and the contributions of Commission experts, IUCN's work on policy influencing is not possible in its current form, and this should be recognized as a key part of the IUCN Policy Cycle.
- When planning for policy influence, it is important to also plan for what knowledge will be required to support IUCN's policy objectives.
- In using the policy cycle, IUCN should do so in a critical fashion, taking into account the context and what is required. What constitutes agenda setting, policy formulation or even policy implementation is highly dependent on the context or policy setting in which IUCN and its boundary partners are operating.

Recommendation 2 Planning for policy influencing driven off a shared theory of change: Engage in coordinated planning activities to strengthen IUCN's policy influencing interventions, starting with the development of a universal IUCN policy influencing Theory of Change, drawing on the conclusions of this evaluation. (For IPC, PPC, Chief Scientist, Chief Economist, Commission Chairs, other relevant thematic or regional leads) IUCN Members and the World Conservation Congress)

Activities include (and these should be treated as sub-recommendations):

- 2.1 Develop a **universal IUCN policy influencing Theory of Change**, drawing on the conclusions of this evaluation. The theory of change should highlight: the Union's unique structural governance; IUCN's policy influencing comparative advantage balancing 'hard' technical skills in conservation science with 'softer' knowledge intermediary skills & trusted partner relationships; and, the intermediate outcome nature of meaningful policy influencing results.
- 2.2 Develop a **small set (3 to 4) policy influencing programme theories of change for IUCN's priority policy influencing programmes – see Recommendation 3 below**. We see the International Policy Centre as central to IUCN's policy work and would urge IUCN to bestow some level of authority in the IPC to own, facilitate and coordinate the policy planning and theory of change activities mentioned above.

Recommendation 3 Programme approach: Policy influencing that is 'greater than the sum of its project parts', requires a 'policy influencing programme' approach. Starting with policy objectives, actively assess the project portfolio and pipeline to identify opportunities for a small number of strategic policy influencing programmes. Based on the evaluation conclusions and as a starting point, IUCN policy influencing programmes should be developed for: UNCBD; UNFCCC; BBNJ/High Seas; and, UN Decade on Restoration.

Each policy influencing programme should have a clear, contextualised and periodically updated overall policy objective and accompanying programme theory of change. These should be 'nested' under the universal theory of change above, and specific, contextualised and periodically updated as guides to the Union's programmatic policy influencing work.

As such they should provide a guide or roadmap to the relevant and specific Secretariat, Regional Offices, Commissions and Members stakeholders across the sphere of control (strategy, activities and outputs) towards anticipated or expected outcomes in its spheres of influence and interest. (For: policy leads and all programme-level heads)

Recommendation 4 Documenting, sensemaking and learning : Led by the Secretariat, encourage and formalise activities (products and processes) that routinely, consistently and collaboratively document, sense-make, and adaptively learn within and between IUCN's policy influencing programmes. (For IPC)

IUCN has been effective at documenting technical analysis of gaps and problems, but less effective at documenting policy or political analysis. While a lot of this is done in tacit and ad hoc ways, documenting at least some of this serves to promote transparency, enable others to give feedback and provides a baseline for monitoring purposes.

What to collect data about? Data can refer to some of the components of the framework we have outlined – i.e. IUCN's strategy, governance (how it organises itself), the quality and quantity of outputs and activities, immediate responses to them (such as participant attendance and experience at workshops) as well as outcomes, including changes in policy

content, policy process, relationships between stakeholders, their perceptions and their practices/behaviours. Annex 6 suggests a monitoring log which might be used to collect such information.

The work undertaken by the International Policy Centre over the past ten years to analyse CBD policy, set clear objectives and positions, map supporting and opposing Parties, prepare delegations, plan for and engage in “broad spectrum” activities, document IUCN’s activities at policy events, and document reactions to IUCN’s positions and how IUCN interprets those reactions and to identify future obligations and opportunities, represents an excellent approach. There is a trade-off inherent in this approach - it is rather resource intensive.

Such activities should include:

Documenting policy influencing programmes

- Document policy objectives, positions, delegation preparation, meeting and after action reports, stakeholder analyses, results, implications for IUCN and next steps; manage knowledge (IPC, Regional offices, other thematic teams engaged in policy work) – noting that this is already referenced in *Engaging in International Policy Meetings: a step-by-step guide*, but need to be systematically applied.
- There is scope for better capturing learning on how policy influencing works with IUCN Members at regional, national and sub-national levels and exchanging this learning between regions.
- Promote and amplify success!

Sensemaking and learning

- Create spaces for discussion – planning, reflection, learning and amplifying what works. Include Commissions in sense-making
- Establish a community of practice that includes Secretariat staff drawn from HQ and Regional Offices, Commission Members and interested Members or Councillors
- Continue to engage in activities that help create a collective identity and continue to emphasize the One Programme approach (this seems to work quite well in IUCN policy delegations)

Recommendation 5 Project standards: We recommend a revision to project guidelines and standards focusing specifically on policy aspects of projects to give assistance, example and guidance, but not prescription to project managers designing projects. (For IPC, IPME and Finance)

We take note of the work that IPME is currently engaged in, most notably on developing a qualitative indicator to measure policy influence and upgrades to the Programme and Policy Portal and wholeheartedly support this important work. Guidelines and standards should be helpful, preventing project managers from having to “reinvent the wheel” every time a new project document is written. Any guidelines should also attempt to reflect the diversity of IUCN’s policy influencing work.

This should include:

- Guidelines that help project developers plan for, learn from and measure policy results.
- Guidelines that focus on the roles that IUCN plays in policy influencing and on specific aspects of the policy cycle.
- [with Finance] Clarify guidelines on budgeting for policy influencing work in projects to bring project experts into policy spaces.
- Set some minimum requirements for projects that IUCN implements and executes (not Service Level Agreements).
- Where possible, amplify successful examples documented by evaluations.
- Create and execute a knowledge management plan for the project portfolio, supported by the Programme and Project Portal IT solution.

Recommendation 6 Upstream activities to support downstream influencing: The IUCN Secretariat should plan for and implement projects and activities aimed at supporting State and government and sub-national Members in planning for and implementing their policy obligations and commitments. This should be documented as clearly as possible to ensure that this service to Members is distributed evenly and leaves no-one behind. (For all Regional and National Offices, Commissions)

In addition to other supporting roles that IUCN plays with governments, IUCN can also mobilize resources on behalf of governments to support their implementation of international obligations. The purpose of gaining accreditation under the Global Environment Facility and Green Climate Fund was to position IUCN as an Implementing Agency / Entity so that more resources could be mobilized in support of the IUCN Programme, which is in turn, aligned [will be aligned] to umbrella conventions such as CBD and UNFCCC. In addition to mobilizing resources, there are a host of other activities that the IUCN Secretariat and Commissions could engage in to support governments and increase IUCN's policy influence.

These could include:

- Support the development of national and-sub national planning instruments.
- Providing technical advice.
- Tailoring standards and tools to local context (i.e. translating into local languages).
- Building capacity.
- Supporting legal reform.
- Convening multi-stakeholder, and where appropriate, multi-sector dialogues.
- Supporting the ability of environment oriented ministries to engage the rest of government.
- Supporting and amplifying the voice of Indigenous Peoples' Organization Members in national and sub-national processes.
- Mobilizing large scale resources from the Global Environment Facility and Green Climate Fund and then supporting governments in IUCN's capacity as an Implementing Agency / Entity under those two funds.
- Promoting South-South and triangular sharing of knowledge and experiences.

Planning for and documenting the IUCN Secretariat's efforts to support all categories of Membership (see Recommendations) would go a long way to helping IUCN articulate its value proposition to Members.

Recommendation 7 Use of unrestricted or framework funding: Based on planning developed under Recommendation 2, allocate a percentage of unrestricted funding annually to support policy influencing work. (For the Director General, Chief Financial Officer, with IPC, Regional Offices and other relevant players)

This allocation should be transparent and accountable, supported by:

- Annual work-planning and allocations,
- Annual reporting, and
- Activities under Recommendation 3 for sensemaking, learning and adjust plans for following year based on results and successes.
- Also note that the Policy and Law Center (formerly the IPC) should also work to fundraise for Policy objectives and policy programmes, and coordinate with regions and centres so that project resources can also have an impact on policy influencing.

Recommendation 8 Framework Partners: The evaluation recommends IUCN's Framework Partners to recognize the strength of IUCN's policy influence at all levels, the tremendous value added of Commission volunteerism in generating policy relevant science and to invest new and additional resources earmarked for IUCN's policy influencing work. (For the Framework Partners, Director General and Strategic Partnerships)

This evaluation finds that some of most valuable and sophisticated influence roles that IUCN plays are the most difficult to sustain through project funding and most in need of flexible funding. While we recognize that there are also gains to be made by better aligning the project portfolio to policy objectives, policy influencing is expensive and difficult to resource directly. Generating policy relevant science, extended consultations, convening multi-stakeholder platforms, engaging governments and sub-national entities through technical support and capacity building are some of the areas which are chronically under-funded.

Recommendation 9 Competency and capacity in policy influencing for the Secretariat: With IPC, Human Resources should develop a policy competency framework to be used in the recruitment of key policy-oriented positions such as future Directors General, Regional Directors, Country Representatives, thematic leads and policy officers. (For HR and IPC)

Like any specialized function from project management to financial management, skillsets for engaging in policy influencing are highly specialized. It would be worthwhile to investigate the policy competency frameworks on IUCN Members that are successful in policy influencing (such as the World Wildlife Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society, The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International) and perhaps the competency frameworks of some of the related UN Specialized Agencies (such as UNEP or FAO).

In recent years, the application of competency frameworks has become standard practice in large organizations and this would be a worthwhile exercise for the skills development and recruitment of policy facing positions.

With additional resources, IUCN might also want to consider expanding its cadre of policy officers, probably of higher priority at the Regional level.

While this recommendation is related to individual capacity, capacity can also be grown collectively (see Recommendation 2) through collective sense-making and learning.

Recommendation 10 Managing and coordinating IUCN's policy work: To aid in coordination between IUCN globally and regionally, between Members, Commissions and the Secretariat, use the annual work-planning process to document and compile IUCN's policy influencing work from all corners of the Union. This information could aid in planning (Recommendation 2) and sense-making. (For all "policy teams")

Recognizing that IUCN has demonstrated some good practice in deploying policy engagement strategies and developing procedures for engaging in international policy meetings, there is still scope to improve upon management and coordination of IUCN's policy influencing work. It is perhaps telling that there was no single person who could "paint the entire policy picture." And while this is a characteristic of large, decentralized organizations there is scope for improvement. There is a pretty good understanding of what is happening at the global level and a pretty good understanding of what is happening at the regional level, but we are not convinced that the two levels are completely aware. For example, the feedback the draft report from someone from the global Secretariat suggest that person was unaware that IUCN has applied to become a "Centre of Excellence" under the CBD and KMGBF.

Other mechanisms that IUCN deployed successfully to support coordination include engagement strategies, stakeholder maps (noting Parties in alignment or opposition), delegation briefs, internal strategy notes and delegation/meeting reports. In the context of IUCN's engagement with the Post-2020 negotiations, there was very complete documentation covering eleven points of contact that allowed the evaluation team to see how IUCN was coordinating itself.

It is important for IUCN to also address the equity dimension, ensuring balanced participation in terms of gender, age, and origin (North and South) with full participation of the Commissions and Regional Offices of the Secretariat.

Recommendation 11 IUCN Members and policy influencing: We urge IUCN Members to work with the IUCN Secretariat and Commissions support the implementation of the IUCN Programme and work within their governments to support obligations under international agreements, including, but not limited to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the UN Framework Convention on

Climate Change in a manner that engages other government departments and sectors. (For all categories of Members)

All categories of Membership have roles to play in policy work, but the roles are differentiated.

It is rare for the IUCN Membership to be requested to engage in the implementation of recommendations from IUCN evaluations, however in this case, Members are key to Parties' implementation of international obligations and commitments.

For State, government agency and subnational governments, we see that these Members have agency to undertake policy implementation and the potential to influence other departments of government. Some specific examples of areas where these categories of Membership could help include promoting uptake of IUCN knowledge, particularly standards and tools, creating awareness in other sectors and departments of government, supporting efforts for revising plans (such as NBSAPs), helping convene multi-stakeholder dialogues and support implementation. []

For non-governmental and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations Members, there is a slightly different role to be played in support of policy implementation. To support this recommendation, IUCN may want to engage first in an exercise that maps these two categories of Membership against specific Targets under the aforementioned agreements. For us, one obvious place to start is to map which IGO Members may be in a position to help IUCN and government operationalize Target 3 under the KMGBF.

It would be ideal for IUCN to document this form of Member engagement (Recommendation 3) and feed any learning back into IUCN's planning for policy influence (Recommendation 2).

Recommendation 12 IUCN Commissions and policy influencing: Ensure that draft Commission mandates are well aligned with the policy objectives named in the draft Programme in terms of (1) generating and supporting knowledge for policy, including horizon scanning, standards, tools, indicators, data and meta-data, scientific publications (2) supporting and participating in policy influencing efforts, and (3) supporting capacity building and implementation of policies and (4) linked to (1) generating data and filling indicator/data gaps required for monitoring (at minimum), the KMGBF and SDGs. (For all IUCN Commissions and Commission Chairs)

We recognize that Commission mandates tend to be well aligned with WCC Resolutions and the IUCN Programme, but also take note that some Commissions plan in considerable detail to ensure complete alignment and smooth coordination of Commission experts. We hope, that beyond the mandates approved by WCC, that all Commissions can also workplan against the specifics of the IUCN Programme in a suitable level of detail.

It is worth noting that IUCN is already named as custodian for four of six headline indicators under the KMGBF and several indicators used to monitor the implementation of the SDGs and is named in numerous places as a holder of expertise for future policy monitoring. It is also worth noting that IUCN has developed some useful tools for monitoring, such as Key Biodiversity Areas and the Restoration Barometer, that would provide useful information to sit alongside IUCN's more established monitoring tools that underpin indicators under the KMGBF and SDGs.

Collectively, the IUCN Commissions generate knowledge, without which, IUCN would not have the basis for policy influencing. This needs to be recognized and celebrated collectively by IUCN. Recognizing the contribution of youth in Commissions and experts from the global South is also important. While we did not specifically focus on how recognition could be operationalized, we take note of the World Conservation Congress and the SSC Leaders meeting as two obvious event focused mechanisms. Recognition of the tremendous contribution of Commissions could serve as a means of incentivizing further the participation of individual Commission experts.

13. Outline theory of change

A conventional theory of change is a roadmap for how one plans to achieve a specific change. It lays out steps from e.g. objective and outcome setting, stakeholder identification to specific actions taken to engage them. It also sheds light on underlying assumptions for the plan to succeed and explains why one thinks each step will lead to the next and ultimately one's desired outcomes. However, as we have seen from the six IDRs, objectives, stakeholders, actions and the contexts they take place in vary widely. As the saying goes, 'one size does not fit all'. We therefore propose to step back and highlight how IUCN actors might develop a context specific theory of change by listing the questions they ought to ask themselves.

13.1 – Core building blocks

In developing a theory of change we build on work done by IUCN as well as in this evaluation. We refer to this work as core building blocks. They comprise:

Building block 1 – IUCN's policy cycle: We have adopted IUCN's definition of policy and how IUCN currently defines the policy processes¹². This provides a basis for the Union to start with a shared understanding of what defines 'policy', the key stages in a policy cycle, and hence how policy may be influenced or informed.

Building block 2 - Our conceptual framework: We have adopted the underlying conceptual framework developed for the evaluation. This enables IUCN to demonstrate that policy influence, and positive change through policy influencing takes place in complex contexts. Essentially, it enables IUCN to explore and define *how change happens* in complex contexts - through multiple dynamic, unpredictable and contested pathways, at different scales, geographies, across a multitude of actors and interest groups.

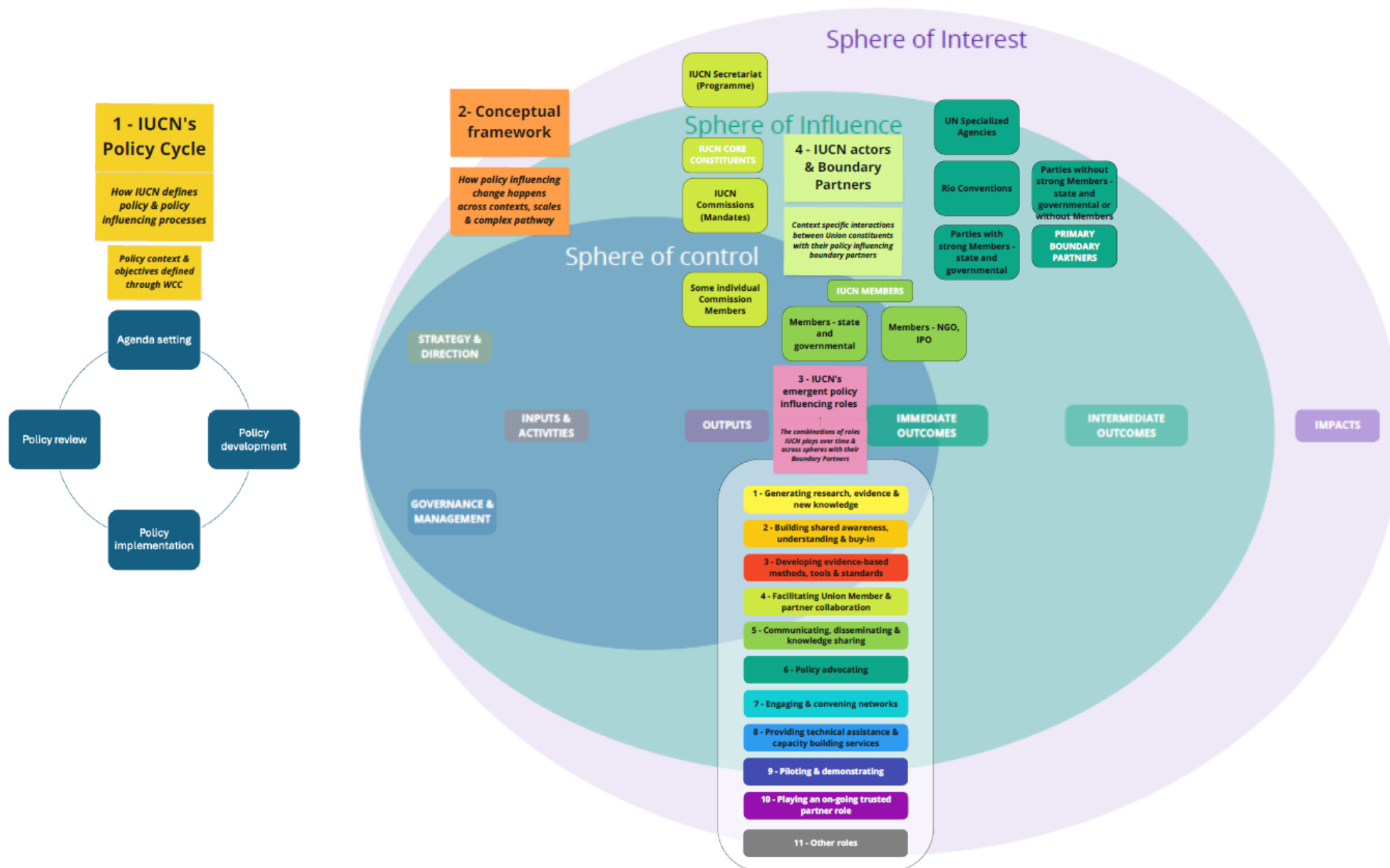
Building block 3 – IUCN's emergent policy influencing roles: We have also adopted the emergent framework from the evaluation – IUCN policy influencing 'roles'. These are combinations of policy influencing roles IUCN can deploy as a Union depending on the context and location with the conceptual framework – Sphere of control, Sphere of influencing, and Sphere of impact. The essence of the roles is that it allows IUCN and its constituents parts, to start to better understand *who deploys which roles in which contexts at different stages of a policy influencing process*.

Building block 4 – IUCN actors and Boundary Partners: We have added actors or 'agency' as the 4th essential building block of an overarching IUCN policy influencing TOC. The essence is to start to more explicitly define and understand *who is responsible for which policy influencing roles*. In the TOC we provide a headline overview of the component elements of the Union as well as their primary 'boundary partners'.

Future iterations of the TOC should aim to further refine and better illustrate the dynamic interactions between Building block 2, 3 and 4 – the policy influencing roles IUCN plays, through which Union component actors, in which contexts, and engaging which Boundary Partners.

The outline TOC diagram below illustrates these building blocks.

¹² [Review of IUCN's policy work, 2005](#), policy cycle described on pp. 35-36



13.2 – A process for further developing IUCN’s policy influencing TOC

Here, we highlight the questions IUCN constituents might ask themselves to develop a more context specific policy influencing theory of change. The questions are organised in 4 stages as follows and illustrated in the diagram below:

- 1) **Defining and analysing the challenge, or problem**
- 2) **Developing a strategy**
- 3) **Ensuring good governance**
- 4) **Implementing, learning and adapting the strategy**

We list the key questions under each stage below and where relevant, list a number of tools which policy teams could use to shape their thinking. We suggest IUCN does not simply stop asking themselves these questions once they reach the end of stage 4 but e.g. integrate their learning from implementation into a redefinition of the problem and its causes (stage 1), running through the cycle on an ongoing basis until objectives have been met.



Stage 1: Defining and analysing the problem

- What is the specific problem to be addressed? If there is more than one problem, can they be clearly distinguished?
- What previous interventions have taken place, who has undertaken them and how effective have they been? Who are the other actors and networks currently active in trying to address the problem?
- What are the systemic features in place that enable the problem to persist (demography, geography, geopolitics, culture, historical legacies, climate change, relevant institutions, as well as informal norms etc)?
- What constellation of stakeholders and behaviours contributes to the persistence of the problem (motivations and incentives of individuals and collectives, relationships between actors, balance of power between them, etc)?
- The way a problem is framed can determine its institutional location as well as the receptivity of target audiences, so how is the problem framed? What is the balance between the nature and human/economic dimensions of the problem?
- To what extent is formal research commissioned to undertake this analysis? Or to what extent is this analysis documented, shared and subjected to scrutiny across IUCN (headquarters, relevant Commissions and Members)?

Helpful tools include the 5 Whys? Forcefield analysis, SWOT, Social Networks Analysis, Drivers of Change, Fishbone diagram as well as stakeholder or power mapping.

Stage 2: Developing a strategy

- With the policy analysis as background, what is the purpose or objective of the policy work that IUCN intends to pursue? How should the objective be framed?
- What space should IUCN focus its policy work in (global, regional, national, local, or a combination)?
- What stage of the work should the work be targeted at (agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, review/evaluation)? Note that a medium term development plan or national level law might be seen as agenda setting and policy formulation at a national level but at a global level, it will be seen as policy implementation.
- What policy instruments (plans, laws, strategies, regulations, etc) are likely to be the most effective and therefore the target of IUCN's policy work?
- Which stakeholders should IUCN engage with?
- How should the stakeholders' behaviour and attitudes change as a result of IUCN's engagement with them? How realistic is this given the enablers and constraints (both internal and external to IUCN)?
- What is the pathway through which these stakeholder behaviours are likely to change?
- How long is change likely to take?
- What balance of insider versus outsider and technical versus political approaches is most likely to encourage stakeholders to change their behaviours?
- What types of knowledge are stakeholders most likely to respond favourably to? What narratives are likely to resonate with stakeholders?
- Given the roles that IUCN tends to play in its policy work (as well as what it cannot do), which of these should IUCN undertake in its policy work?
- As a result, what activities and/or outputs are most likely to encourage stakeholders to change? How should these be tailored, sequenced and timed to have maximum impact?
- To what extent does this include working in partnership with other actors, networks and coalitions?
- How can the activities and outputs be produced in a way that is likely to maximise their intended effect on stakeholders' behaviours? E.g. to what extent will outputs be socialised with relevant stakeholders?
- Is it worth making contact with IUCN's communication team? Documenting a communications strategy might be helpful as a way of managing conversations with them.
- To what extent does IUCN have the capacity required to deliver these activities and outputs (especially given the time required to bring about change)?
- To what extent are the answers to these questions documented, shared and subjected to scrutiny across IUCN?

Helpful tools include IUCN's policy cycle, stakeholder mapping tools as well as Outcome Mapping's progress markers (which set out stakeholder behaviours which one would 'expect to see', 'like to see', and 'love to see', Communication strategies.

Stage 3: Ensuring good governance

- To what extent has IUCN provided legitimacy for the policy work it intends to pursue (through the WCC process)?
- Who is part of the group or team that is spearheading the policy work? Given the purpose of the policy work, what capacity/skills needs to be brought in? What is the best way to recruit relevant members to the team?
- How should leadership be distributed between the secretariat, Commission Members and other IUCN actors?
- To what extent should the policy team consult and promote participation both internally within IUCN and external to it in relation to its policy position?
- Where the team might be relatively large and/or where the policy issue is complex and shifting quickly over time, what processes are in place to ensure the team is well managed and supported?
- What resources are required to ensure the activities and outputs stated above can be produced to spec and on a timely basis? What funding might be available internal within IUCN or external to IUCN such as governmental donors or philanthropy? How might these opportunities be utilised?

- What can be done to ensure members of the policy team are properly incentivised and not overworked?
- To what extent are the policy team receiving support and key information from other relevant parts of the Union?

Stage 4: Implementing, learning from and adapting the strategy

- To what extent are IUCN actors collecting and documenting information about the changing context, the quality of its interventions and the effects they are having on key stakeholders?
- Are there regular spaces for the policy team (and other key actors) to discuss the information listed in the previous bullet as well as implications on IUCN's ongoing policy work?
- To what extent is all this documented and stored, shared and subjected to scrutiny within and across IUCN?

Helpful tools and approaches include: after action reviews, back to office reports, monitoring and impact logs, weekly team meetings, retreats, intranets (for storing information) and workshops, outcome mapping journals .