



# **Operational Guide for IUCN National and Regional Committees**

## **Terms and Principles**

*Text approved by the 113th meeting of the IUCN Council, May 2025*



## **Part I. Background and Principles**

In accordance with the IUCN Statutes, IUCN Member Committees (National, Regional and Interregional Committees), as components of the Union, exercise their functions with a high degree of autonomy and financial responsibility. By adopting these terms and principles, the IUCN Council seeks to ensure that IUCN's Mission can be achieved, and its reputation and credibility upheld to the highest possible degree.

1. The ability of IUCN to fulfil its Mission depends directly on the capacity of all its constituencies – the Members, the Commissions, the National/Regional Committees, the Secretariat, the Council as well its external partners and stakeholders such as donor agencies, project collaborators and the public – to work together with confidence, respect and mutual support. Achievement of the Union's Mission, goals and objectives also needs effective coordination and the alignment of their conservation efforts. This requires a Union-wide commitment to the highest levels of integrity, cooperation and ethics.
2. IUCN recognises the critically important role that IUCN Member Committees play in the recruitment, engagement, connection, networking, general assistance and retention of Members. In many cases, particularly in countries with no IUCN office, the IUCN Member Committee is the key IUCN touchpoint for Members, as well as the facilitator of all Member and Commissions expert networking activities and collaborations within that region. IUCN Member Committees are integral to achieving the mission and objectives of IUCN, as well as helping to ensure the sustainability of IUCN as an organisation.
3. Formal obligations and responsibilities of the components of the Union are specified in the IUCN Statutes, supplemented by the IUCN Regulations and supported by the One Programme Charter (2011). In these governance documents, these terms and principles are referred to as the Operational Guide for IUCN National and Regional Committees. To strengthen these, Codes of Conduct and professional ethics have also been adopted for the IUCN Council and the Secretariat.
4. The establishment and functioning of IUCN Member Committees, which represent the views and interests of their respective membership, are governed by Part VII of the IUCN Statutes and Part VI of the IUCN Regulations.
5. In addition to these statutory provisions and to IUCN Regulation 66b is dealing specifically with the conduct of IUCN Member Committees operating outside their own State or Region, and recognizing that there are other issues not explicitly covered by the Statutes and Regulations, Council has adopted this Terms and Principles which provides ethical standards and criteria to which all IUCN Member Committees are required to adhere at all times. This is all the more relevant in light of the fact that, in accordance with the IUCN Statutes, Member Committees, as components of the Union, exercise their functions with a high degree of autonomy and financial responsibility. By adopting these Terms and Principles, the IUCN Council seeks to ensure that IUCN's Mission can be achieved, and its reputation and credibility upheld to the highest possible degree.
6. IUCN Member Committees shall monitor the application of these Terms and Principles and include corresponding feedback in their annual reports to Council. In turn, these annual reports, where appropriate, will contribute to the content of the IUCN Annual Report.
7. This document provides broad guidance subject to the ultimate authority of IUCN's Statutes, Regulations and Resolutions. Its provisions shall apply to all IUCN Member Committees and their Members when acting as representatives of a National or Regional Committee.

## **Part II. Adhering to and Exemplifying IUCN's Principles and Values**

8. In all their operations and dealings, IUCN Member Committees:
  - a) Will maintain the highest levels of integrity and ethical behaviour, especially (but not limited to) the avoidance of conflicts of interest where a National or Regional Committee might allow its own interests, or those of its individual members, to interfere with or to prevail over IUCN's Mission, goals and objectives or the broader interest of conservation. IUCN Member Committees have a duty to disclose to the IUCN Director General any present or potential conflict of interest that may arise. The Director General shall treat such

information in confidence and in accordance with applicable provisions in the Statutes and Regulations.

- b) Can expect reciprocity and will adhere to principles of responsibility and accountability, to support and strengthen the ability of the Union to achieve its Mission, goals and objectives. Member Committees:
- i. will be respectfully included, assisted and supported by their Regional Office as well as the Secretariat Membership Support unit and the IUCN Council:
  - ii. will work in a coherent mode and in partnership with each other, the IUCN Council, the Commissions and the Secretariat, which will support them as required in Regulation 68, to align with and participate in the delivery of IUCN's Programme according to their respective capacities and statutory functions, and will work in accordance with the accountability measures provided for in the Statutes and Regulations or Resolutions and measures established thereunder by Council and the Director General;
  - iii. will issue messages strictly in the name of their particular IUCN Member Committee and not of IUCN per se, and shall align their external messages with the values and general policy approved by the World Conservation Congress, with the rulings and guidance of the IUCN Council to elaborate that policy, and with official statements issued from time to time by the Director General to implement the policy;
  - iv. shall only use the official version of the logo as required by the Union for all communications and must follow the existing logo specifications and rules in the "Logo Rules"; and
  - v. shall be kept informed, by relevant units of the Secretariat, of activities undertaken within their Region and/or country, including, with full and sufficient notice, Secretariat visits and work within the area of the Committee.
- c) Will coordinate their **fundraising activities** with the Secretariat in a spirit of openness, transparency, respect and support. The Secretariat will support and facilitate IUCN Member Committees in conducting fundraising efforts. The National or Regional Committee shall ensure that those fundraising activities remain fully consistent with the guidelines and procedures developed and applied by the Secretariat for purposes of implementation of policy as established by Congress and Council.
- i. IUCN Member Committees should exercise due diligence in the use of any resources, financial or other, provided to them by IUCN or by any third party to carry out their duties and activities. Committees that generate or receive financial income must ensure transparency and accountability to their members.
- d) Will aim for **fairness, inclusivity and transparency in decision-making**. IUCN Member Committees shall:
- i. be required to carry out their responsibilities in a spirit of openness and transparency;
  - ii. on request, make minutes of meetings available, in the language in which the meeting was conducted, to the members of the Committee, IUCN Council and the Secretariat.
  - iii. IUCN Member Committees shall submit an annual report on their activities to the Director General and the Council in accordance with Paragraph 66 (d). It is recommended that this report is sent in one of the official languages either using a standard template prepared by the IUCN Secretariat or by submitting the IUCN Member Committees' official annual report.
- e) Will aim for equality, inclusiveness and respect for the diversity of people and cultures. IUCN Member Committees shall:

- i. expect to be treated with courtesy, respect, and consistency by all IUCN stakeholders and representatives.
- ii. have a reciprocal duty to treat their Councillors, their Members, their colleagues in other IUCN statutory components and all external stakeholders with courtesy, respect and consistency.
- iii. promote a culture of appropriate behaviour for personal interaction, including the need for courteous communications and respect for others' culture, specific functions and mandates.
- iv. demonstrate a strong commitment to environmental responsibility.
- v. assess and consider the consequences of their decisions, policies and actions on ecosystems and those who depend on them; and
- vi. remain faithful to the Mission and Vision of IUCN.

### **Part III. Maintaining the Diversity and Representativeness of IUCN Member Committees, and Investing in the Future**

9. To reach their maximum potential, IUCN Member Committees need to be representative of the membership on whose behalf they act. All IUCN Member Committees shall therefore take all appropriate steps to ensure that:
  - a. to the extent possible, the IUCN Members' individual representatives to the IUCN Member Committees reflect a balance of gender, age and expertise in line with IUCN's diversity principles, in the interest of representing the diverse concerns of Members and of enabling the IUCN Member Committees to benefit in the future from a continued succession of diverse experience and perspectives;
  - b. as many Members and individuals as possible have the opportunity to participate in IUCN's governance bodies and processes, and to ensure that Members have a diversity of individuals operating within the IUCN's structures, both leading them in the pursuit of IUCN business as well as representing their interests. Therefore:
    - I. the Chair of a IUCN Member Committee should preferably not, subject to availability of an alternate Committee representative to fill the position of Chair, simultaneously hold the position of IUCN Council member and Committee Chair; and
    - II. Member Committee Chairs and other elected officers shall not hold office for more than two consecutive terms, as defined in each Committee's bylaws, to enable a diversity of IUCN Members to hold office and provide leadership, and so that the Member Committees – and IUCN in general – benefit from fresh perspectives, insights, expertise and knowledge.
  - c. IUCN Member Committees involve Councillors elected from the Regions and other members of the Council resident in a State or Region, where such Committee or Regional Fora have been established, to participate in their meetings and activities as provided for in article 72 of IUCN's Statutes;
  - d. that the IUCN Member Committees assist Councillors elected from the Regions in completing the obligations of their appointment in accordance with the Responsibilities and roles of Councillors elected from the Regions; and,
  - e. that the IUCN Member Committees invite representatives of the Commissions to participate in their meetings. To that end, each Commission shall make available to IUCN Member Committees contact information for Commission Members living in the area of the Committees and nominate the member(s) as the Commission's official representative(s) to Committee meetings.

## **Part IV. Coordinating with IUCN Commissions**

10. In order to give effect to Part II.8.a and part III.9.c, and to strengthen the One Programme Approach among IUCN components, the Commissions might be involved in the governance structure and in the activities of the IUCN Member Committees. IUCN Member Committees may invite the regional or national representative of each Commission to participate in the meetings of their governing bodies, in accordance with the following guidelines:
  - a. Each Member Committee should ensure collaborative and cohesive engagement with the representative of each Commission.
  - b. All members of the Commissions resident in the State or Region of the Committee may be invited to participate in all major meetings and relevant events of the IUCN Member Committees and Regional Fora (art. 72 of the Statutes).
  - c. If a member of a Commission has been nominated as their official representative, they shall be the one invited to participate in, and speak at the meetings of the governing bodies of the IUCN Member Committees in the name of their Commission, without a right to vote; For this purpose, the Commission's official representative(s) shall ensure that they align their messages with that of their respective Commission and inform their respective Commissions about any matter relevant for the Commission discussed and decided at the meetings of the Committees. For these purposes, the regional commission representative is accountable to the national representatives of each Commissions and the national commission representative to the national members of each Commission.
  - d. Each Regional or National Committee that decides to include Commissions in its governance structures, in coordination with the Commissions, and based on their specific realities, shall define the manner in which this collaboration will be implemented under the One Program Approach.

## **Part V. Working Outside National or Regional Boundaries**

11. The World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008) adopted amendments to the IUCN Statutes and Regulations so as to permit IUCN Member Committees to work outside their own State or Region. Council has recognized that this brings a need for greater consultation and coordination between Committees and regional and country offices in different countries and/or Regions.
12. When proposing to work outside its own State or Region, a National or Regional Committee shall undertake prior, meaningful consultation with its counterpart Committee(s) in the country(ies) or Region(s) concerned (hereafter referred to as "focal" country(ies) or region(s)) in order to avoid conflicts and to ensure that its activities are consistent with the IUCN Programme, including any agreed regional or national programmes or work plans.
13. Such prior consultation shall be the norm for any subject matter and/or activity that falls outside a Committee's national territory or regional area of operation, as relevant, including but not limited to aspects of:
  - a. direct project implementation.
  - b. capacity building.
  - c. governance issues.
  - d. policy processes.
  - e. fundraising activities; and/or
  - f. Congress preparations, including the Motions process.
14. In cases where no National Committee exists in a particular focal country, prior consultation shall be undertaken with IUCN Members in that country.
15. The relevant IUCN regional or country office shall be kept informed of such consultations in a timely and meaningful way, to facilitate on-going communication and coordination between all relevant IUCN components.
16. IUCN Member Committees shall strive to engage with IUCN Members in the relevant focal country or region.

17. IUCN Member Committees shall give due consideration to the need for inter-country or interregional coordination with Commissions, as appropriate.

## **Part VI. Effective Date and Amendment**

18. These Terms and Principles;
- a. shall become effective upon Council's decision approving it, and
  - b. may be amended at any time by decision of Council, after consultation with Member Committees. Suggestions for improvements to these guidelines by Committees are welcomed and should be addressed to the Constituency Committee of Council.

## **Part VII. Implementation of the Terms and Principles**

19. Persistent and deliberate action in violation of these Terms and Principles by IUCN Member Committees may lead the Director General to seek a written response from the Committee. Thereafter, the Director General may make a recommendation to Council on the withdrawal of recognition of that particular Committee, as provided for in IUCN Regulation 64.

## **Part VIII. Scope of Application**

20. The provisions of these Terms and Principles shall apply to all IUCN Member Committees and to their Members.