



INTEGRATING THE APPLICATION OF GOVERNANCE AND RIGHTS WITHIN IUCN'S GLOBAL CONSERVATION ACTION

BACKGROUND

IUCN was established in 1948 explicitly to ***influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity of nature without compromising human well-being***. The importance of social justice, equity, transparency and inclusion is reinforced by IUCN's vision of "*a just world that values and conserves nature*" and underpinned by a large body of socially progressive policies and procedures. These closely held values oblige IUCN to deliver conservation and natural resource management activities which can be held accountable against widely accepted international standards with respect to social inclusion, equity, gender equality, transparency and human rights. The new IUCN 2017-2020 Programme further strengthens this commitment by focusing one of its three key programme areas to ensure that "*natural resource governance at all levels enables delivery of effective conservation and equitable social outcomes by integrating good governance principles and rights-based approaches*".

Equally important, at the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress, IUCN Members adopted a decision to establish a new membership category for Indigenous Peoples Organisations (IPOs). This landmark decision is path breaking and ensures an equal voice of Indigenous Peoples Organizations in IUCN and in the further development and delivery of the IUCN One Programme.

In many ways, the essence of IUCN's contribution to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals is to shape the ways in which societies manage and conserve natural resources; enhance the transparency and inclusion of associated decision-making processes; and promoting and protecting fairness and equity in the distribution of natural resources. However, the achievement of this ambition requires that IUCN move from institutional policy commitments to a systematic application of approaches that effectively integrate key social issues, including governance and rights, in its conservation programmatic action on the ground and its national and global policy advice.

In this context, IUCN has embarked a strategy to further enhance and mainstream its social science capacity and its ability to address social issues in conservation. To this end, the Global Economics and Social Science Programme is being reorganised into a new Global Programme on Governance and Rights (GPGR) with an explicit focus on strengthening natural resource governance; the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women; and the promotion and recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples. By doing so, IUCN will not only strengthen its own ability



to advocate for improved governance and champion the rights of women and men who rely on natural resources but will set a benchmark in the global arena around how rights and governance should be systematically addressed in any conservation or natural resource action or policy.

The higher-order goal of the GRGP is: ***To strengthen natural resource management and conservation action through effective and equitable governance and a more systematic adoption of rights-based approaches, including in support of SDG implementation.***

While IUCN is one only of many players working with governments and civil society to deliver the SDGs, it does occupy a unique position of national and global influence on how natural resources are perceived and deployed.

For example, IUCN has the explicit mandate from its Members to integrate the provisions of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) into all components of its conservation programme. To this end IUCN engages directly with government level actors and decision-makers in securing rights to lands and resources. In Indonesia, it has worked with indigenous peoples and provincial governments in negotiating and legitimising rights to indigenous lands (using territories as mapped by indigenous peoples themselves) for integration in wider land use planning and conservation action. In Central Africa, IUCN played an important role in integrating indigenous rights into the revised Cameroonian Forest Law. In Asia, IUCN undertook a detailed study on customary rights in the Xe Champhone Ramsar site, which served as the basis for dialogues that produced a site regulation document based on local customary laws, taboos and beliefs at community levels.

Furthermore, at an institutional level the Green Climate Fund has turned to IUCN to establish a gender-responsive framework against which to assess future projects. At the national level IUCN has worked with 25 governments to prepare and put in place government sanctioned Climate Change Gender Action Plans (ccGAPs) which are enabled to act as a key source document to inform national climate change strategies and government led programmes.

Internally, IUCN has established an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) as an intrinsic part of IUCN's project cycle. It provides systematic steps and operational tools for managing the environmental and social performance of projects implemented or supported by IUCN. It also ensures that the implementation and effectiveness of mitigation measures are monitored and that any impacts arising during project implementation are addressed.

The ESMS principles and standards are rooted in IUCN environmental and social policies and IUCN World Conservation Congress Resolutions. They also draw on IUCN values, good practice tools developed by IUCN Secretariat programmes and IUCN Commissions and on lessons learned during IUCN's long tradition of working at the interface of conservation with

social issues and human rights. The ESMS principles and standards consolidate the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as other relevant international conventions and agreements on environmental and social issues, including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and UNDRIP. The human rights aspects of these principles and standards have been further shaped by the work of the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights of which IUCN is a founding and active member.

The ESMS Policy Framework has also been influenced by policies and guidelines from other organisations such as the International Finance Corporation (IFC) or the World Bank and is fully compliant with relevant policies of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) – specifically the GEF Policy for Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards¹ and with relevant policies of the Green Climate Fund².

Because the application of principles and standards to manage environmental and social performance of conservation initiatives is a fairly new experience, not only for IUCN but also for conservation organisations in general, the system will evolve and improve as valuable lessons come out over the course of ESMS mainstreaming.

To achieve the goal of the GPGR, IUCN will proactively synthesise these experiences and feed them into high-level processes, standards and programmes.

The medium-term outcome of the GPGR is: ***To enable IUCN, as a global leader in the field of conservation and natural resource management, to systematically and meaningfully develop, apply and account for policies and approaches for improved natural resource governance and proactive recognition and promotion of the rights of historically marginalised groups.***

The GPGR will pursue its medium-term outcome with and through IUCN's Members (States, Government Agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations and Indigenous Peoples Organisations), and in close collaboration with its expert Commissions, particularly the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP).

Four specific but interrelated outputs will underpin the achievement of this outcome:

- *Output 1: Indigenous Member-led and self-determined strategy and mechanisms that mobilise, engage and coordinate action on*

¹ Global Environment Facility (GEF), 2015, Policy on Agency Minimum Standards Environmental and Social Safeguards, available at <http://tinyurl.com/GEFSafeguards2015>.

² On an interim basis until the Green Climate Fund has developed its own environmental and social safeguards (ESS), the Fund adheres to the Performance Standards of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) available at <http://tinyurl.com/IFC2012PS>.

conservation and natural resource management and indigenous rights, at the global, regional and national levels

- *Output 2: IUCN Secretariat and Members demonstrate leadership at global, regional and national levels by upholding and enhancing gender equality in environmental decision-making and programming spheres*
- *Output 3: Use of the Natural Resource Governance Framework as a “conservation standard” for decision-makers, rights-holders and practitioners to assess and strengthen governance of natural resources*
- *Output 4: Advance the realisation of a human rights-based approach to conservation, leveraging the unique role and ability of IUCN to engage a wide range of actors within and beyond the conservation sector*

OUTPUTS

Output 1: Indigenous Member-led and self-determined strategy and mechanisms that mobilise, engage and coordinate action on conservation and natural resource management and indigenous rights, at the global, regional and national levels

IUCN has a long track record in addressing and embracing the issues and concerns of Indigenous Peoples (IP). Since 1975, a total of 172 Resolutions pertaining to indigenous issues have been adopted by IUCN Members and thus integrated into IUCN’s overall mandate. Likewise, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was endorsed by IUCN in 2008 through Resolution 4.052 “Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”.

The rights and issues of IP are an integral part of human rights standards underpinning the rights-based approach applied by IUCN. In light of these and other commitments, IUCN Programmes apply internal guidance for safeguard provisions to comply with when working with IP or in the lands or seas they inhabit or rely on for their livelihoods. Relevant guidance also outlines examples of approaches to improve the livelihoods of IP, conserving their environments and natural resources, and securing their rights through conservation.

IUCN’s commitment to IP issues was demonstrated and advanced at the last IUCN Congress in 2016. Around 100 events on IP issues were held at the Congress Forum. The Congress also served as the platform to present the latest report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Moreover, one of the most notable outcomes of the Congress was a landmark decision by IUCN Members’ Assembly to create a new category of membership for Indigenous Peoples’ Organisations (IPOs). This decision opens the opportunity to strengthen the presence and role of indigenous organisations in IUCN. IUCN has never before altered the structure of its membership for any particular sector or social group; it did so for the first time

specifically to better accommodate the representative institutions of indigenous peoples, which will now have a clear, distinct identity and will have their unique perspectives recognised.

This change in IUCN's governance structure will allow IUCN to play an important convening and facilitating role for indigenous participation in environmental decision-making, as well as conflict resolution relating to conservation.

The activities under Output 1 will support the operationalisation and implementation of IUCN's commitment to advancing IP rights in IUCN's conservation programme

Expected Results:

- IUCN platform established to enhance the voices of IPs in the field of conservation and natural resource management
- Indigenous Member-led and self-determined strategy developed
- IP rights are an integral part of IUCN programme
- Conservation actors enhance their support of IP rights
- IUCN's implementing agency status within GEF and GCF enables access to resources for IPOs.
- An increase in IPO membership

Output 2: IUCN Secretariat and Members demonstrate leadership at global, regional and national levels by upholding and enhancing gender equality in environmental decision-making and programming spheres

For decades, IUCN has been the vanguard in recognising gender equality as a driving force for effective, equitable, and sustainable environmental solutions. This is evident in the role that the IUCN Global Gender Office has played in supporting and facilitating gender-responsive policy shifts that have occurred across environmental decision-making spheres (e.g. Rio Conventions) complementing the implementation of those mandates at national levels, including with IUCN government and non-government Members.

Within the Union, since 1984, women's issues and gender concerns have been given high priority through various decisions of IUCN Members' Assemblies and the IUCN World Conservation Congress. In 1996, a Resolution was passed "to integrate a gender perspective across the IUCN Programme." In 1998, IUCN Council adopted a Gender Policy and an Action Plan, and Assembly decisions have passed numerous additional resolutions in subsequent years.

Today, gender issues relevant to IUCN's programme of work are more frequently discussed and better understood than in past years. However, as a leading environmental institution, IUCN can and should take significant internal steps to enhance how gender equality and women's empowerment principles are being proactively addressed and integrated in programmes, project

planning, procedures and resource allocation for increased efficiency and effectiveness. To this end, IUCN approved in 2016 its Course of Action on Gender (CAG) in order to scale up attention to and capacity on gender issues across the Union.

Expected Results:

- IUCN's programme portfolio adopts, monitors and reinforces of standards, capacity and tools with respect to the systematic delivery of gender-responsive action
- IUCN applies a corporate certification process that recognises good performance in delivering gender equality results
- IUCN and its members demonstrate leadership at global and national levels by upholding and enhancing gender equality in environmental decision-making and programming spheres
- IUCN Members and partners enhance their action in relation to the promotion of gender-responsive policies and initiatives at the global, regional and national levels

Output 3: Use of the Natural Resource Governance Framework as a "conservation standard" for decision-makers, rights-holders and practitioners to assess and strengthen governance of natural resources

The Natural Resource Governance Framework was launched as part of IUCN's 2013-2016 program with the overarching goal to: *set standards and guidance for decision-makers at all levels to make better and more just decisions on the use of natural resources and the distribution of nature's benefits, following good governance principles, such that improved governance will enhance the contributions of ecosystems and biodiversity to equity and sustainability.*

IUCN's new four-year results framework, approved by Members as part of IUCN's 2017-2020 Programme, contains two targets and associated indicators (out of a total of 30) that explicitly require the use and application of the Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF). The NRG Framework that was developed with Sida's support will be completed and used by IUCN programmes to assess and promote improvements in national resource governance in multiple contexts. The NRGF will also be used to align all governance-related tools that IUCN deploys and identify specific gaps in governance analysis.

Within this context, over the next four years, all IUCN Programmes will be required to report on the use and application of governance and rights-based tools that are consistent with the NRGF. To achieve this, the component programmes of the Union must improve their skills and capacity to integrate governance and rights dimensions, including equity and equality considerations, into their work at policy, programme and project levels.

Expected Results:

- Platforms for dialogue and action on natural resource governance established and support increased knowledge, capacity, and implementation of priority governance initiatives at the global and regional levels
- Standards, methods and tools to assess and strengthen natural resource governance developed
- Capacities and action on natural resource governance in IUCN projects and programmes improved
- NRGF as a quality assurance and coherence mechanism is utilised to ensure that IUCN Secretariat work on governance is underpinned by robust social science and ethical considerations
- Knowledge and action on natural resource governance strengthened among decision-makers, rights-holders, and practitioners through the use of the NRGF

Output 4: Advanced realisation of a human rights-based approach to conservation, leveraging the unique role and ability of IUCN to engage a wide range of actors within and beyond the conservation sector

By referring to the need for the equitable utilization of natural resources, IUCN's mission explicitly recognizes the importance and value of fairness, impartiality and respect for rights in the practice of conservation. The [IUCN Policy on Conservation and Human Rights for Sustainable Development](#) (Resolution 5.099, adopted in 2012) provides an overarching policy for IUCN to consider and integrate human rights issues into its work, including but not limited to, the development and implementation of rights-based approaches (RBAs) within its projects and programmes.

In line with this, the IUCN Programme 2017-2020 states in its Global Result 2, *“Natural resource governance at all levels enables delivery of effective conservation and equitable social outcomes by integrating good governance principles and **rights-based approaches**.”* Over the past decades, IUCN has been conducting ground-breaking work in this area, as exemplified by its work with indigenous people and the promotion of gender equality, among others.

Since 2015, IUCN has also been actively participating in the elaboration of the report presented by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment to the UN Human Rights Council. This report constitutes the first time an official report from the UN human rights system articulates the concept of “human rights obligations relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity”, and identifies, from a human rights perspective, the duties of states (and other parties) to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems.

In the process of developing the report, it was clearly identified that IUCN is uniquely placed to mobilise a process that bridges the human rights community with the conservation community, as well as between governments and civil

society. For example, the “core group” of governments (e.g. Switzerland, Costa Rica) supporting the Resolution that the Human Rights Council adopted on 24 March 2017 are IUCN members who have had a long-standing working relationship with IUCN Global Gender Office on mobilising human rights and gender equality under the UNFCCC.

IUCN support for advancing a human rights-based approach to conservation should result in:

Expected results

- IUCN facilitates and engages in platforms among conservation and human rights communities to effectively promote and inform the realisation of human rights-based approaches to conservation
- Guidelines and resources including a consolidated set of human rights standards and tools for the conservation sector
- Capacities of decision-makers and practitioners are developed to take human rights obligations and commitments into account in efforts to protect the environment
- IUCN’s programme portfolio adopts and integrates standards, capacities and tools with respect to human-rights
- Improved action from IUCN Members and partners to protect and advance human rights through policies and initiatives at the global, regional and national levels
- IUCN’s capacity is increased to assist the resolution of conflicts affecting the rights of communities on topics close to its programme (protected areas, ecosystem management and other natural resource use practices)

Final Note: As a living document, there is recognition that there are areas for further discussion, such as culture and human well-being. It will therefore be reviewed and amended on an annual basis through the input from stakeholders and practitioners.