

Natural Resource Governance Framework Strategy Update September 2017

The Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF) is an IUCN initiative created for the purpose of providing a robust, inclusive, and credible approach to assessing and strengthening natural resource governance, at multiple levels and in diverse contexts. The overarching goal of NRGF is 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.*

The NRGF is co-convened between the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy (CEESP) and the Global Programme on Governance and Rights of the IUCN Secretariat (GPGR). Activities in the first phase of NRGF's work (2013-2016) included regional dialogues and scoping activities in Asia, East and Southern Africa, and Mesoamerica; preparation of an initial Framework for use in assessing natural resource governance, with an accompanying Assessment Guide and background papers; and a survey of governance-related work across IUCN programmes and Commissions.

Strategic Directions 2017-2020

With the re-confirmation of IUCN's commitment to NRGF in its 2017-2020 Programme, main strategies for the NRGF will include to:

1. Consolidate development of an overarching Natural Resource Governance Framework

Central to the work of the NRGF is development of a framework for independent assessment of the status of natural resource governance – emphasizing issues of rights, equity and social justice - in multiple contexts. Building on the design work conducted in the first phase, the NRGF team will engage interested programmes and partners to consolidate development of the overarching NRG Framework and supporting materials. In particular, the NRG Framework will be refined through the identification and validation of indicators for governance assessments. A series of background papers on the NRGF principles and an NRGF Assessment Guide will also be completed and distributed. Over time, the NRG Framework will be periodically reviewed and updated, as needed, to take account of experience and lessons from its use.

2. Use the NRGF to build coherence and consistency across IUCN Secretariat work on governance

While several IUCN programmes have an established track record of addressing governance issues in their particular sector, work on governance of natural resources still tends to be fragmented. To build greater coherence and consistency around robust standards, the new IUCN four-year results framework requires that all IUCN programmes report on the use and application of governance and rights-based tools that are consistent with the NRGF. Accordingly, NRGF technical teams will collaborate with IUCN programme colleagues to

facilitate the alignment of IUCN's existing governance-related tools, as well as to identify gaps requiring the development of new resources or tools. NRGF's technical team will also work with programmes to build skills and capacity to further integrate governance and rights dimensions into IUCN's policy, programme and project-level work. Measures to track this NRGF integration will be integrated into IUCN's project cycle systems and standards.

3. Promote the NRGF as a conservation standard for the broader conservation and natural resource community

By engaging networks of IUCN Members and partners, NRGF will catalyse wider dialogue on natural resource governance and use of the NRGF as a credible and effective standard for governance of natural resources and its contributions to the realization of sustainable development goals. Key constituencies for this work include IUCN Members, Commissions, and partners including indigenous, community and civil society organizations. As part of this work, NRGF working groups will explore interests and needs for the preparation of resources and tools that can support this wider range of actors to assess and strengthen natural resource governance.

4. Strengthen knowledge and action on natural resource governance

Working with interested IUCN Programmes and partners, NRGF teams will pursue opportunities to conduct assessments on natural resource governance and use the results to inform actions to strengthen governance in diverse contexts. One aim of this work will be to build up a body of comparative analysis that can highlight gaps and priorities for action to strengthen natural resource governance and, in turn, contribute to the realization of sustainable development goals. NRGF will also facilitate opportunities for programs and partners to gather and exchange lessons on implementation experience, including as a way to iteratively improve NRGF knowledge resources and strategies over time.

Expected results

The overall outcome expected from these activities is: *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.*

Expected results include:

- Standards, methods and tools to assess and strengthen natural resource governance are developed
- NRGF is used as a quality assurance and coherence mechanism to ensure that IUCN Secretariat work on governance is underpinned by robust social science and contributes to IUCN's rights-based approach
- Capacities and action on natural resource governance in IUCN projects and programmes improved
- NRGF catalyzes increased attention to natural resource governance in the wider conservation and natural resource sector
- Knowledge and action on natural resource governance strengthened among decision-makers, rights-holders, and practitioners through the use of the NRGF

NRGF Governance

The Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF)'s internal governance reflects the "One Programme" and includes representatives from the IUCN Secretariat, CEESP and other Commission members, IUCN Members and partners. The primary governance bodies for the NRGF are an Executive Committee, a Steering Committee and Working Groups. Structures will be periodically reviewed and adapted as needed to support NRGF's work.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee has responsibility for decision-making on strategic and financial issues and is the most senior governance body within NRGF.

The Executive Committee¹ consists of:

- The Chair of CEESP
- The Chair of the Theme on Governance, Equity and Rights/CEESP NRGF lead
- The Global Director of the Nature-Based Solutions Group
- The Director of the Governance and Rights Programme

The Executive Committee makes decisions by consensus and oversees the Steering Committee. The Executive Committee will meet via monthly calls, or more often as needed for decisions on specific issues.

Working Groups

Working Groups provide the technical foundations of the NRGF and will implement specific activities/areas of work within the NRGF strategy. Current priorities for working groups will focus on:

- Conceptual and methodological development: further development of the NRG Framework, guidance and supporting papers
- IUCN Secretariat collaboration and integration
- Engagement and dissemination: Building collaboration; capacity building

Working Groups will be composed of selected members from:

- CEESP – including TGER members and others who indicated interest in working with NRGF in their application to become a CEESP member. The TGER listserv will be used as a communications tool to reach out to this group of experts and identify interests and capacities to participate in Working Groups.
- Colleagues from the IUCN Secretariat and other Commissions working on natural resource governance
- Other experts, stakeholders and/or practitioners identified by Executive Committee.

Working Groups will convene regularly, as determined by needs and the Working Group lead(s).

Secretariat support

A Programme Officer within the Governance and Rights Programme of IUCN, based in Washington D.C., will provide support to the NRGF. The PO will also facilitate joint work and dialogues with other IUCN Thematic and Regional Programmes.

¹ The current holders of these positions are Kristen Walker Painemilla (Chair of CEESP), Jenny Springer (Chair of TGER/CEESP NRGF lead), Stewart Maginnis (Global Director, IUCN Nature-Based Solutions Group), and Lorena Aguilar, Director of the Governance and Rights Programme.