

Statement of Work for 2017-2020 Quadrennium

Final Version – April 7, 2017

Resilience Thematic Group

The Ecosystems Approach is an internationally agreed-upon approach to ecosystem management, which recognises that ecosystems are complex systems of people and nature¹. The Ecosystems Approach is fundamental to the aims of IUCN and an important foundation for the work of thematic and specialist groups in IUCN’s Commission on Ecosystem Management. The science of social-ecological systems provides a framework for understanding the processes of ecosystem change that are necessary for adaptability, transformability and long-term sustainability. Accordingly, the Resilience Thematic Group views resilience as one of three integrated capacities:

1. Resilience – the capacity of a system to recover from stress and disturbance while retaining its essential functions, structure, feedbacks and identity;
2. Adaptability – the capacity of actors (both human and biological) in a system to influence resilience; and
3. Transformability – the capacity of actors to create a fundamentally new system when ecological, economic, or social structures make the existing system untenable.

Resilience, adaptability and transformability all require capacity for learning about systemic change in response to management intervention, external shocks and change within subsystems at lower and higher levels.² Resilient ecosystems are fundamental to the work of IUCN because they can sustain biological diversity and human livelihoods in times of severe and wide-ranging change, and “resilience-based ecosystem stewardship³” helps practitioners to enhance the sustainability of a system. The Commission on Ecosystem Management’s 2017-2020 Mandate sets forth a vision of healthy, resilient ecosystems. This vision binds together diverse IUCN work areas such as species conservation, ecosystem restoration, governance including equity and rights, climate change adaptation, food and water security, and disaster risk reduction.

¹ CBD, 2014. The Ecosystems Approach. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal

² Folke, C., S. R. Carpenter, B. Walker, M. Scheffer, T. Chapin, and J. Rockström. 2010. Resilience thinking: integrating resilience, adaptability and transformability. *Ecology and Society* 15(4): 20. [online] URL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol15/iss4/art20/>

³ Chapin, F. S., Carpenter, S. R., Kofinas, G. P., Folke, C., Abel, N., Clark, W. C., ... Swanson, F. J. (2010). Ecosystem stewardship: sustainability strategies for a rapidly changing planet. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, 25(4), 241–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2009.10.008>

Contents

1. Vision.....	2
2. Mission.....	2
3. Key Audiences.....	2
4. Goals.....	3
5. Structure and Responsibilities.....	3
6. Member List.....	4
7. Information Sharing and Discussion.....	5
8. Reporting.....	5
9. Media Protocol.....	5

1. Vision

IUCN uses resilience of social-ecological systems as a foundational concept to design and implement conservation efforts that are effective and durable in the face of complex and uncertain interactions between people and nature.

2. Mission

The mission of the RTG is to strengthen the application of the concept of “resilience in complex adaptive social-ecological systems” by IUCN programmes, commissions, and members, and the people and communities with whom they work.

3. Key Audiences

Our main audiences are people who are working with, implementing, and developing the theory and practice of resilience, in field and policy settings.

1. Commission on Ecosystem Management, including its specialist and thematic groups, and its task forces
2. IUCN Commission on Education & Communication (CEC); Commission on Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy (CEESP); Species Survival Commission (SSC); World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL); and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)
3. IUCN member states and organizations
4. Additional global, regional, and national decision-makers and policy bodies
5. Additional scientific communities
6. IUCN programme staff

4. Goals

In the 2017-2020 quadrennium, the RTG pursues its mission through the following goals. The corresponding activity list describes the specific ways through which RTG members operationalize the goal. A brief summary of activities follows each goal below; the activity sheet should be consulted for details.

1. Ensure a common yet widely-applicable understanding of resilience of social-ecological systems as a concept across IUCN programmes, commissions, and members.
 - a. Activities include surveying RTG members about their needs and contributions; and developing information sheets, informational graphics, and briefing papers.
2. Build the capacity of IUCN to apply resilience science to its work.
 - a. Activities include facilitating information exchange within IUCN; providing input into technical or policy documents, including partnerships with specific groups and projects; and preparing a handbook and case studies.
3. Both within and outside IUCN, raise the visibility and influence of CEM's work that incorporates resilience.
 - a. Activities include delivering trainings in-person and online; hosting networking events; publishing in scholarly journals; and publishing a blog.
4. Increase the ability of the RTG to function as a social learning network.
 - a. Activities include updating the RTG's statement of work and activity list; and fundraising.

5. Structure and Responsibilities

The CEM Resilience Thematic Group consists of three parts: a core group, members, and liaisons.

The **Core Group** consists of the RTG Chair and a small group of RTG members who have volunteered to spend extra time sharing the work and providing leadership for the RTG, and in turn are designated by the RTG Chair.

- The Core Group leads strategic planning efforts for the RTG, including engaging members in establishing RTG direction.
- The Core Group also leads the implementation of associated objectives, and, via its Chair, liaises with the CEM Steering Committee.
- The Core Group also manages RTG membership and the RTG discussion platform (Google Groups).
- Core Group representatives are responsible for participating regularly in discussions with the RTG chair concerning administration of the group and its work.

2017 Core Group representatives:

1. Mike Jones, Chair (Sweden) – mikejones.psa@gmail.com
2. Dorian Fougères, Vice-Chair (USA) – fougères@gmail.com
3. Alice Hughes (China) - achughes@xtbg.ac.cn
4. P.C. Abhilash (India) - pcabhilash@hotmail.com
5. Barbara Heinzen (USA) – barbara@barbaraheinzen.com

The **members** consist of scientists and practitioners from diverse professions and disciplines who employ resilience in their work, or have an interest in resilience.

- Generally, members are willing to contribute to IUCN by
 - Helping implement the RTG objectives, as well as by
 - Providing advice in response to inquiries for assistance,
 - Integrating resilience in their IUCN and non-IUCN science, policy, and management efforts, and
 - Publishing on resilience.
- Members also help to build the IUCN – as well as local and international – network(s) of resilience practitioners, including the recruitment of new RTG members.
- Members are responsible for responding to periodic information requests from the Core Group, and for posting a response or new thread to the discussion platform at least once per quarter.
- Members are also responsible for responding to the annual survey conducted by the Core Group to solicit input from RTG members on their primary reasons for participating in the group, the key connections they see with other IUCN efforts, and the contributions to which they are willing to make.
 - Survey responses will be saved and used to track annual member contributions.
 - If a member does not respond to the survey, or does not make any contributions over the course of the calendar year, they will be denoted an “inactive member” – still a member of the RTG, but not one that is actively contributing.

Liaisons consist of individuals who are members of other CEM thematic groups or task forces, or other IUCN commissions, and volunteer to serve as a conduit between the RTG and another specific group.

- Liaisons are responsible for sharing news of activities, requests for input and feedback, and resilience-related information.

6. Member List

The Core Group will maintain a list of RTG members, including their affiliation, contact telephone and email, areas of interest, website (optional), and notation of other CEM groups and Commissions on which they serve. One version of this will be made available to RTG members

online as a shared Google document, and another version (with contact information redacted) will be posted on the RTG website.

7. Information Sharing and Discussion

The RTG has three platforms for information sharing and discussion.

1. The CEM webpage for the RTG. This public page shares information about the RTG's work, activities, and products, such as this Statement of Work, informational materials, and published papers. The link is <https://www.iucn.org/commissions/commission-ecosystem-management/our-work/cems-thematic-groups/resilience>
2. The Union Portal page for the RTG. This password-protected page allows IUCN members to post and share documents, news, consultations, events, and opportunities with other IUCN members. The link is <https://portals.iucn.org/union/group/2417>
3. The RTG Google Group. This online discussion platform allows members to circulate information and engage in direct dialogue via email. Members are encouraged to share material that they find noteworthy, whether to simply raise awareness about it or to advocate for it. In turn, per the Code of Conduct for IUCN Commissions, other members are welcome to respectfully share their comments, criticisms, and suggestions on material shared. All ideas and points of view have value, even if other members do not agree with those expressed by the person sharing information; the purpose of having a diverse membership is precisely to bring a wide range of expertise and perspectives to bear upon resilience and related issues.

8. Reporting

Twice a year the Core Group will send out a brief email to all members to update them on the status of RTG objectives, and notify them of any RTG work products or events.

The Chair will report to the CEM Steering Committee on RTG activities and accomplishments on a regular basis and in a format established by that committee. Topics may include completed and upcoming tasks, activities, outcomes, and products; partnership development; new member recruitment; significant internal and external communications; funding obtained or requested; and organizational insights.

9. Media Protocol

If contacted by the press and/or media regarding RTG activities, individual members will:

1. Clarify that they are speaking and expressing opinions as individual participants, not on behalf of the RTG, CEM, or IUCN, unless specifically authorized as a representative (in which case the Code of Conduct for IUCN Commissions applies).
2. Represent topics of discussions, issues, and concerns as general group comments. Not attribute statements to, nor characterize the views of other participants. If asked to do so, refer the inquirer directly to that participant(s).
3. Per the Code of Conduct for IUCN Commissions, avoid any communication or use of the name, logo, or other formal indications of IUCN, CEM, or the RTG that has not been authorized by the appropriate person or body.
4. As a courtesy, notify the RTG Chair if they are contacted by the media.