The IUCN Monitoring and Evaluation Policy

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Is part of	IUCN Internal Control Policy Framework
Conforms to	International best practice
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Document History

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1. Aims and scope

The overall aim of this policy is to establish common structures and standards across the IUCN Secretariat that govern the application of effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems with a view to maximizing the benefits from IUCN interventions.

More specifically, this policy aims to:
- Demonstrate IUCN's commitment to monitoring and evaluating its work and using the results to drive performance and impact
- Set out minimum requirements, principles to be respected, as well as roles and responsibilities
- Provide an overview of and basic introduction to M&E at IUCN, with additional tools referenced to provide further guidance and information.

All IUCN staff must comply with this policy and therefore they constitute its primary audience. However, this policy is also aimed at external stakeholders such as donors, IUCN Members, partners and users, to provide information on IUCN standards and procedures. Hence this policy plays an important role in delivering IUCN accountability and transparency on M&E.

2. Context

Following recommendations from several external reviews (1993, 1996 and 1999), IUCN built its M&E capacity, resulting, among other things, in the 2001 IUCN Evaluation Policy, which institutionalised the M&E function. The 2011 IUCN External Review[1] noted the important progress made in M&E, but also recommended that IUCN continue to invest in this function, and 'develop critical mechanisms for information sharing, coordination and alignment'. This updated policy contributes to implementing that recommendation.

IUCN closely links M&E with planning, with the M&E function located in the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PME). This enables IUCN to continuously use the feedback collected from M&E to improve planning processes and this in return improves M&E practices and systems.

Finally, this M&E policy, and the M&E function more broadly, must be considered in the context of an internal policy environment that includes Code of Conduct and Anti-Fraud policies, as well as an internal Oversight and Internal Audit Function.

3. IUCN's definition of monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring

Monitoring is the continuous collection and analysis of information used by management and partners to determine progress on the implementation of activities, achievement of objectives and use of resources. Monitoring can happen at several levels, including local, regional, global as well as at project and programme level.

Evaluation

Evaluations are formal IUCN activities that provide evidence of the achievement of results and institutional performance. Evaluation is a periodic and systematic assessment, as impartial as possible, of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of an activity in the

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[1] The 2011 IUCN External Review, as well as all other IUCN reviews and evaluations, can be accessed on the IUCN website http://www.iucn.org/knowledge/monitoring_evaluation/database/year/

context of stated objectives. Evaluations can focus on different IUCN activities, including programmes, projects, policies and organizational units. Evaluations should provide credible, reliable and useful information, enabling timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons learned into relevant decision-making processes.

The difference between monitoring and evaluation

The term 'monitoring' is often used in conjunction with the term 'evaluation'. In fact, information collected through monitoring is an important source of data used in evaluation. While monitoring tells us what is happening, evaluation provides more detailed information such as why and how things are happening. In other words, while monitoring tells us whether an activity is on track to achieve its intended objectives, evaluation tells us whether the activity as a whole is on the right track. Monitoring and evaluation, together with planning, are the foundation for Results Based Management (RBM), the broad management strategy adopted by IUCN.

Results Based Management

According to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), RBM is a 'management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts', collectively known as 'results'. RBM uses a structured, logical approach that identifies expected results and the inputs and activities necessary to achieve these. This management strategy ensures that all business units work towards and report on a common set of goals. At IUCN, RBM is based on the following pillars:

- A four-year **planning horizon** based on the period between IUCN World Conservation Congresses, during which the intersessional programme (called the IUCN Global Programme) is implemented. This is supported by an annual planning process.
- **The integration of planning and budget processes**, covering both programme (substantive conservation and human well-being results) and operations (results that support the functioning of the IUCN Union)
- **Monitoring and reporting tools**, from those aimed at measuring delivery of results through to those for measuring finances and risk
- **Utilisation-focused evaluation:** All evaluations must be designed with a focus on intended users and intended use.
- Data and information collected either through planning, monitoring or evaluation processes are used by senior management to **manage for results** in all key decision making fora.

For definitions of M&E terms please see OECD/DAC (2010) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management

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4. The purpose of monitoring and evaluation at IUCN

Within IUCN the purpose of M&E is three-fold:

- **Learning and Improvement**
  M&E activities help to understand why, and the extent to which, intended and unintended results are achieved, and their impact on stakeholders. It is therefore an important agent of change through the provision of useful feedback and a commitment to act on that feedback, thereby driving organizational learning. Furthermore, as a learning tool, M&E adds to IUCN's body of knowledge with respect to best practices in monitoring, evaluation and conservation.

- **Accountability**
  M&E plays a crucial role in accountability. IUCN is answerable to its Members, partners, donors and users on whether its policies, programmes and projects are having the intended results. IUCN also needs to demonstrate that resources are used efficiently and effectively. The M&E process, together with the required documentation that accompanies it, holds IUCN staff and contracted implementing partners responsible for their performance. High quality M&E builds Members', donors', users' and partners' confidence in IUCN.
  Evidence-Based Management
  The results of M&E activities are an important input to the decision-making process within IUCN and affect a range of management processes, including risk and performance management and decisions to change, expand or contract programmes.

5. The main types of monitoring and evaluation at IUCN

There are many different types of M&E, and some may be more appropriate and useful depending on the activity being evaluated. However, IUCN's M&E work generally falls in one of the categories below.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a management tool to improve organisational delivery and performance. At IUCN monitoring is almost always undertaken internally (including by project staff), although it is not unusual at the project level for donors to undertake monitoring of their own. IUCN's organisation-wide monitoring and reporting efforts focus on the below.

- **Programme Monitoring**
  Programme monitoring measures the contribution of an IUCN programme or region to the achievement of IUCN's Global Programme results through a set of result and impact indicators. Every IUCN programme and region reports on an annual basis on implementation progress and delivery of results. This is aggregated into an annual *Programme Report*, shared with IUCN's main partners. Impact results are collected every four years and are presented in the *Final Programme Report* at the end of the intersessional period.

- **Project Portfolio Monitoring**
  This measures the health, performance and risks associated with a programme portfolio, including growth/decline, reliance on unsecured income, cost recovery and risks associated with project implementation. IUCN programmes and regions report on a quarterly basis against agreed risk indicators.

- **Project Monitoring**
  This type of monitoring measures and reports on the implementation progress of a project while it is being implemented. The format and deadlines for reporting are typically determined by the project donor and reporting is often against a logical framework and set of indicators agreed at the start of the project.

Evaluation

Evaluations can be commissioned internally or externally, and implemented by internal or external teams, or mixed teams. The main types of evaluation carried out at IUCN are:

- **Project Evaluations**
  These cover projects, which are time-bound sets of activities aimed at delivering a set of agreed conservation and human wellbeing results. A project rests within a programme

unit or region and contributes to the intended results of that programme and of the IUCN Global Programme. A project evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the project. Project evaluations are undertaken as agreed with the project's donor(s), normally at the mid-term of the project schedule and at its termination.

- **Programme Evaluations**
  This type of evaluation covers IUCN's regional and global thematic programmes, and includes the work of the IUCN Commissions where appropriate. Programme evaluation again assesses relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the programme. IUCN defines, internally, a series of programme level evaluations of strategic importance, normally reviewing organizational units or other topics of strategic importance.

- **Strategic Reviews**
  These address the organizational performance of IUCN as a whole or of its regional offices, global thematic programmes or Commissions. IUCN practices a form of review called organizational assessment[2], intended to assess any unit of the Secretariat in terms of its organizational performance, organizational capacity, organizational motivation and external environment. IUCN undertakes one or two Strategic Reviews a year. The Director General and the main IUCN framework partners jointly commission an External Strategic Review of IUCN every four years, which assesses organizational performance as a whole.

- **Policy Evaluations**
  These assess the results of IUCN's policy influencing efforts and the implementation of IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations. Most IUCN evaluations include a policy evaluation aspect.

Other studies carried out by IUCN when relevant and useful include **meta-evaluation** and **synthesis of evaluation** findings. A meta-evaluation is a systematic review of evaluation reports conducted internally to determine the quality of evaluation reports. Synthesis studies are produced on request from the Council and senior management in order to summarize the evaluative evidence, findings and recommendations on a specific topic.

The Cost of Impact Evaluation

IUCN acknowledges the high cost of impact evaluations as well as the important role they play in evaluating interventions. IUCN endeavours to conduct impact evaluations where this provides the best value for money, for example where:

- There is a genuine need and measuring other results would not provide enough information to judge whether an intervention has been successful or not

- It is practically feasible and resources are available

- The intervention is long enough to have measurable effects

- There is sufficient scale (e.g. in terms of funding, number of people affected)

- It produces new information on interventions, including on what works and does not work, and therefore adds to public knowledge

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6. Criteria and guiding principles

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[2] The organizational assessment is based on Lusthaus, C., Adrien, M-H, Anderson, G. Carden, F. and Montalván , G.P. 2002. Organisational assessment: A framework for improving performance. IDB, IDRC (e-book)

All IUCN M&E activities must respect the criteria and guiding principles below to ensure that M&E activities contribute to the IUCN Global Programme and the goals of the Union. Other concerns such as financial viability, equity, gender and poverty are equally important and should be explored as necessary.

6.1 Monitoring criteria

In line with RBM, information collected through monitoring needs to comply with the following so-called SMART criteria and be:

(S)pecific - The information captured measures what it is supposed to measure. In other words, the data collected clearly and directly relates to the achievement of an objective and not to any other objective. If the information collected is specific, it can tell us whether the change we seek to create is happening or not.

(M)easurable – Before starting monitoring, staff must make sure that the information required can be practically collected using measurable indicators.

(**A)chievable** – Any changes measured must be feasible in the given time-frame.

(R)elevant – Monitoring results must make a contribution to selected priorities, i.e. they must fit with the IUCN Global Programme and where possible IUCN global results indicators must be included in monitoring.

(T)ime-bound – Monitoring is not open-ended but allows change to be tracked at the desired frequency for a set period.

6.2 Evaluation criteria

In general, IUCN evaluations explore the five major criteria outlined below. Not all of the criteria need to be systematically reviewed in all cases as IUCN may make modifications to ensure the criteria fit the specific nature of the evaluation. In all cases, an IUCN evaluation must first consider all five criteria and decide which ones are the most important given the context. IUCN evaluation reports must explicitly state the criteria used in the evaluation.

Relevance – To what extent is the policy, programme, project or organizational unit contributing to the strategic direction of IUCN and/or its Members and partners? Is it appropriate in the context of its environment?

Effectiveness – To what extent is the policy, programme, project, or organizational unit meeting its objectives and performing well?

Efficiency – To what extent is the policy, programme, project or organizational unit using its resources cost-effectively? Does the quality and quantity of results achieved justify the resources invested? Are there more cost-effective methods of achieving the same result?

Impact – What are the positive, negative, primary, secondary and long-term effects of an intervention directly, indirectly, intended or unintended? In other words, what difference has the activity made?

Sustainability – Is the enabling environment within which the policy, programme, project or organizational unit operates supportive to its continuity? To what extent will the activities and outputs be maintained after development support is withdrawn?

6.3 Monitoring and evaluation principles

All IUCN M&E work must adhere to the principles set out below.

Results-Oriented Accountability

M&E must focus on the extent to which the work of IUCN contributes to policy, programme, and overall objectives of the Union. A results-oriented accountability regime recognizes that there are a number of approaches to obtain results. It provides the flexibility for managers to use their insights and creativity to obtain the results desired. Similarly, a results-oriented system supports a management and governance system that provides guidance to managers, and requires information from managers about performance and learning. System controls for accountability for inputs are primarily left to internal audit.

Improving Planning and Delivery

M&E activities must provide useful findings and recommendations. Those under consideration should see M&E as an asset aimed at improving results and thereby strengthening the organization. Sustained involvement in, and ownership of, M&E processes contributes to better planning, decision-making and strategy formulation at all levels.

Quality Control

M&E involves the systematic integration of a wide assortment of knowledge and information related to a set of questions posed. As a result of gathering, analyzing and making judgements, IUCN staff and their stakeholders make important decisions related to the quality of their work at the policy, programme, project and organizational level.

Supporting an Evaluation Culture

M&E is most effective when it forms part of an organization's culture – a way of thinking and a way of acting. Concretely, M&E is seen as an important part of all IUCN staff responsibilities. As such, IUCN's incentive systems need to support learning about and appropriately using M&E. All staff should see the M&E process as a tool that can help them improve their work and their results.

Working in Partnership

M&E often involves multiple stakeholders. Those affected by the outcome of M&E work have a right to be involved in the process. Stakeholders should be actively involved in all aspects of the evaluation process. Such involvement will make evaluations better understood, promote contributions and acceptance, and will increase the likelihood of use.

Transparency

The transparency of the M&E process is an important aspect of ensuring that M&E information is extensively used by managers, the Director General and Council. Clear communication with stakeholders concerning the purpose of the monitoring and/or evaluation work, the key questions and intended uses of the results of the M&E process, along with standards for the design, data collection and analysis will maximize the transparency of the M&E process.

Access

IUCN makes M&E results publicly accessible. All final reports, as well as management responses where available, are uploaded on the IUCN website. Findings and lessons learned will be disseminated as appropriate and in accordance with IUCN's aspiration to be seen as a leader in M&E and in the spirit of collaboration. Finally, the Director General will present a report summarizing the M&E results of the term at each World Conservation Congress.

Ethics

M&E shall provide due regard for the welfare, beliefs, and customs of those involved or affected, avoiding conflict of interest. Stakeholder rights and interests shall be respected, particularly with regard to respecting culture and customs, fundamental values, the right to or not to participate, and ensuring confidentiality of individual stakeholders.

Ethical M&E requires that management and/or commissioners of M&E work remain open to the findings and do not allow vested interests to interfere. It also involves ensuring that IUCN carefully considers whether a monitoring and/or evaluation process is the appropriate tool to address the questions and issues raised about any policy, programme, project or organizational unit, or if some other process is more suitable such as an audit or performance appraisal.

External evaluators must receive a copy of this policy as an appendix to their contract and adhere to it. Internal evaluators will, in addition, adhere strictly to the IUCN Code of Conduct and Professional Ethics for the Secretariat (henceforth 'IUCN Code of Conduct'). If wrongdoing is uncovered or suspected in M&E activities, reporting should follow the procedures for reporting ethical misconduct as outlined in the IUCN Code of Conduct. **Impartiality**

M&E processes should be complete and fair in their examination and record the strengths and weaknesses of the policy, programme, project or organizational unit under consideration. As much as possible, M&E procedures should guard against distortion caused by personal feelings and biases of any party to the evaluation.

Independence

M&E processes are expected to truthfully and honestly describe successes and shortcomings. The M&E function should therefore be independent to ensure credibility and maximize benefits. Independence contributes to impartial M&E and ensures that the ability of those carrying out M&E to provide credible reports and advice is not compromised.

However, as defined above, there is a difference in the need for independence for monitoring and evaluation, respectively. Monitoring is an integrated part of management and therefore must be under the authority of the Director General.

When it comes to evaluation, independence is achieved where evaluation is independent from managers responsible for programme design, management and implementation, or organizational processes. The evaluation function shall be separate from IUCN's management and report to Council via the Director General. The Director General may comment on factual errors or insufficient data analysis leading to possible misinterpretation in an evaluation but may not change the findings and recommendations. Management influence over terms of reference, selection of evaluators and scope of evaluations shall be limited. The Head of the PME Unit may propose to the Council any measure that he or she believes is necessary to ensure evaluation independence.

While a high degree of independence is desirable, it does not mean all M&E should be external but rather that the principle of independence must be respected. Independence should not prevent the M&E function from enjoying a close working relationship with management and the programme functions to ensure maximum organizational learning and improved organizational practices as well as capacity building of staff on M&E.

Credibility

IUCN is committed to ensuring that M&E is carried out according to a high quality of accepted standards in the professional field and based on reliable data and observations. The use of these standards by IUCN managers is reviewed on a regular basis, and progress towards improving the quality of IUCN's evaluations is reported on an annual basis.

Improving the quality of evaluations in IUCN is a critical aspect of the credibility of its evaluation work.

Utility

M&E must serve the information needs of intended users. There is no point in engaging in M&E unless it is seen as useful and used in decision-making and programme improvement. Assessments of the extent to which evaluations are used in IUCN form part of regular reporting on evaluation in IUCN.

Moreover, evaluations are guided by a set of minimum procedures available on the IUCN website, in particular:

- IUCN Project Guidelines and Standards (2014)
- IUCN (2004) Managing Evaluations at IUCN – A guide for IUCN programme and project managers.
- IUCN (2004) A Guide for the Planning and Conduct of IUCN Strategic Reviews

7. Minimum monitoring and evaluation requirements

The following minimum requirements must be adhered to by all IUCN staff:

- All IUCN programmes will provide data supporting measurement of the result and impact indicators defined in the IUCN Global Programme on an annual basis;

- In addition, all IUCN programmes will define and measure four-year results indicators and provide annual updates

- Every IUCN programme will also provide an annual report of implementation of annual results from the previous year

- Every project, as required by donors, will define and implement a monitoring and evaluation plan, including indicators and plans for one or more evaluation(s)

- Irrespective of donor requirements, every IUCN project with a value over CHF500,000 will develop and implement a monitoring plan with indicators and plan for an end of project evaluation

- In addition to the above, every IUCN project with a value over CHF2,000,000 will add a mid-term evaluation to its monitoring and evaluation planEvery evaluation will trigger the development of a management response.

8. Roles and responsibilities

The IUCN Council, through the Programme and Policy Committee, is responsible for overseeing the evaluation function, including approving the M&E Policy as well as receiving and considering evaluation reports. This Committee is also responsible for overseeing the IUCN Global Programme and approving annual workplans and programme monitoring reports. The Committee's role is exercised through the Director General, who has responsibility for the monitoring function and for facilitating the evaluation function. The Council and the Programme and Policy Committee can request specific evaluations and updates on the implementation of the recommendations of completed evaluations.

IUCN senior management, which includes the Director General, the Deputy Director General, Regional Directors and Global Directors, are the primary users of M&E results. These results are used to improve performance, perform adaptive management, control risk, enable learning and provide accountability. Management is expected to be an active participant in M&E activities in terms of collaboratively setting a workplan, participating in design, considering draft reports and using results in decision making. Senior management also monitors the implementation of changes as recommended by an evaluation.

The Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit is responsible for:

- Coordinating M&E activities

- M&E standard setting and implementation

- Implementation of this M&E Policy

- Working with senior management and Council to prepare M&E workplans and reporting

- Liaising with IUCN's donors

- Ensuring M&E tools are in line with international best practice.

Individual project and programme managers are primarily responsible for monitoring and reporting and using the results of project and programme evaluations.

For further information please contact evaluation@iucn.org