

Even before the deadline to submit proposals for the next World Conservation Congress was reached, there were 157 proposals on ecosystem management, many of them involving our commission. Steve Edwards, our invaluable coordinator of CEM's contribution to congress, was very impressed by the quality of the proposals, and so am I. These proposals were proof of innovative and good out-of-the-box thinking to lead IUCN into new opportunities for conservation. It will be hard to make a selection, and many will be disappointed given the large numbers of proposals in relation to the number of slots available. But it does show that we are part of a very lively family, with many of us ready to stick their neck out for the good cause of nature conservation.

CEM matters

Birguy Lamizana has kindly agreed to replace Masse Lô as Steering Committee member for the African continent. I have known Birguy since a long time when she worked with the IUCN office in Ouagadougou under the leadership of Ibrahim Thiaw, who is now one of the directors of UNEP. Birguy's PhD-thesis on ecology studied the linkages between river flows and livelihoods in an African River system. I am looking forward to work with her in this new role.

In the last report, with regrets I had to announce that we decided to postpone the nomination of a Luc Hoffmann award winner because we needed more candidates to make our choice. Many names are coming in now, and I am very pleased with that. However, be aware that we are looking for people that show **leadership in conservation at their community level**, that do this because of their genuine motivation and concern about nature and **that are not professionally involved** with it, being paid for it, or making personal profit out of it.

From the Thematic Groups

Since a long time, Brahim Haddane, our Regional Chair for North Africa, has expressed his wish to organise a CEM-event on the management of oases. When I was in Mauritania, I discussed this idea with Mohamed Lemine Ould Baba, coordinator of IUCN's country office in Nouakchott. Mauritania is planning to organise a "Journée des villes anciennes" in the old oasis town of Ouadane, a world heritage site beautifully located on a rock at the edge of the Guelb el Richât. The Guelb is proposed to be a new desert protected area and world heritage site because of its natural values and spectacular Neolithic rock art. We decided to use this event to organise a session on climate change and oasis management for the North-African Maghreb-countries. IUCN's office in Malaga has promised to support the initiative, but the budget is not fully covered yet.

Masse Lô initiated the idea of organising a workshop on nature based solutions to the impacts of Climate Change for the city of St.Louis in Senegal. St.Louis, equally a world heritage site, is West Africa's equivalent to Venice, situated in the Senegal River Delta. Like Venice, its low-lying position makes it very vulnerable to climate change. In January next year, a "Journée du Delta" will be organised by the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve of the Senegal Delta, where CEM hopefully will organise a workshop on climate change.

The 4th Ecosystem Services Conference in Wageningen, organised by Dolf de Groot, has been a great success. Jelena Ilić organized a workshop on ecosystems and food security, highly relevant for the proposed future IUCN-programme.

From the Regions

The French National Committee is very active in spreading the word on ecosystem management through a special newsletter for the French IUCN-members. To ensure synergy between their work on our commission's programme, Marion Péguin has been nominated CEM's national focal point for France.

I attended the Regional Conservation Forum in Rabat where the proposed IUCN programme and its relevance for North-Africa has been discussed. It was an inspiring and no-nonsense event, including a visit to a Ramsar site nearby. The "Arabian spring" was not officially on the agenda, but of course it came back regularly during

the discussions. IUCN's commissions were asked to step up efforts to increase membership in the North-African Region, and I did invite a number of high level experts to be members of CEM. At my suggestion, CEM-member Professor Bachir Raissouni from Morocco found a student, Palamino Essadik, who will work as an intern to our commission collecting as much data as possible on ecosystems and biodiversity in Libya. The idea is that we use this information to organise a short workshop in Libya to remind the new political powers of the interesting biodiversity of their country and its importance for human well-being.

The seminar dedicated to the late Kamal Batanouny will be organised in Qatar in March 2012 in week 11 (Insjallah). Said Damhoureyeh and myself are in contact with the organisers about CEM's role in this.

I should have informed you in my previous flash report about 2 recent developments in North America. As Steve Edwards is promoting a very active programme in North America and the Caribbean region, Charlotte Moser has agreed to serve as Deputy Regional Chair for CEM in that region. The Symposium "Roadmap to Restoring the Ecological Health of the Gulf of Mexico" was very successful. It was organised by Keith Bowers in his double quality as chair of SERi¹ and CEM's Thematic Group Lead on ecosystem restoration. Two grants (totalling \$28,200) were awarded to the Inter Commission Working Group on the Gulf.

General IUCN-matters

Olivier Hamerlynck, our Thematic Group Lead for the Ecosystem Approach, has participated in the first session of the plenary meeting on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in Nairobi. As stated in my last flash report, IUCN deserves to play a leading role in IPBES given its expertise in its knowledge networks. With Neville Ash, former focal point within HQ-IUCN for CEM, now heading up the unit within UNEP it that is working to get IPBES a similar status and authority as the IPCC, we have an excellent ambassador to get IUCN and CEM recognised as leading partners in ecosystem management.

• _____
¹ Society for Ecological Restoration international