

The IUCN Innovation Fund

Information Brochure



The Challenge

Human society is currently developing faster than at any other time in its history and is constantly being challenged by the scale and consequences of social, economic and environmental change. Institutional structures evolve, perceptions change and emerging technology opens up new opportunities. The development of an increasingly global society produces both problems and opportunities. Addressing these in a way that ensures quality of life for both present and future generations requires new visions and new approaches.

Innovation is central to today's world and a key ingredient in responding to and adapting to changes that result from an ever more complex world characterized by increasing human population and limited resources base. Thus innovation will continue to be the imperative and hope of a sustainable world that we envision for the future.

Knowledge-based and learning organizations, such as IUCN, have a particular role and responsibility to "encourage, influence and assist societies" in meeting this challenge of sustainability. As a result, the capacity to define future

directions as well as adapt to change is essential to achieving IUCN's mission. The challenge, however, is not only to remain innovative, but also to make innovations more effective.

IUCN's Response

IUCN has established the Innovation Fund to provide an incentive mechanism to catalyze IUCN's adaptation to a changing world and guide the course of future institutional programmatic work.

Innovation is considered at the institutional programme level and includes new issue areas for IUCN and new ways of addressing current issues.

Use of the Fund is based on an integrated approach across IUCN's component programmes (including regional, global thematic and commission programmes) and clear outputs that are scientifically credible, can

be readily communicated to key audiences, and have strong potential to attract further investment by donors and partners.

The Innovation Fund has two elements:

- **3I-C Projects** (Innovation, integration, information and communication); and
- **Leverage Initiatives.**

Individuals and component programmes from across the Secretariat are encouraged to propose new strategic issues and projects throughout the year. The Innovation Fund Steering Committee, composed of the Deputy Director General and a team of advisors meet several times each year to select the most strategic issues and the most challenging and innovative projects.

More detailed guidelines for submissions are provided in the Innovation Fund Operational Guidelines.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature

3I-C Projects

3I-C projects are designed to:

- catalyse Innovation,
- promote Integration,
- generate Information,
- stimulate Communication.

The Innovation Fund allocates up to CHF 250K to 3I-C Projects. It is aimed at testing innovative areas in a way that brings together commissions, global thematic programmes and regions. The 3I-C mechanism allows for member engagements, but this is not a compulsory requirement. This is deliberate as 3I-C projects are meant to be relatively high risk and rapid and working with members can be slow in some cases. Periodically the Innovation Fund Steering Committee selects projects for funding based on a set of criteria. The 3I-C application process has 2 stages, with an initial concept stage, and for the selected concept a proposal specifying the expected outputs.

3I-C Concepts

3I-C concepts address the following questions:

- **Challenge:** What is the specific challenge being faced and why should IUCN address it?

- **Response:** What approach is proposed for IUCN to address the challenge?

- **Eligibility:** Why is your idea innovative for IUCN? How will your idea promote integration within IUCN? What kind(s) of information could be generated? What type(s) of communication products could be envisaged?

- **Partners:** Who is currently doing work on the issue within IUCN? What partnership would be formed within IUCN to address the issue?

- **Indicative Budget:** What is the estimated cost for the 3I-C Project in Swiss francs (IUCN staff time, consultants, travel, workshops, publications, communication)? Are other sources of funds available?

The concept must demonstrate that partnership approach is planned with at least one global thematic, one regional, and one Commission programme.

3I-C Proposals

Once the concept is selected, proponents will be invited to develop a proposal, address the following issues :

- **Situation Analysis:** to define the factors affecting ecosystems, people and institutions within the context of the issue being addressed.

- **Final drafts of Policy/Position statement:** to inform the IUCN programme and the Union's constituency.

- **Communication product(s):** to reach beyond IUCN's traditional constituency.

- **Project proposals:** to secure future funding.

Leverage Initiatives

A Leverage Initiative (LI) is a topical, targeted and time-limited effort (4-8 years) designed to influence policy and practice. LIs will build upon institutional learning, stimulate innovative ideas and test their viability and effectiveness. LIs use the Union's strengths to influence conservation and development policy and practice in areas that have been outside IUCN's traditional area of work. They enable existing component programmes (Commissions, regions and thematic programmes) to work together on new strategic issues with members and partners.

A LI will demonstrate how environmental concerns can be better integrated into the economic and social pillars

of sustainable development.

Unlike the open application process for the 3I-C fund, a consortium of programmes will be invited to develop a LI proposal based on strategic priorities identified.

Each leverage initiative receive up to CHF 250k each year for up to 2 years.

LI Proposals

The proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Broad consultation of partners,** from local to national and global scale;

- **Involvement of private partners** from at least 1 economic sector;

- **Leadership** of a designated coordinator;

- **Demand-driven and result-oriented approach.**

Each LI will develop a vision and a strategy on a specific topic with input from a wide group of stakeholders within and outside IUCN.

- **A vision** with the overall outcome and target audience (e.g. CBD COP);

- **A strategy** with specific results, management structure, budget, fundraising and communication plans.