

## How is IUCN policy made?

IUCN members start the process for making policy by submitting motions on issues that are consistent with the objectives of IUCN, for consideration, debate and adoption/rejection by the WCC. A motion is a draft of a decision which the Congress is requested to consider. Motions must meet the requirements and guidelines as described in IUCN statutes.

Prior to a Congress, motions are reviewed and consolidated by a Resolutions Working Group established by Council, to ensure consistency with IUCN objectives and to avoid any duplications. Motions may also be submitted to the WCC Resolutions Committee at the Congress in accordance with requirements provided by IUCN statutes.

Adopted motions become Resolutions and Recommendations, which are the main source of IUCN policy. Resolutions are directed to IUCN itself, whereas recommendations are directed to third parties such as governments, international and national organisations

## More information:

A list of IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations can be found at [http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/global\\_policy/gpu\\_resources/index.cfm](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/global_policy/gpu_resources/index.cfm) along with statements and position papers relevant to policy.

For more information, contact the Global Policy Unit at IUCN Headquarters – [gpuhq@iucn.org](mailto:gpuhq@iucn.org)

## Summary: Roles in defining and implementing IUCN policy

### *The World Conservation Congress (WCC)*

- Defines IUCN general policy;
- Makes recommendations to third parties on matters related to IUCN objectives;
- Approves the IUCN programme.

### *The Council*

- Gives rulings on policy and determines policy guidelines;
- Adopts and publicizes statements on issues concerning IUCN objectives;
- Approves the annual work plan and budget of IUCN's programme.

### *IUCN Members*

- Participate in the WCC, submit motions and vote;
- Participate in National/ Regional Committees or Fora.

### *The Director General*

- Implements IUCN policy and programme as approved by WCC;
- Issues policy statements in the name of IUCN;
- Seeks policy rulings and guidelines from Council where policy is unclear.

### *The IUCN Commissions*

- Extend scientific knowledge through research, analysis and action;
- Undertake tasks assigned to them by the WCC, Council and programme;
- Commission Chairs, as members of Council, could present a motion to Council for submission to WCC.

### *National / Regional Committees and Fora*

- Pursue their own policies where consistent with those of IUCN, but do not make general policy;
- Issue policy statements on behalf of committees where these do not obligate IUCN;
- Collaborate with Secretariat and Commissions on the IUCN programme within their region.

## THE IUCN POLICY SYSTEM



## What is a “policy”?

A policy may be defined as a definite course or principle of action to guide present and future decisions and actions. For instance, IUCN has adopted a policy on sustainable use of natural resources (WCC Res. 2.29)

## What is IUCN policy?

IUCN general policy consists of a body of principles and frameworks on conservation-related issues embedded in Resolutions or Recommendations adopted by the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC).

IUCN policy must conform to the IUCN mission: *“to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.”*

IUCN general policy also includes texts such as the *World Conservation Strategy (1980)* and *Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living (1991)*.

This leaflet clarifies the roles and responsibilities of different IUCN components in defining, interpreting and implementing IUCN policy, as stated in the Revised Policy System approved by the IUCN Council in 2002. It does not address IUCN's policy system in detail, nor the particulars of policy development and delivery.

# The IUCN Policy System

## Who defines IUCN's policy?

The *only* body entitled to define IUCN general policy is the WCC. **The WCC** is the highest organ of IUCN, **and** consists of IUCN members.

## What is the Council's role with regard to policy?

The IUCN Council gives rulings on policy and determines policy guidelines once general policy has been established by the WCC. It also helps develop IUCN general policy, by appointing a Resolutions Working Group (RWG), and proposing motions for consideration by the WCC. The Council also approves the annual work plans of the IUCN programme.

## What are the Members' roles with regard to policy?

IUCN Members are obliged to support and facilitate the objectives, activities and governance of IUCN. They have the right to submit motions and vote on IUCN policy at the WCC. They are entitled to participate in **National and Regional Committees** and circulate their views to other IUCN bodies.

## Can the National and Regional Committees make policy?

Having independent legal status, the National and Regional Committees are entitled to develop their own policies consistent with those of IUCN, but not to make IUCN general policy. They are also allowed to issue statements on behalf of their Committees as long as these do not commit IUCN to any financial, legal or policy obligations.

## Example: IUCN Sustainable Use Policy Role of different bodies

In 1996 the first **WCC** adopted Resolution 1.39 *Sustainable Use Initiative*, recognising that sustainable use was central to the major multilateral environmental agreements and that most component programmes of IUCN worked on sustainable use, and needed guidance on how to mainstream the principles into their activities.

The WCC requested the **Species Survival Commission** (SSC) Sustainable Use Specialist Group (SUSG) to prepare a draft policy paper on sustainable use for presentation at the next WCC. A draft was prepared through an extensive consultation process throughout the Union involving regional SUSGs, other Commissions, the Secretariat and IUCN members.

The draft Policy Statement was reviewed by **Council** in 2000 who endorsed the submission of the draft statement to the 2nd WCC in the form of Council Decision C/51/36.

In 2000 the 2nd **WCC** adopted Resolution 2.29 *The Policy Statement on Sustainable Use of Wild Living Resources*, and commended it to IUCN's Members, Commissions and Secretariat for implementation.

The **IUCN Secretariat** subsequently uses the Sustainable Use Policy to issue statements to influence policy processes such as the:

- International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 2001:  
*IUCN Policy Statement to the 53rd Meeting of the IWC*
- Convention on Biological Diversity COP6 in 2002:  
*Sustainable Use: Progress on Development of Practical Principles, Operational Guidance and Associated Instruments.*
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) COP12 in 2002:  
*IUCN Recommendations to the Parties.*

## Can IUCN Commissions make policy?

The Commissions are not entitled to make IUCN policy. They provide scientific and technical advice to help advance IUCN's objectives. However, if a Commission sees the need to develop an IUCN policy, its Chair, as a member of Council, can present a motion for consideration by the Council and submission to the WCC.

## What is the Secretariat's role with regard to policy?

The Director General, as the Chief Executive of IUCN and the Head of the Secretariat, is responsible for implementing IUCN general policy as established by the WCC, and associated Council rulings and guidelines. Within the Secretariat, the Global Policy Unit is tasked with the maintenance of standards and coherence in IUCN policy delivery.

Only the Director General, or his/her delegate, is authorised to issue 'Policy Statements' as part of the implementation of IUCN's policy. 'Policy Statements' do not constitute the making of policy, they are part of its implementation.

Where the interpretation of IUCN general policy is unclear, the Director General (or any member of Council) may seek a policy ruling and complementary policy guidelines on particular topics from Council.