

**IUCN World Conservation Congress
3–10 September 2021, Marseille, France**

Report of the Director General on the Work of the Union since the IUCN World Conservation Congress, Hawai'i, 2016

Action Requested: The IUCN World Conservation Congress is invited to NOTE and DISCUSS the Report of the Director General.

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1. Introduction

The IUCN Programme 2017–2020 took shape at a pivotal moment in the relationship between people and planet. The global community had recently reached a milestone agreement, when in 2015 it finally set out a common vision for the future and demonstrated the collective will to implement it, through the adoption of several major multilateral agreements and global targets. Most notable among these were the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Citizens and civil society all over the world were, with cautious optimism, demanding greater ownership of – and political commitment to – conservation efforts, and expectations around the climate crisis were rising on the global agenda. Yet, even as society was looking at the road ahead, evidence was building that measures to reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity, to shift the world towards sustainable practices and to avoid further declines in the state of the environment were proving insufficient. Countries were struggling to show significant progress under already existing agreements and targets, such as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

A call for change. The IUCN Programme 2017–2020 was therefore launched at a time when sustainability priorities needed to be elevated to the highest spheres of international discussion and mainstreamed across all sectors of society. A time when both governments and companies needed to step up investments in nature and ‘clean’ growth opportunities, when social actors were calling for the recognition of their rights to land, water and a healthy environment, and when the scientific community was well placed to reveal the ‘red flags’ and identify technical solutions. Thus, the IUCN Programme 2017–2020 was a blueprint for realising many of the ambitions of the post-2015 agenda. It embraced and assimilated the new global momentum and captured it in a programme of work deploying IUCN’s strengths and taking advantage of the Union’s knowledge, reach and legitimacy in order to move from broad agreements to concrete action. The Programme also reflected IUCN’s conviction that global well-being can only be sustained through enhanced understanding of the planet’s complex life-support systems and their inter-relationships with global trends such as economic growth and consumption, biodiversity loss, and climate change. Ultimately, the Programme broke away from the once-widespread misconception that global challenges could each be addressed separately, instead recognising that environmental, economic and even political concerns often share direct and indirect drivers, and can similarly benefit from common solutions.

One world, one health. The interconnected state of the world was brought into stark relief during 2020 by the rapidly overwhelming outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. IUCN, caught up in a storm whose effects were being felt worldwide, took immediate action to safeguard the health and safety of its globally distributed staff, while also ensuring that the Union remained operational to the fullest extent possible. As the outbreak became a full-blown pandemic, and in order to protect our constituencies and partners, IUCN and the French Government took the decision to postpone the IUCN World Conservation Congress, originally scheduled for June 2020, in Marseille, France, to September 2021. This course of action was mirrored by the postponement of many other international and regional events that had promised to make 2020 a milestone year for biodiversity and climate.

Owing to the pandemic, IUCN Members, Commissions and Secretariat programmes rapidly adapted to organise online events through webinars and consultations. This enabled a greater outreach and a more inclusive approach than in-person workshops and meetings. Further, Commissions established new Task Forces to undertake analytical work and produced publications on the environmental causes of the pandemic and its impact on conservation.

Gaining strength from the highs and lows. The difficult yet necessary decision to postpone the IUCN Congress has not been without consequences for the Union but has also reinforced a number of important messages. The pandemic has given humanity a chance to reconsider its relationship with the natural world. COVID-19 has taught us that a pandemic is not just a crisis of health, but also of nature. It is not separate from the ongoing global crises of biodiversity loss and climate change, but intricately linked by sharing the same roots. IUCN can and must seize this moment to influence the world for the better with the strength of its Members, partners, and the science that underpins its actions. With determination and innovation as the world recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, IUCN can be a leader on the pathway to a more sustainable, healthier and more secure future. The Union gained inspiration and strength from proudly commemorating its 70th anniversary in 2018; now, more than ever,

IUCN has unique reach and relevance in meeting and responding to the challenges confronting the world.

Three pillars of sustainable development. As a unique multi-stakeholder platform, IUCN has a pivotal role to play in the world's renewed commitment to the sustainable development agenda. The past four years have laid the ground for us, with a heightened awareness globally of the impacts of climate change and the consequences of inaction. Society can no longer ignore how raging forest fires, retreating glaciers and polar ice-caps, sea level rise, severe water shortages, and extreme weather events, are increasingly affecting communities and biodiversity, as well as how biodiversity loss is affecting everything else in turn. In this spirit of interconnectedness, IUCN's work throughout this past quadrennium continued to be underpinned by the knowledge that nature conservation and human progress can go hand-in-hand. We drove action on the ground, convinced that there are credible and accessible political, economic, cultural and technological choices that can promote general welfare in ways that support and even enhance our planet's natural assets. By rising to the challenge of its ambitious Programme, IUCN left its mark as much in regional, national and local spaces, as on the global stage. By working with government agencies, civil society, indigenous peoples' groups, scientific experts, the private sector, local leaders, youth groups, global platforms and alliances, and many other partners, our Union's constituents continued to lead in their role as convenors and dialogue facilitators, knowledge generators, policy and technical advisors, and as advocates for nature, to ensure that humanity builds the environmental, social, and economic pillars that all equally support sustainable development.

A brighter future. That is why, in the face of all these concerns and growing challenges, IUCN remains optimistic and committed. Although uncertain times lie ahead, the magnitude and impact of global change are expected to grow, posing new and ever more pressing challenges at all levels. IUCN will be a key part of the solutions. IUCN knows that conservation works and that the inclusive protection, sustainable management, and restoration of ecosystems can be as much a means for, as an outcome of, sustainable development. IUCN firmly believes that good governance of natural resources is a powerful way of addressing social inequalities, that our vulnerability to climate change can be reduced, and that when different sectors of society work together, people and nature can thrive. IUCN will support global leaders throughout the 'Decade of Action' they declared at the United Nations SDG Summit 2019, so that the world will leave no-one behind as it mobilises financing, enhances implementation and strengthens institutions to achieve the SDGs in the decade remaining to reach the 2030 goals and targets. The Union draws its confidence from 70 years of knowledge and experience, its global network of more than 15,000 experts, its membership base of 1,400 governmental and non-governmental organisations, and its partnerships with key donors, like-minded institutions and patrons. Today, despite turbulent times, IUCN is better prepared than ever to step up action, inform decisions, convene actors and facilitate change on the ground to lead the way towards a just world that values and conserves nature.

This report is structured as follows: section 2 provides an overview of implementation of the three main Programme Areas of the IUCN Programme 2017–2020; section 3 provides an update on the membership, Commissions and Secretariat in the past quadrennium; finally, section 4 provides an overview of IUCN's vision for years to come.

2. Delivering the IUCN Programme 2017–2020

2.1 Programme Areas

The IUCN Programme 2017–2020 (Figure 1) was designed to contribute to the delivery of the Aichi Targets, the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. With this ambition in mind, the 2020 targets set out in the Programme were linked to the Aichi and SDG targets, thus demonstrating IUCN's alignment with the imperative to deliver on these outcomes. Building on and learning from previous IUCN intersessional programmes, the IUCN Programme 2017–2020 laid a solid foundation to consolidate all the elements of IUCN's mission and vision through the implementation of three main Programme Areas.



Figure 1. IUCN Programme Framework for 2017–2020

It is important to note that while good progress was made on all programmatic targets, and many were achieved, biodiversity continues to decline globally. It is within this context that IUCN should continue to leverage the Union's strengths to support the global community in achieving the SDGs.

Valuing and conserving nature. This first pillar of the IUCN Programme 2017–2020 referred to IUCN's 'heartland' and its dedication to nature conservation, species, protected areas and natural heritage, and to the intrinsic value that nature holds for nature's sake together with the value of nature's ecosystem services.

Global Result & Sub-Results

1. The risk facing species and ecosystems is reduced

- 1.1 Credible and trusted knowledge for valuing and conserving biodiversity is available, utilised and effectively communicated.
- 1.2 Effective implementation and enforcement of laws and policies for valuing and conserving biodiversity and nature is accelerated.
- 1.3 Key drivers of biodiversity loss are addressed through application of conservation measures.

SDGs: 14 and 15 in particular (and to a lesser extent: 2, 5, 6, and 11 to 13)

Aichi Targets: 1 to 6, 8 to 15, and 17 to 19.

In addition to actively contributing to the elaboration of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, IUCN increased its presence in the field this quadrennium to deliver conservation action. There was also progress in the adoption of national wildlife laws and regulations, in particular to tackle illegal trafficking, and in policy responses for the management of invasive alien species. Since the end of 2015, IUCN has completed over 78,400 new and updated assessments for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, and concluded that, of all assessed species, more than 35,700 are today threatened with extinction. Importantly, IUCN also highlighted the critical effect of up to 12 million tons of plastic every year ending up in the world's coastal marine ecosystems, and warned of the consequences of ocean deoxygenation in a global report that generated over 900 news articles and was featured in 16 news outlets around the world.

IUCN continued to fund frontline conservation efforts through its [Save Our Species](#) (SOS) grant-making programme, which contributes to the long-term survival of threatened species, their habitats and the people who depend on them. This programme includes awareness-raising actions, such as the 2018 campaign by Lacoste that saw the iconic crocodile logo on the company's classic polo shirts replaced with those representing threatened species. Another programme that improves species conservation through grant-making is the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP), launched in 2014 with the support of the German government and KfW (German Development Bank). This programme aims to save wild tigers and their habitats, as well as support human populations in key

biodiversity locations in Asia. During the past quadrennium, ITHCP continued to expand its reach and supported over 21,000 women in accessing livelihood, trade and finance opportunities, as well as alternative fuel resources to reduce deforestation and minimise human-wildlife conflicts.

IUCN and partners also carried out expeditions to gather scientific data and improve our understanding of terrestrial and marine ecosystems and to develop species and habitats inventories that can guide conservation efforts. For the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems, a total of 2200 assessments were finalised. Countries' progress in the establishment of protected areas and to meeting Aichi Target 11 was captured in the World Database of Protected Areas ([Protected Planet](#)). Numerous new Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) were also identified and the [KBA Partnership](#) not only prepared guidelines for applying the KBA Standard but actively encouraged countries to form KBA National Coordination Groups to identify, map and conserve KBAs, while also establishing a global KBA Committee.

The Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) also gained ground in this period, showing the private sector's growing commitment towards conservation. With support from the Tiffany Foundation, IUCN developed guidelines for companies operating in or around KBAs, to help minimise their impact on biodiversity. IUCN and the Biodiversity Consultancy launched the first global database of national biodiversity offset policies that lists more than 100 countries as currently developing or considering adopting offset policies, which is double the number from 15 years ago. The [#NatureForAll](#) initiative has also grown steadily, not least during the COVID-19 pandemic when lockdowns around the world precluded experiencing nature close-up, and motivated IUCN to create the Discovery Zone, an online collection of materials for anyone looking to help connect people with nature, wherever they may be.

Promoting and supporting effective and equitable governance of natural resources. The second pillar of IUCN's Programme 2017–2020 tackled equity and governance of nature's use. Development challenges worldwide have impacted on how resources are used and shared, making effective and equitable governance ever more relevant to sustainability objectives.

Global Result & Sub-Results

2. Natural resource governance at all levels enables delivery of effective conservation and equitable social outcomes by integrating good governance principles and rights-based approaches.

- 2.1 Credible and trusted knowledge for assessing and improving natural resource governance at all levels is available from IUCN.
- 2.2 Governance at national and subnational levels related to nature and natural resources is strengthened through the application of the rights-based approach, and incorporation of good governance principles.
- 2.3 Regional and global governance systems for conservation of nature and natural resources are established, supported and strengthened.

SDGs: 1, 5, 16 and 17 in particular (and to a lesser extent: 2, 5, 6, 10, 12 and 14)

Aichi Targets: 1, 2, 4, 13, and 16 to 19

This quadrennium, 63 countries were supported to enhance their reporting in relation to international commitments under biodiversity-related conventions and other agreements (e.g. NBSAPs). IUCN continued to support the implementation of the UNFCCC's Gender Action Plan and its Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform. By the end of 2017, IUCN estimated that 965 institutions had mechanisms in place, such as climate change gender action plans, to significantly increase effective gender-equitable participation in decision-making. IUCN experts in international environmental law, marine protected areas, environmental assessment processes, marine scientific research and marine genetic resources supported the development of a new treaty under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, designed to close governance gaps and enhance cooperation to preserve the health of the oceans in areas beyond national jurisdictions.

IUCN also made progress in applying tools, methodologies and approaches for improved natural resource governance, consistent with the Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF). Supported by the German International Climate Initiative, IUCN launched [CLIMA](#), a tool to assess governance frameworks for implementing ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation, as well as online courses on governance for ecosystem-based adaptation and integrated planning for

climate change and biodiversity conservation. Jointly with FAO and UNEP, IUCN further developed the [ECOLEX database](#), the most comprehensive information source for environmental law globally. IUCN also supported the development of [enviroLENS](#), a new portal that combines legal data with information from satellite technology to support compliance with environmental law, and completed the first-ever global study detailing the legal and institutional frameworks governing mangroves and offering solutions to address governance gaps and weaknesses.

Many IUCN projects recognised, supported and promoted community-led, cultural, grassroots or protected area governance systems that were conducive to social and environmental benefits, and demonstrated the value of effective and equitable governance of natural resources. Examples can be found in Tanzania, where governance was strengthened through the water resource management platforms of 90 villages, land tenure management in 17 villages, and equitable production and market chains with 16 cooperatives. Or in Burkina Faso, where IUCN supported the development of grievance mechanisms in 32 municipalities to enhance local natural resource governance, with 53 grassroots organisations and 17 local economic operations then making use of these instruments. A further example is the SDC-supported BRIDGE programme, which has facilitated transboundary water governance in shared watersheds. These include the Lake Chad Water Charter (Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Niger and Nigeria), the Peru-Ecuador Bilateral Commission, and the Binational Commission of the Sixaola River Basin (driven by local organisations from Costa Rica and Panama).

Deploying Nature-based Solutions to address societal challenges. The third pillar of the IUCN Programme 2017–2020 focused on improving the understanding, efficacy, uptake and up-scaling of Nature-based Solutions (NbS).

Global Result & Sub-Results

3. *Societies recognise and enhance the ability of healthy and restored ecosystems to make effective contributions to meeting societal challenges of climate change, food security, human health and well-being, and economic and social development.*

- 3.1 Credible and trusted knowledge on how nature-based solutions can directly contribute to addressing major societal challenges is available and used by decision makers at all levels.
- 3.2 Inclusive governance and resourcing mechanisms to facilitate the effective deployment of nature-based solutions are tested and adopted by decision makers at all levels.
- 3.3 Intact, modified and degraded landscapes, seascapes and watersheds that deliver direct benefits for society are equitably protected, managed and/or restored.

SDGs: 1, 2, 5, 6, 11 and 13 in particular (and to a lesser extent: 3, 4, 12, and 14 to 16)

Aichi Targets: 1, 2, 7, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19 and 20.

Nature-based Solutions now feature in major policy initiatives such as the European Green Deal, the 2019 UN Climate Summit, the UNFCCC Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, the UN Task Force on Nature-based Solutions for Water, and the zero draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. This concept has come a long way since first used by IUCN over 10 years ago, and is transcending the conservation community as it gains interest from governments, and the private and finance sectors. The definition of Nature-based Solutions approved by IUCN Members in Hawai'i in 2016 is now the most widely-accepted framing of NbS globally and frequently used by many governments and international bodies. In 2017, 124 countries used NbS-supporting tools for decision-making (e.g. the Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology). By 2019, 60 countries had signed up to the NbS Coalition with over two-thirds of signatories to the Paris Agreement including NbS in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Moreover, IUCN was actively assisting many of these countries to implement the NbS contained in their NDCs, to convene multi-stakeholder dialogues, and to secure funding from donors such as the Green Climate Fund. Through NbS, IUCN has also drawn links between REDD+ mechanisms and forest conservation and restoration; between climate change mitigation and adaptation; between environmental degradation, disasters and climate change; and between conservation, social inclusion, women's empowerment and good governance of natural resources.

During the quadrennium, there was significant progress with the application on the ground of NbS through Eco-Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR), Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and Forest

Landscape Restoration (FLR). Since the last Report of the Director General to Congress, at least a further 76 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes have been committed to restoration under the [Bonn Challenge](#). In 2017 alone, IUCN assisted the establishment of 33 new payment and compensation mechanisms for NbS, such as a national fund for forest financing, and reached approximately 248,000 beneficiaries by fostering national and sub-national participation. In 2018, IUCN launched the [Blue Natural Capital Financing Facility](#), a funding mechanism that encourages private investments in projects in developing countries that protect, restore and strengthen coastal and marine ecosystems, while enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation responses. In 2019, IUCN expanded its work in EbA in over 65 countries, and demonstrated the effectiveness of EbA for governments to advance sustainable development through enhancing or restoring ecosystem integrity. IUCN provided technical and policy support to 80 countries for Eco-DRR, to 19 countries to develop specific national Eco-DRR actions, to 81 countries to establish national voluntary targets for Land Degradation Neutrality, and to 10 countries to mobilise implementation funds and action.

By 2020, momentum rose to the next level with the launch and promotion of the [IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions](#) as a framework for benchmarking nature-based responses to major societal challenges such as water security, food security, human health, DRR and climate change. In addition, IUCN and UNEP jointly launched the Global Fund for EbA, which will strengthen knowledge and political will for NbS by providing targeted and rapid support for innovative approaches to EbA. Towards the end of the year an innovative blended-finance initiative was launched by IUCN and partners that aims to invest in mid-sized, climate resilient low carbon infrastructure and Nature-based Solutions in developing countries. Supported by the GCF and several private sector entities, the Sub-national Climate Fund will be capitalised at 750 million dollars, with IUCN implementing the technical support component.

2.2 Meeting Programme targets

Successful Programme delivery. Building on the preceding programme for 2013–2016, the IUCN Programme 2017–2020 retained the same three Programme Areas yet raised the ambition, outreach, impact and profile of IUCN’s conservation efforts. This Programme also set in place better metrics to measure the actual impact of IUCN’s work (Table 1). By the end of 2020, 18 out of 30 targets were fully achieved while another 8 made significant progress towards achievement (the label “on track to achieve target” was maintained to ensure consistency with previous iterations of the traffic light assessment). There are only four that made slower progress than was envisaged. Progress was made on all targets over the 2017–2020 period, thanks to contributions and collaborative work among all IUCN constituencies – Members, Commissions and the Secretariat.

Table 1. Implementation progress on the IUCN Programme 2017–2020 targets

Target achieved 2017–2020		On track to achieve target	Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate	No significant overall progress	No Progress	
#	Target description				2019	2020
Programme Area 1: Valuing and conserving nature						
1	The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™: global assessments of 160,000 species completed including reassessments to generate indicators and at least 75 % of countries with national and regional Red Lists use the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria.					
2	The IUCN Red List of Ecosystems: ensure global assessment of risk of collapse of 25% of the world’s ecosystems according to an agreed global ecosystem classification.					
3	Protected Planet documents accurate and up-to-date information on protected areas under Aichi Target 11, including coverage, management effectiveness, governance, ecological representativeness, connectivity, other effective area-based conservation measures, as well as outcomes and other metrics for Green Listing.					
4	2,500 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are identified and the current datasets are updated against the new KBA standard to document all sites contributing significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity.					
5	IUCN knowledge, including gender-specific knowledge as appropriate, on the value and conservation of nature is generated and communicated to influence key global, regional and local decisions and actions.					
6	The implementation of commitments under biodiversity-related conventions and international agreements is accelerated.					
7	New legislation and policies are developed (and implemented), and existing laws and policies are enforced, to address illegal wildlife trafficking.					
8	The development and implementation of standards, safeguards, natural capital metrics, incentives and the development of relevant regulatory frameworks (in the public, private and financial sectors) are recognised and put into practice.					
9	Targeted conservation actions lead to the recovery of species and ecosystems.					
10	Protected area networks are expanded to conserve areas of particular importance for biodiversity through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.					
11	Invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritised, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment					

12	#NatureForAll raises awareness of nature and its values and enables more people to experience, connect with, and take action to conserve nature		
Programme Area 2: Promoting and supporting effective and equitable governance of natural resources			
13	IUCN tools, methodologies and approaches for assessing and improving natural resource governance are available and used.		
14	Natural resource governance systems assessed (through testing of methodologies) under different management regimes, including protected areas, and corresponding improvement plans developed		
15	Community-led, cultural, grassroots or protected area governance systems that achieve the effective and equitable governance of natural resources are recognised (as best practices/pilot testing), supported and promoted, while respecting the rights of nature		
16	Intervention points in which rights regimes related to natural resources are clear, stable, implementable, enforceable and equitable have increased and are effectively integrated with other rights regimes – particularly for women, indigenous people, youth and the poor – have increased		
17	The capacity of institutions (including protected area and customary institutions) to undertake decision making in a participatory, inclusive, effective and equitable manner is enhanced, especially for facilitating the active participation of women, youth and indigenous peoples as key stakeholders.		
18	Intervention points in which natural resource governance has the capacity to halt illegal natural resource use, through the promotion of rule of law and access to justice, have increased		
19	Legal and institutional frameworks for an increased number of transboundary areas, including protected areas, are established and deliver effective and well-implemented natural resource governance		
20	International governance mechanisms for marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, Antarctica and the Arctic are strengthened, including the establishment of marine protected areas		
21	The accountability of governments in relation to their commitments under environmental agreements and related policy frameworks is enhanced.		
Programme Area 3: Deploying nature-based solutions to societal challenges			
22	IUCN and partners are equipped to systematically collect and compile disaggregated data that enables the assessment of the material benefits and cultural values that flow from ecosystems to, inter alia, indigenous peoples and local communities		
23	IUCN and partners have a peer-reviewed framework and tools to guide the targeting of nature-based solutions and assessment of nature-based solutions effectiveness in contributing to relevant SDGs and Aichi Targets at national or sub-national levels		
24	Key nature-based solutions interventions promoted by IUCN, (e.g. Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and Mangroves for the Future, river basin management and protected areas) are equipped to systematically assess and monitor the requisite in-country enabling frameworks, including legal, customary, institutional and resourcing mechanisms for implementation		
25	Legal, policy and institutional mechanisms (at the national and sub-national level) that support and reward ecosystem stewardship by local communities and other resource managers for the delivery of societal benefits have been piloted and documented		
26	Mechanisms to facilitate the active participation of women, youth and indigenous peoples as key stakeholders in the design and implementation of nature-based solutions are tested, evaluated and promoted		
27	Additional international or national financial mechanisms that encourage the deployment of nature-based solutions are established and /or strengthened		
28	New national, sub-national or corporate planning and investment frameworks are effectively implemented in productive ecosystems to contribute to biodiversity conservation, sustainably deliver ecosystem goods and services and promote 'land degradation neutrality'.		
29	Restoration processes and methodologies make demonstrable contributions to the restitution of key ecosystem services in degraded landscapes, watersheds and seascapes.		
30	Legal, customary and institutional mechanisms and resourcing are effectively implemented to maintain intact, natural and semi-natural ecosystems that deliver benefits to society, including existing and new protected areas.		

There are two targets, Targets 4 and 20, which have achieved progress towards target, but at insufficient rate.

T4. I.04 # of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) identified according to A Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas.

The rate of KBA identification has increased from 2017 but not at a sufficient rate to meet this ambitious target. There were 155 nominations in 2010 with a total of 16,521 identified in 2017, which is short of the target of 18,000. IUCN and the wider KBA Partnership are building capacity for KBA identification through the development and training. Many KBAs were identified in 2019–2020 which are still undergoing review and will likely be confirmed later in 2021, including an estimated 600–700 sites from national KBA identification efforts in Canada and South Africa. Much has been achieved on the improvement of KBA boundaries and the bolstering of KBA trigger species lists, however, this is not captured in the 'KBAs identified' target.

T20. I.20.1 # of regional/ international governance arrangements [with competency] on the high seas.

This indicator is related to progress made at the international level on high seas conservation. At the time of setting this indicator, the Preparatory Committee for UN BBNJ (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction) negotiations were ongoing and there was hope that this would trigger the extension of the area of competence of several Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and Regional Seas Conventions to high seas areas. The UN BBNJ negotiations ("High Seas Treaty") made good progress between 2018 and 2020 with the opening and first three meetings of an Intergovernmental

Conference. Owing to the pandemic, the anticipated fourth and final Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC4) was postponed. In the interim, online intersessional dialogues have been held.

T20 I.20.2 # of Arctic Council/CCAMLR and other relevant Arctic Governance bodies decisions adopted on biodiversity conservation.

This indicator is related to progress made at the international level on polar conservation. IUCN and other civil society organisations continue to advocate for enhanced protection of biodiversity in the Southern Ocean and in the Arctic. However, the level of progress made is dependent on the level of advancement at the international level. Discussions on conservation matters within CCAMLR for the Southern Ocean and the Arctic Treaty are taking place at a very slow pace. In 2020 there was no Arctic Council Ministerial meeting as these are held bi-annually. The CCAMLR meeting in 2020 was held virtually and resulted in several conservation measures and resolutions.

Much like the preceding IUCN Programme, the 2017–2020 Programme was intent on making a significant contribution to the implementation of the SDGs and the Aichi Targets. Between 2017 and 2020, IUCN showed strong contribution to the biodiversity and climate-related goals. SDG 15 – Life on Land with the highest expenditures at 40% and SDG 13 – Climate action and SDG 14 – Life below water at 15% and 13% respectively. Expenditure was similarly spread across all SDGs in 2020. 82% of the SDGs have an expenditure that is 5% or below.

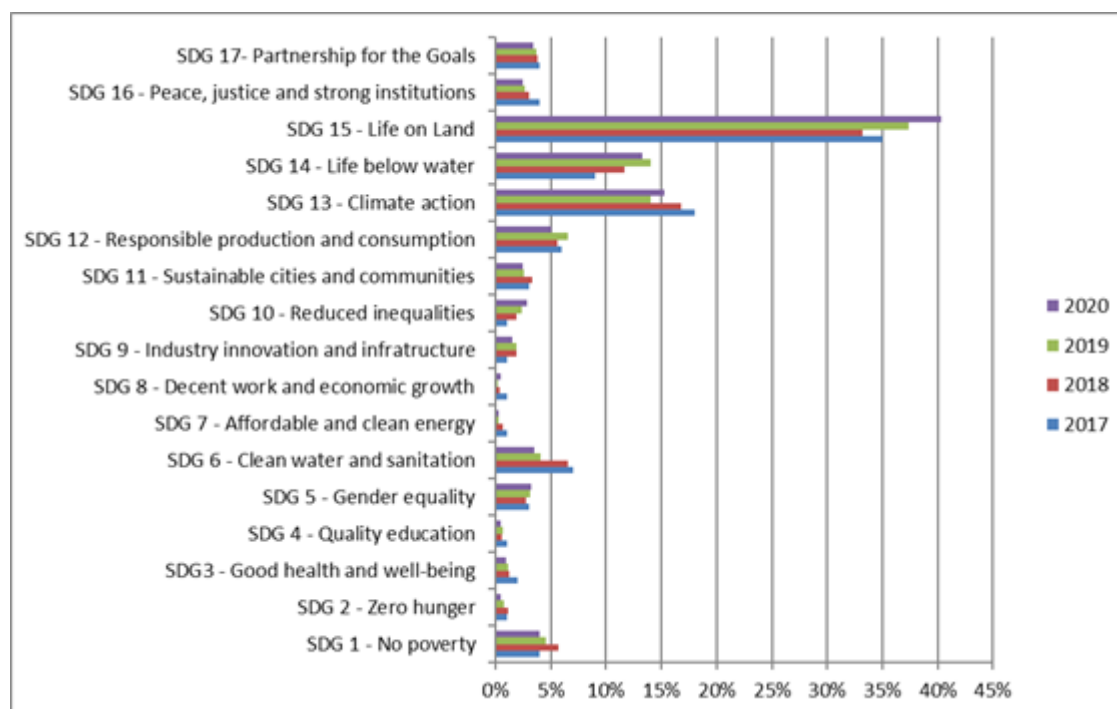


Figure 2. 2017–2020 Expenditure by SDGs (Source: IUCN Project Portal and Finance, March 2021)

Expenditure was spread across all Aichi Targets (Figure 3) and broadly similar in 2017–2020. In 2020, Aichi Target 15 (Ecosystems restored and resilience enhanced) had the highest expenditure at 15% followed by Target 11 (Protected areas increased and improved) and Target 12 (Extinction prevented) at 14%. In 2020, 70% of the Targets had expenditure below 5%.

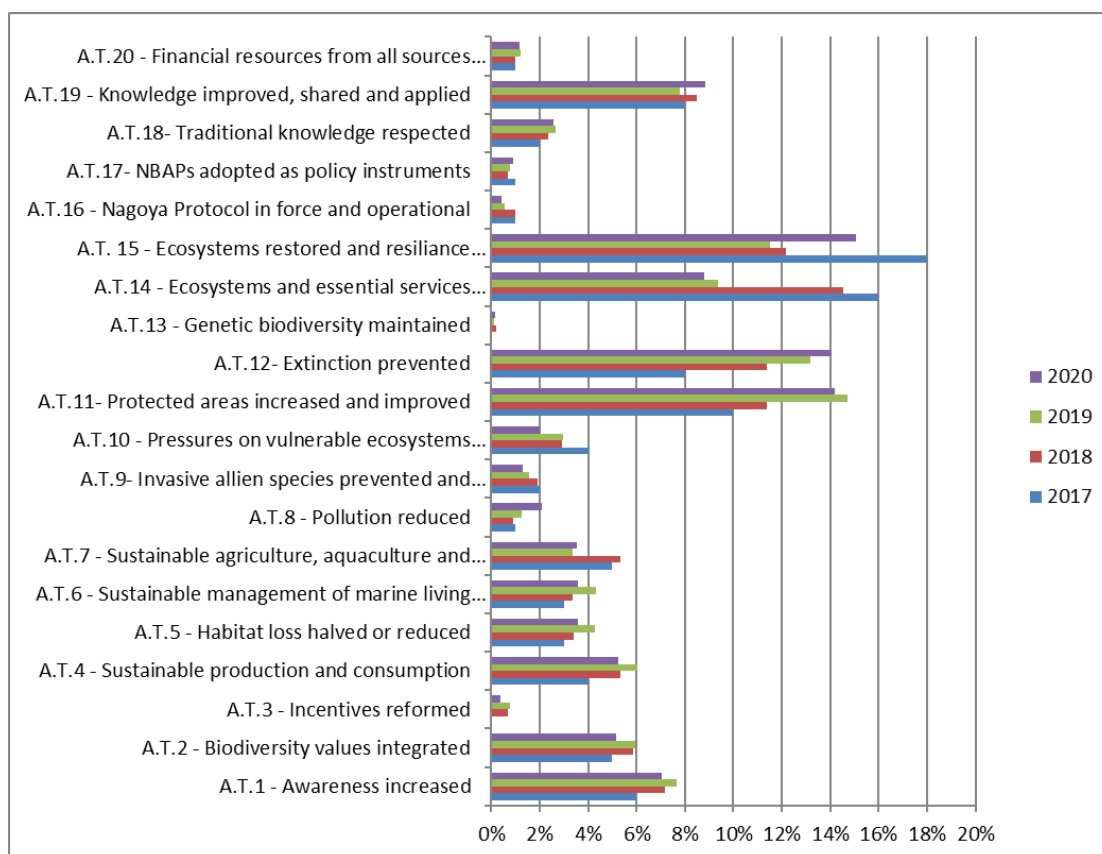


Figure 3. 2017–2020 Expenditure by Aichi Targets (Source: IUCN Project Portal and Finance, March 2021)

2.3 IUCN’s leadership in knowledge generation

Today, governments, private sector and investors are under increased societal pressure to manage environmental risks, and assess and mitigate impacts on nature. The demand for standardised indicators similar to the 1 tonne CO₂ for climate continues to grow. The pathway from data generation to environmental impact is not as smooth or direct as would be desired. Measuring impacts on nature and progress of conservation is a complex undertaking, and the global conservation community is yet to find the right indicators and data that ‘speak’ to policy makers across all sectors, and help them determine whether their ventures are nature-negative or -positive. A global, systemic issue of this kind requires a global and coordinated response. The Union has the capability, network and knowledge to convene and mobilise the global conservation community to provide standardised data and serve as a knowledge hub on nature and biodiversity. There is an urgent need for the nature conservation community to supply the necessary metrics and data to all stakeholder to enable a global and cohesive approach to understanding what nature-positive means and how to achieve it. This is essential to underpin efforts by all of society to address the planetary crisis.

IUCN remains a ‘go-to’ source of biodiversity and conservation knowledge. IUCN has a long history of providing credible and trusted knowledge on biodiversity, and developing conservation tools. New tools and knowledge products were also created or launched, demonstrating that IUCN remains at the forefront of knowledge generation. Conservation knowledge and data for nature will remain a priority for IUCN in the next quadrennium and beyond.

Red List of Threatened Species™. The [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™](#) is a true 'barometer of life'. The [Red List Index](#), which measures trends in species' risk of extinction, shows that a substantial proportion of species, in all taxonomic groups examined to date, are declining overall in population and distribution. As of December 2020, a total of 129,918 species had been assessed using the Red List criteria, of which more than 35,700 are considered threatened with extinction (28% of all assessed species). The overall target for this work, which involves hundreds of experts around the world, especially from the IUCN Species Survival Commission, was to reach 160,000 assessments by the end of 2020.

Recent assessments included all known eucalypt tree and shrub species worldwide and highlighted the perilous state of freshwater fishes globally, as species continue to be threatened by the loss of free-flowing rivers, habitat degradation, pollution, invasive species and climate change. While IUCN Red List updates throughout 2017–2020 warned of the increasing risk of extinction for many species, they also revealed the encouraging impact of conservation efforts. For example, the case of the flightless, fast-running Guam rail, the second bird in history to recover after being declared 'Extinct in the Wild', and populations of mountain gorilla, fin whale, kiwi and the Rodrigues flying fox that are showing signs of recovery, thanks to conservation efforts.

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is used by all of the major environmental policy platforms. It has been taken up by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). Three major biodiversity conservation grant-makers also use the IUCN Red List to guide investment decisions. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has used the IUCN Red List since 2006 to guide its funding allocations in the Biodiversity Focal Area. Similarly, the IUCN Red List also informs grant allocations made by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) and the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund. Internally, IUCN has continued issuing grants through Save Our Species and the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme, again informed by IUCN Red List priorities.

Red List of Ecosystems. During the quadrennium and with strong involvement from the IUCN Commission for Ecosystem Management, IUCN has demonstrated significant and ongoing progress in the implementation of the Red List of Ecosystems (RLE), a global standard for assessing and monitoring ecosystem conservation status. Between 2017 and 2020, a total of 2,200 RLE assessments were finalised, bringing the overall total since 2014 to more than 3,000 ecosystem units evaluated. Completed assessments, whether ecosystem-specific or broader-scale, are increasingly being conducted to inform management plans as well as conservation and restoration decisions in various contexts, for example in Australia, Colombia, Finland, Mozambique, Norway and Tonga. Importantly, the relevance of these assessments greatly increases when reaching ecosystem health objectives is considered a means to both enhance community resilience to disasters and climate change, and to provide biodiversity benefits.

In 2019, IUCN presented the prototype of the [Red List of Ecosystems database](#), which is now being further developed, building upon the newly released IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology. This typology provides a framework to support applications across global to local scales, thus determining the risk of ecosystem collapse and enabling global assessments for highly threatened and neglected ecosystems. The IUCN team behind the Red List of Ecosystems remains committed to the goal of assessing all of the world's freshwater, marine, terrestrial and subterranean ecosystem types by 2025.

Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas. The [IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas](#) is a new global sustainability standard that measures, improves and recognises successful conservation. Any type of dedicated conservation area can use the Green List for improvement, and receive independent evaluation and certification. The focus is on positive reinforcement of solutions, and how success can be generated by supporting fair and effective local action. Since its launch at the IUCN World Parks Congress 2014, the IUCN Green List Standard has been recognised by the CBD (2016), is backed by a number of IUCN Resolutions, and is underscored by a new version of the standard (version 1.2 from 2017) approved by the IUCN Council for use worldwide.

In 2014, just 8 countries participated, and only 15 protected and conserved areas were admitted to the first IUCN Green List. By the end of 2019, more than 50 countries were actively engaged in Green

Listing programmes. More than 520 candidate sites had been registered, and the 'Green List' included 46 protected and conserved areas certified for their good governance, effective management, and delivery of conservation outcomes for people and nature. These include: Amarakaeri Communal Reserve, an indigenous-managed conserved area in the Peruvian Amazon; Ol Pejeta, a conservancy in Kenya that helps protect local cattle and their pastures as well as threatened ecosystems and wildlife; Mount Huangshan, one of the most culturally significant mountains in China; and the French Austral Lands and Seas World Heritage area in the Southern Ocean, home to hundreds of thousands of penguins, and inscribed by UNESCO in 2019 – in part based on its Green List credentials for effective conservation of its outstanding values. By the end of 2020, 49 sites had been admitted onto the Green List, and by the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille, a further 12 new sites will be awarded Green List certificates for their successful conservation efforts. Currently 60 countries are engaged, and nearly 600 candidate sites are involved in the programme. The Green List Development Plan for the period to 2030 will be launched at the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

Key Biodiversity Areas. Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are sites of global importance for biodiversity conservation. The Global Standard for the Identification of KBAs, launched at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016, in Hawai'i, gave rise to the KBA Partnership that aims to enhance global conservation efforts by systematically mapping internationally important sites and ensuring that scarce resources are directed to the most important places for nature. In addition to IUCN, the KBA Partnership comprises: BirdLife International, American Bird Conservancy, Amphibian Survival Alliance, Conservation International, CEPF, GEF, Global Wildlife Conservation, NatureServe, Rainforest Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, World Wildlife Fund, and Wildlife Conservation Society.

One of the most important outputs produced by the KBA Partnership during the quadrennium has been the [World Database on KBAs](#), which identifies those sites that most significantly contribute to the global persistence of biodiversity in terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems. By the end of 2020, the terrestrial coverage of KBAs as fully or partially protected stood at 43%, freshwater coverage at 42% and marine coverage at 44%. A total of 16,343 sites are now recognised KBAs and the imperative of safeguarding these features in plans for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Currently, the KBA Global Standard is being used to steer priorities within policy instruments such as the CBD, the World Heritage Convention, and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. It is also being used by major donors such as the GEF and CEPF to guide their resource allocation policies and to assess, in the longer term, the impact of their interventions with regard to biodiversity and natural habitats. New protected areas established with support from the seventh GEF replenishment (GEF-7), must be globally significant, as defined by the KBA Global Standard.

World Database on Protected Areas (Protected Planet). [Protected Planet](#) is a joint product of the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) and the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) that maps all of the world's protected areas. As the world's most comprehensive and up-to-date database of marine and terrestrial protected areas, it is widely used by scientists, businesses, governments, international secretariats and others to inform planning, decisions and management. The *Protected Planet Report*, a biennial landmark publication that assesses the state of protected areas around the world, complements this tool. The [Report Series](#) started in 2012, when Parties to the CBD encouraged UNEP-WCMC and IUCN to continue to report on progress towards achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and related targets. The latest monthly update from June 2020 shows there has been good progress in expanding the coverage of terrestrial and marine protected areas, globally. Terrestrial coverage has increased slightly from 14.7% in 2016 to 16.64% in 2020, while marine coverage of national waters increased faster, from 10.2% to 18.01%. However, Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (>200nm from the coast) are still lagging behind, with only 1.18% under protection, so that overall, only 7.74% of the world's oceans are currently protected. Recalling that Aichi Target 11 foresees terrestrial and marine protected area coverage of 17% and 10%, respectively, the *Protected Planet Report* concludes that with concerted efforts from governments, both terrestrial and marine targets are likely to be achieved by the end of 2020. That said, further protected area designations will still be needed to attain adequate representation of areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services.

World Heritage Outlook. World Heritage sites represent the highest level of international protection and can thus contribute to environmental policy, such as the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

The [IUCN World Heritage Outlook](#) provides a measure of the effectiveness of global conservation efforts by assessing the conservation status of all natural World Heritage sites and tracking changes over time. Since launching in [2014](#), there have been two updates – in November 2017 and November 2020 – each update culminating in a global report and updated online assessments (covering 252 sites as of 2020). Each cycle of assessments involves hundreds of experts around the world, especially from WCPA and SSC.

The [IUCN World Heritage Outlook 3](#), published in December 2020, shows that climate change is now the biggest threat to natural World Heritage, affecting one third of sites. The evolving trend revealed by three datasets available for 2014, 2017 and 2020 is that the conservation outlook of natural World Heritage is not improving. Only 63% of sites have a positive outlook (“good” or “good with some concerns”), while 30% are of “significant concern” and 7% have a “critical” status. Just half of the sites have effective protection and management, with critical aspects such as sustainable financing, law enforcement and staffing remaining of serious concern. Despite this negative trend, cases of improved sites provide important proof that, where concerted conservation action is applied, successful outcomes ensue. Such is the case of Wadi Al-Hitan in Egypt, whose commitment towards meeting the IUCN Green List standard resulted in improved management, and in turn a transition in the IUCN World Heritage Outlook from “good with some concerns” in 2017 to “good” in 2020.

Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool. The [Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool \(IBAT\)](#) is an authoritative tool that provides geographical information about global biodiversity to support decision-making. It is maintained through a partnership between BirdLife International, Conservation International, IUCN and UNEP-WCMC. IBAT draws on data from the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, Protected Planet, KBAs and other sources, and can be used to inform assessments around investment decisions and to meet reporting requirements. The main user of IBAT is the corporate finance and business sector. In January 2019, the partnership launched IBAT 3.0, bringing together three previously separate platforms: IBAT for Business, IBAT for World Bank Group and IBAT for Research and Conservation. Interest in the tool continues to grow, as seen in the number of paying IBAT subscribers, which to date stands at 77, translating into forecast revenue of USD 1.1 million. New subscribers in 2019 included African Development Bank, AC Energy, Petronas, Enel, L’Oréal, Veolia, and Votorantim Cimentos.

Environmental Impact Classification for Alien Taxa. The [Environmental Impact Classification for Alien Taxa \(EICAT\)](#) is a new IUCN standard for classifying alien species in terms of their environmental impact. Based on evidence, alien taxa are classified into one of five impact categories, depending on the level of biological organisation of the native biota impacted (individual, population or community) and the reversibility of this impact. EICAT has the following objectives: (i) identify alien taxa by levels of environmental impact, (ii) compare the level of impact by alien taxa among regions and taxonomic groups, (iii) facilitate predictions of potential future impacts of taxa in the target region and elsewhere, (iv) aid the prioritisation of management actions, and (v) facilitate the evaluation of management methods. EICAT is intended for scientists, environmental managers and conservation practitioners as a tool to gain a better understanding of the magnitude of impacts caused by different alien taxa, to alert relevant stakeholders to the possible consequences of the arrival of certain alien taxa, and to inform the prioritisation, implementation and evaluation of management policies and actions.

EICAT, which was initially developed at the request of CBD Parties and then mandated through a 2016 IUCN Resolution, was officially launched in September 2020. The development of EICAT involved an IUCN-wide consultation process, receiving broad support from across the Union. The results of EICAT assessments will be published through the existing [IUCN Global Invasive Species Database](#) while the SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group will develop an online training course to support IUCN members and non-members alike in the application of EICAT.

Natural Resource Governance Framework. In 2017, IUCN published the foundational documents of its Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF), aimed at providing comprehensive and coherent guidance on inclusive, equitable and rights-based approaches to assessing and strengthening natural resource governance. The NRGF is intended as an internal institutional standard reference for IUCN and its partners that can be applied among decision makers, rights-holders and practitioners in diverse contexts and scales. Developed through an extensive research and consultative process, the NRGF is being used to strengthen how other IUCN assessment methods and tools (such as the Restoration

Opportunities Assessment Methodology – see below) integrate governance issues. It has also been put to use on the ground in a number of countries, such as Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda, where assessments using the NRGF were conducted in diverse situations, including forestry, marine ecosystems and water resource management. Through use of the Framework, IUCN continues to build capacity and to provide grounded evidence for referencing best practice. This will enable the Union to make progress towards a standard for securing rights and enhancing powers for the marginalised to participate in decision-making on natural resource management, bringing benefits for both people and biodiversity.

Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions. In 2019, IUCN began drafting a global standard for implementing Nature-based Solutions, involving the expertise of more than 800 individuals. This new [Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions](#) was approved by IUCN Council in February 2020 and launched in July 2020. It provides a common framework for benchmarking nature-based responses to key societal challenges, such as water security, food security, human health, disaster risk reduction and climate change. This Global Standard will increase the reach of NbS into non-conservation sectors, particularly the business community, by demonstrating the role and cost-effectiveness of nature in achieving development goals.

Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology. The [Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology \(ROAM\)](#), produced by IUCN and World Resources Institute (WRI), provides a flexible and affordable framework for countries to rapidly identify and analyse areas where forest landscape restoration (FLR) can generate an array of social, environmental and economic benefits at national or sub-national scales. ROAM can provide vital support to countries seeking to accelerate or implement restoration programmes and landscape-level strategies. ROAM combines situation analysis of degradation and deforestation with geospatial analysis and biophysical and economic modelling, within a framework that assesses the social, political, and institutional readiness to implement large-scale restoration.

During the past quadrennium, IUCN Secretariat, Members, Commission experts and partners implemented and supported a total of 48 ROAM processes to make FLR possible in 35 countries. Almost 500 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes were assessed, and 200 million hectares of restoration opportunities identified. ROAM has provided a framework to guide evidence-based decision-making on FLR interventions. The aim is to drive impactful and sustained change, involving the transformation of degraded and deforested areas into resilient and productive landscapes with tangible benefits for biodiversity, climate and local communities.

IUCN also opened the door to FLR in the private sector, through large multi-agency efforts and by homing in on restoration opportunities in smallholder landscapes that form part of the supply chains of large agro-businesses. Ultimately, the aim is to grow the private sector's knowledge of FLR assessments and to create a community of practice.

Bonn Challenge. IUCN has encouraged governments to embrace FLR as a nature-based solution for achieving international targets, especially the SDGs, Land Degradation Neutrality targets, and NDCs under the Paris Agreement. The [Bonn Challenge](#), and the restoration targets it entails, has provided a key platform for achieving this. Through the Forest, Food and Land Coalition, IUCN positioned FLR and the Bonn Challenge in global climate change debates as principal components of Nature-based Solutions, which can help countries achieve more than 30% of the climate mitigation required globally by 2030.

The quadrennium saw incredible progress under the Bonn Challenge. Commitments surpassed the 150 million hectares (ha) milestone and, as of end-2020, stood at 210.12 million ha. Some specific accomplishments include: the United States achieving and exceeding its pledge, bringing 17 million ha under restoration; the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province in Pakistan achieving its original target and announcing a new pledge; and the launch of a new 30 million ha regional initiative for Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus. Ministerial dialogues resulted in regional declarations on restoration, calling for inter-country cooperation and joint fundraising in the ECOWAS, SADC and ASEAN+ blocs. The Barometer, a restoration progress tracking protocol developed by IUCN, was also launched. 89% of the total aggregated area was pledged by the five pilot countries. The Barometer has been endorsed by over 40 countries and regional bodies and is now available to all pledgers through a new online tool.

A Nature-based Strategy for Adaptation and Resilience. IUCN has demonstrated global leadership in the thematic area of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) as a Nature-based Solution for climate change. It has led the mobilisation of resources, convening a global partnership and collaboratively setting the benchmark for robust EbA. Together with its Members and Commissions, IUCN has engaged with the UNFCCC and CBD Secretariat to inform and influence global policy processes based on the knowledge and field evidence generated through its portfolio of over 50 initiatives globally, worth over EUR 100 million.

IUCN serves as the Secretariat for the Friends of EbA (FEBA): a collaborative network of more than 80 organisations comprising government ministries and sub-agencies, UN bodies and conventions, NGOs, research centres, and other institutions. In 2017–2018, IUCN mobilised FEBA to facilitate the development of the CBD Voluntary Guidelines for effective design and implementation of EbA and DRR which were adopted by the Parties at CBD COP14. The CBD COP recognises FEBA as a key partner “to support Parties in their efforts to promote ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation” (Decision 14/5). In 2017, it launched the *EbA Qualification Criteria and Quality Standards*, the first framework of its kind, which has become a benchmark for enhancing the effectiveness of EbA. This was followed in 2020 by the Guidebook for Monitoring and Evaluating Ecosystem-based Interventions. In 2019, IUCN and UNEP launched the Global Fund for EbA, a EUR 20 million grants facility, supported by the Government of Germany’s International Climate Initiative (BMU-IKI), which provides targeted and rapid support mechanisms through seed capital for innovative and catalytic approaches to scale up adaptation through Nature-based Solutions. This Global Fund became operational in December 2020 and is planned to run through December 2025.

Publications

Maintaining IUCN’s publishing output and quality. The IUCN Publications Committee was established in March 2017 to provide pipelines of IUCN Secretariat publications to be assigned IUCN ISBNs. As of the last concept note review meeting of 2020, 102 concept notes had been submitted by the Secretariat for review at seven concept note review meetings, and the Publications Committee had greenlit 80 of these for development as IUCN publications. Furthermore, since the start of the quadrennium, the IUCN Editorial Board has reviewed 119 peer review tracking tables and signed off on 108 of these. In total, 175 formal IUCN publications with ISBNs have been published over the quadrennium, comprising different language versions and new editions. These are complemented by joint publications with other institutions to yield the Union’s total publication output of books and monographs. To support the production of publications and navigation of IUCN’s new publishing processes, the *IUCN Publishing Guidelines* and *IUCN Style Manual* were completely revised in 2018 and a new ‘Cheat Sheet for Commissions’ produced in 2019.

Maximising ‘discoverability’ of IUCN knowledge. Some 4,000 IUCN titles, representing half our total output, are now available in electronic format via the IUCN Library System, with hard copies preserved and accessible at the HQ Library. Rich, descriptive metadata are generated for IUCN publications to help fuel discoverability. Over the quadrennium, 150 Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) were assigned to IUCN publications, which are subsequently registered with Crossref to allow them to be easily identified, linked to, cited by, and used by other researchers. DOIs are continually generated for assessments of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.

Monitoring online uptake of and attention to IUCN publications. In total, there have been nearly 3.7 million downloads of PDFs from the IUCN Library System since 2017, compared with less than 1.5 million during the previous quadrennium. Downloads of IUCN publications are monitored on a monthly basis, and the procurement of an Altmetric subscription in 2018 has further enhanced the monitoring of the online attention surrounding each IUCN publication with a DOI.

Recognising that it is always tricky to determine the impact of any individual publication, a variety of indicators can nevertheless be used to estimate whether a publication is of significance to the wider world. These indicators include calculating the level of attention received by specific publications through the Altmetric Attention Score, citation counts to see how many times the publication was cited by others, including Wikipedia, and even policy mentions to demonstrate how a publication has influenced policy or the course of action in a particular field. By combining these metrics with the number

of downloads from the IUCN website, we can reasonably conclude that the following **five IUCN publications were the most impactful during the quadrennium:**

1. *Oil palm and biodiversity* (2018) – [link](#)
2. *Primary microplastics in the oceans* (2017) – [link](#)
3. *Tools for measuring, modelling, and valuing ecosystem services* (2018) – [link](#)
4. *Tourism and visitor management in protected areas* (2018) – [link](#)
5. *Gender-based violence and environment linkages* (2020) – [link](#)

2.4 IUCN on the international policy stage

Ensuring progress with global policies. Throughout the quadrennium, IUCN has continued to emphasise, on the international policy stage, that nature must be at the centre of national development strategies, and to call for concrete action to achieve global targets. The Union is in a unique position to be the most influential actor in the global debate on nature conservation, and proactively advocate for the sustainable use and management of natural resources and biodiversity in particular. Global policy objectives are driven by IUCN Resolutions approved by Members at each IUCN World Conservation Congress. IUCN's principal global policy engagements and achievements, as well as the corresponding Congress Resolutions mandating those engagements, are summarised below.

High-level UN Fora. As an observer to the UN General Assembly, IUCN has regularly convened dialogues to bring the latest conservation science to the attention of diplomats at UN headquarters. At the 74th UN General Assembly and its accompanying UN Climate Action Summit, IUCN was particularly visible, thanks to a 'Knowledge Dialogue on Nature-based Solutions for Climate Change' and to the release of the Nature-based Solutions for Climate Manifesto, which called for inclusion of nature-based solutions in national climate policy instruments and enhanced financing for their implementation. At the [UN Biodiversity Summit](#), in September 2020, the new Director General addressed for the first time the global UN community on "[Urgent action on biodiversity for sustainable development](#)".



IUCN also contributed to the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly (2019), on topics such as youth and sport, food systems, sustainable finance, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and marine litter. IUCN participated in the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, convened under the theme 'empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality'. There IUCN highlighted the critical role of nature-based solutions in addressing the SDGs. The UN's [Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019](#) featured IUCN's Red List Index, as well as coverage of KBAs.

IUCN Resolutions: WCC-2016-Res-09, WCC-2016-Res-049, WCC-2016-Res-056, WCC-2016-Res-062, WCC-2016-Res-095, WCC-2016-Res-096, WCC-2016-Res-107.

Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). IUCN Secretariat and Commission experts have been contributing authors in various regional and thematic assessments of biodiversity, ecosystem services, land degradation and restoration carried out by IPBES, with data provided by IUCN also used extensively (e.g. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, KBAs and Protected Planet), most notably in the IPBES Global Assessment released in 2019.



IUCN Resolutions: WCC-2012-Res-117; WCC-2012-Res-118.

UNDRR Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. Encouraged by IUCN and recognising the interplay between disasters, climate change and environmental degradation, countries and stakeholders called for better integration of DRR in the adaptation agenda, better consideration of the role of ecosystems and their services, and improved reporting on ecosystem losses and nature-based solutions, for implementation of global targets under the Sendai Framework.



IUCN Resolution: WCC-2012-Res-058.

World Heritage Convention. As the World Heritage Committee's advisor on nature, IUCN is continually called upon to assess the state of World Heritage sites and to make recommendations to governments. IUCN has highlighted the impacts that illegal fishing, logging, poaching, oil drilling and leisure resorts are having on natural World Heritage sites and recommended actions for hundreds of sites facing such threats. In this period, the Committee followed IUCN's advice to list as 'in danger' sites in Kenya and Mexico, to extend two existing sites, to inscribe seven new sites including the French Austral Lands and Seas, now the largest of all World Heritage sites, and to take certain sites, such as the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System, off the endangered list.



IUCN Resolutions: WCC-2012-Res-046, WCC-2012-Res-047, WCC-2016-Res-031.

UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. IUCN has been part of the intergovernmental conferences convened by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea with a view to development of a new treaty on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction. IUCN experts provided resources and technical inputs to support these negotiations, advising on processes for establishing and managing marine protected areas, systems for sharing benefits provided by marine genetic resources, and provisions for identifying and evaluating the environmental impacts of decision-making processes. IUCN's inputs received significant uptake and are helping to shape the evolving draft treaty.



IUCN Resolutions: WCC-2012-Res-074, WCC-2016-Res-047, WCC-2016-Res-050.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). IUCN provided scientific advice at the 18th Conference of the Parties to CITES. An IUCN/TRAFFIC assessment guided decisions about the extent to which trade in certain species should be restricted. IUCN reports on the conservation status of rhinos, lions and great apes informed decisions aimed at ensuring these species are not threatened by international trade. IUCN experts on sharks, seahorses and eels advised on regulatory measures for improving the sustainability of trade in these species.



IUCN Resolutions: GA 1978 RES 024, GA 1978 RES 025, GA 1984 RES 029, GA 1994 REC 049, WCC-2008-REC-110, WCC-2016-Res-025, WCC-2016-Res-093.

UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD). Parties to CCD have recognised, in line with IUCN's recommendations, that their Land Degradation Neutrality targets and the activities to achieve them are directly linked to their national SDG, climate and biodiversity agendas. IUCN has been emphasising the importance of NbS, of addressing anthropogenic drought through ecosystem restoration, of gender-responsive policies and of involvement of civil society in the implementation of the Convention. During the 14th Conference of the Parties, IUCN provided evidence to show that linking FLR initiatives under the Bonn Challenge with Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets helps countries achieve their land restoration goals more efficiently. IUCN has financed 81 countries in LDN target-setting exercises and continued to advise on ways to mobilise investments for LDN initiatives, including on FLR, rangeland restoration and EbA.



IUCN Resolutions: WCC-1996-Res-074, WCC-2000-Res-003, WCC-2008-Res-093, WCC-2008-Rec-134.

UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). IUCN has provided substantial input to discussions and implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020. Several Commissions have worked with the Parties to the CBD on implementation of Aichi Target 11 and provided particular support in helping to define and develop criteria for other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), which were adopted at COP14. In the process of drafting the new post-2020 global biodiversity framework, IUCN has strongly advocated for the CBD's 2050 Vision for biodiversity to be more specific in order to spur concrete measurable action and called for the 2030 mission to be underpinned by quantifiable, science-based targets. In line with IUCN's recommendations, the CBD Secretariat was requested to make provisions for sound analytical work in developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, emphasising the links between biodiversity conservation and the SDGs. Also supported by IUCN, Parties agreed to strengthen their national strategies and plans and encourage non-state actors, including the private sector, to contribute to an effective post-2020 framework through voluntary biodiversity commitments. IUCN has also advocated for a framework that constitutes a unified



global action plan aimed at achieving *no net loss* of biodiversity by 2030 and *net gain* by 2050 through restoration and recovery.

IUCN Resolutions: WCC-2016-Res-096, WCC-2016-Res-050.

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). IUCN has underscored the urgent need to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the critical role of healthy ecosystems in providing NbS for tackling climate change. IUCN has also stressed the need to include ecosystems in a concrete and quantifiable manner in future NDCs under the Paris Agreement. IUCN was strongly engaged in the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action to support the acceleration of climate ambition and action on the ground, and also supported the work of the [UNFCCC Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform](#), as well as the development and adoption of the first UNFCCC Gender Action Plan. IUCN has been contributing its expertise on forests, land use, water, oceans and climate resilience to inform current and future actions to address climate change.



United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change

IUCN Resolutions: WCC-2016-Res-056, WCC-2016-Res-057, WCC-2016-Rec-107.

2.5 IUCN's Secretariat in the regions

ARO – Asia Regional Office. The vast continent of Asia harbours more than half of the world's population, and a myriad of wildlife and natural environments. With booming urban growth and expanding economies, billions of people in Asia will benefit from increased prosperity, but this must also strike a balance with protecting the continent's natural heart. This is the mandate of IUCN-ARO, which leads the Union's operations in South, East, and Southeast Asia. Over the past four years, ARO fostered international conservation and development in many ways. A key example is the Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP). With its 21 Members from 17 countries in Asia, and two Associate Members, APAP is a pillar of IUCN's protected areas work in the region, serving as a regional platform for building capacity and sharing best practices in the management of protected areas and natural heritage. Regional leadership was also demonstrated through Mangroves for the Future (MFF), Asia's largest coastal resource management programme, which supported investments in coastal ecosystems for sustainable development in 11 countries. Phase 3 of MFF was concluded in 2019 and supported 197 grant projects implemented primarily by local civil society organisations, delivering on-the-ground results for the well-being of coastal ecosystems and communities.

ARO was also responsible for overseeing the CEPF investment in the Indo-Burma hotspot from 2013 to 2019, during which time 188 grants totalling USD 15.6 million were awarded to conserve key biodiversity areas. The Regional Office also facilitated the integration of forest landscape restoration concepts in the planning and management of over 4,000 State Forest Farms in China, which will contribute to the sustainable management of 77 million hectares of forest landscapes. Under the Green Climate Fund (GCF) portfolio, the Asia region received GCF financing of USD 39.78 million for its project on climate resilience of agricultural plantation communities in the Knuckles Mountain Range Catchment in Sri Lanka. The seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility trust fund, which ends in 2022, has approved projects for Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan with a combined value of USD 6.73 million. All this work comes in addition to transboundary resources management, strengthening the implementation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and significantly growing the size of IUCN's second-largest statutory region in terms of membership.

ECARO – Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office. IUCN-ECARO was established in 2015 to support IUCN's constituents in implementing the IUCN Programme in 17 countries of the IUCN Statutory Region East Europe, North and Central Asia. In the few years since its creation, it has carved out a unique space for itself in a region that spans a diverse range of natural, political, economic, and social fabrics. For instance, ECARO has worked on development and dissemination of IUCN knowledge tools and standards. The Regional Office helped Albanian authorities strengthen the national system of protected areas and extend the Ohrid Lake region World Heritage site in 2019, and identified natural sites with high potential for World Heritage nomination in Central Asia. With regard to species conservation, ECARO facilitated the development of the first IUCN Red Lists of Threatened Species in North Macedonia, whilst in the Far East Russia, the Office provided ongoing advice to Sakhalin Energy and other actors on concerning conservation of the Critically Endangered western grey whale.

In 2018, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan pledged to restore three million hectares of land in support of the Bonn Challenge, the IUCN-led global effort to bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested land into restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. In the Caucasus, IUCN successfully concluded a forest law enforcement and governance programme in 2017, which has had a lasting impact in the region, where environmental groups continue to monitor these vitally important elements of forest conservation. ECARO was instrumental in establishing the Biodiversity Task Force of South-Eastern Europe in 2017 and the following year published 'State of nature conservation systems in South-Eastern Europe', the first comprehensive report on institutional arrangements for nature conservation in the region. Illustrating the Office's role in leveraging financial support for conservation, ECARO successfully launched a SOS Central Asia programme towards the end of 2019, as part of the IUCN Save Our Species initiative. Furthermore, in Albania, the Regional Office set up a Living Buna grant scheme in support of civil society and community-led conservation initiatives. Additional critical work undertaken by ECARO covered institutional development, regional cooperation and supporting regional work underlying the NbS Global Standard.

ESARO – Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office. Traversing the 24 countries of eastern and southern Africa is an immense range of natural treasures and landscapes, among them multiple centres of endemism, including seven of the world's biodiversity hotspots. Over the past quadrennium, IUCN-ESARO has guided the governments, civil society organisations, businesses, and communities of this huge territory in various ways. For instance, the Regional Office worked in forest landscape restoration, addressing ocean acidification, developing coastal resilience to climate change, promoting ecosystem-based land-use planning as well as partnerships with private sector partners such as the Mitsubishi Foundation.

The region is one of the key focuses of Phase 2 of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) programme, stretching from 2017 to 2023. In 2019, ESARO signed an agreement with the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development, an intergovernmental organisation, to host the BIOPAMA Observatory for Biodiversity and Protected Areas, a key regional resource hub for decision-making on biodiversity conservation and protected area management. In the same year, IUCN and KfW signed an agreement for ESARO to manage a EUR 12 million Financing Facility for Transfrontier Conservation Areas in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, earmarked for grants to support conservation action in key transboundary landscapes in southern Africa.

2019 also marked the start of a new partnership with USAID and the East African Community (EAC) to strengthen regional collaboration and cross-border conservation action in East Africa through a four-year USD 5 million project. ESARO has also led the Sustainability and Inclusion Strategy for Growth Corridors (SUSTAIN) initiative, aiming to ensure that African countries attain sustainable economic and social prosperity. The first phase of SUSTAIN-Africa in Mozambique and Tanzania ended in 2019, and the second phase is currently under development. Within regional water diplomacy and conservation, ESARO continued its work on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Regional Water Resources Protocol, facilitating the finalisation of a memorandum of understanding between Kenya and Uganda for the Sio-Malaba-Malakisi basin of the Nile River. Under the Coastal and Oceans Resilience programme, ESARO also delivered a major milestone, launching the Locally Empowered Area of Protection project. This aims to achieve by 2023 the effective management of coastal, island and marine biodiversity and ecosystem services in Kenya, Mozambique, Seychelles and Tanzania.

European Regional Office. The IUCN European Regional Office works with 340 Members in Europe, and represents IUCN at the European Union (EU) level. This highly developed region faces great environmental challenges while also leaving a significant global footprint on the natural world. Because of its international influence, it can lead by example through commitment to global targets such as the SDGs, something the Office helped to facilitate throughout the last quadrennium. Close cooperation with the European Commission led to establishment of a European-wide community of practice and large-scale investment in NbS, which have been integrated in the Horizon 2020 programme for Research and Innovation since 2016. IUCN has been active in raising awareness of NbS among EU institutions, Member States and other key stakeholders. The Regional Office also works with cities to promote NbS, supporting biodiversity conservation in urban areas while tackling societal challenges, such as climate and water resilience. The 2018 establishment of the IUCN Urban Alliance is a key step

towards connecting IUCN's global expertise with cities to create sustainable and liveable urban areas and to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services in urban planning.

The European Regional Office also generated crucial conservation knowledge for policy-makers, and provided technical support to strategies such as the EU Pollinators Initiative. From 2017, the Regional Office also played a key role in facilitating discussions and generating knowledge on sustainable agriculture, collaborating with the European Commission and agricultural stakeholders to convene roundtables in 2018 and 2019. In December 2019, many of the proposals and solutions resulting from these exchanges were presented to EU Member State representatives tasked with drafting national agricultural plans, to an enthusiastic welcome. The European Regional Office also focused strongly on plastics, and in 2017 launched the report 'National marine plastic litter policies in EU Member States: an overview'. This saw IUCN Europe actively engage in and organise regional initiatives, such as co-leading the 2nd Stakeholder Conference on Plastic and Micro Plastic Pollution, together with the Austrian Presidency of the European Council, in November 2018, convening key industry players to develop strategies on combatting plastics pollution in the EU.

IUCN-Med – IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation. At IUCN-Med, the sea is a force that links societies and environments together. As an ecologically rich region that encompasses South Europe, West Asia, and North Africa, all with varying levels of development and conservation, the Mediterranean comes with unique challenges and opportunities that the Centre took on with great success across the quadrennium. One of the key achievements was empowering North African civil society organisations (CSOs). Some 80 emerging CSOs in Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia benefited from projects and training sessions. IUCN-Med also focused on other aspects of capacity building, organising more than 100 workshops on a range of subjects that reached over 2,000 conservation practitioners, protected area managers, spatial planners and scientists.

Keeping true to IUCN's role as the interface between science, policy, economics and practice, IUCN-Med developed four national conservation strategies for emblematic North African species (the great bustard, Barbary macaque, Barbary sheep and Cuvier's gazelle), and in 2019 developed an emergency action plan for the critically endangered noble pen shell. IUCN-Med also built a coalition of European and North African organisations, which produced practical guidelines to prevent raptors from interacting with electrical powerlines during their migrations, and developed an app to track raptor loss. As the Mediterranean is a tourism hotspot, IUCN-Med co-created the Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism (MEET) Network in 2018, which involved organisations and managers from 25 protected areas across 9 countries of the Mediterranean. This work continued in 2020 through DestiMED PLUS, which is building viable ecotourism practices in 9 protected areas in Albania, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy and Spain. Finally, in recognition of the cross-cutting links between climate change and biodiversity conservation, IUCN-Med worked with five marine protected areas (MPAs) piloting the development of the first Mediterranean MPA Climate Change Adaptation Plans.

ORMACC – Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. IUCN-ORMACC leads the Union's work in this lush tropical region that encompasses 20 states and territories, home to some of the world's richest – yet most vulnerable – ecosystems. The Regional Office has worked with Members and Commissions to ensure that nature and people in this verdant part of the planet thrive, focusing especially on influencing policy through science, and a rights-based approach to conservation that includes respect for traditional knowledge and the application of free, prior and informed consent. Recognising the key role that indigenous peoples play in conservation, great strides were made in the restitution and self-governance of about 26,000 hectares of land in Guatemala, the collective management and protection of fishery resources in Honduras through the adoption of a biocultural protocol, and the governance of indigenous lands and natural resources in Guatemala and Panama. In 2018, ORMACC and the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) joined forces to bring together 16 indigenous peoples' organisations that are IUCN Members, the first meeting of its kind since this membership category was established at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016.

The Regional Office also achieved much in protected areas. For example, renewed commitment in the Caribbean, through the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) programme, which is strengthening the management of protected areas in 15 Caribbean countries. In 2019, a network of 160 protected area professionals was set up, and in the Selva Maya, the second largest tropical forest

of the Americas after the Amazon, governments and local communities are closely involved in the protection of this forest's ecosystem functions and cultural values. Furthermore, the Regional Office strengthened legal and institutional frameworks in multiple transboundary areas of Central America and Mexico, in collaboration with the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM), benefitting more than 2,500 farming families who adopted NbS and saw significant increases in yields, alongside greater food and water security. In the Goascoran watershed of Honduras alone, 27,000 farmers and rural inhabitants improved their livelihoods through climate-smart and disaster risk reduction practices and were able to access microcredit and other inclusive financing mechanisms. The Regional Office also led efforts to strengthen women's leadership in learning and decision-making related to governance and policies. In 2018–2019, ORMACC was proud to find that in the Gulf of Fonseca, which borders El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, women hold 43% of director positions for rural funds. ORMACC also ensured that the region strongly contributed to the Bonn Challenge, helping eight countries to link five million hectares of committed land to specific restoration actions. Support was secured for climate change adaptation in vulnerable communities of the Guatemalan Highlands, after IUCN's first GCF project was approved in 2018, benefiting over 32,000 people and tackling the degradation of 12,000 hectares in Guatemala.

ORO – Oceania Regional Office. Although the oceans are well known to be fundamental to life on Earth, the region that feels the power of the seas at its strongest is Oceania. IUCN-ORO oversees 22 countries and territories in the Pacific Ocean, covering a vast 40 million square kilometres of seas – almost five times greater than the region's 8.5 million square kilometres of land. Coastal regions are among the most sensitive to the effects of biodiversity loss and climate change, and over the last quadrennium the CEPF, implemented by ORO in the East Melanesia Biodiversity Hotspot, has empowered local communities to protect and manage their biodiversity. From 2017 to 2019, CEPF awarded 44 grants, with a total of over USD 2.6 million dispersed to grantees. ORO also worked with the governments of Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu to sustainably manage their coasts and oceans. For instance, ORO published national marine ecosystem services valuations, revealing in 2017 that Tonga's marine ecosystem services are worth more than their national exports. ORO also provided technical advice and support concerning Marine Spatial Planning and development of National Ocean Policies in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

From 2017, ORO was deeply involved with implementing Phase 2 of BIOPAMA, including developing a EUR 3 million action grant programme for local communities and stakeholders to implement field projects. Through the Energy, Ecosystems and Sustainable Livelihoods Initiative (EESLI) ORO also provided over USD 500,000 in grants and capacity support to communities and governments across the region, to safeguard biodiversity by positioning nature conservation at the heart of their responses to livelihoods and energy needs. Lastly, since its launch in 2016, the IUCN Pacific Centre for Environmental Governance has provided world-class environmental governance support for Pacific Island decision makers. Notably, one of its forums in 2017 received praise from the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga as a *“safe, private space where leaders can gather and discuss common challenges... with an openness and freedom not available in other regional forums”*.

PACO – Regional Office for West and Central Africa. The African continent is blessed with an enormous wealth of flora and fauna, counting among its wildlife globally recognised symbols such as elephants, gorillas and lions. IUCN-PACO spearheads IUCN's conservation and development efforts in 25 countries on the continent, and from 2017 to 2020 led multiple successes that brought benefits to both nature and society. Key to PACO's work across the quadrennium were NbS, which in 2017 alone accounted for nearly 56% of the investment channelled through the Regional Office. Since then, PACO has mainstreamed NbS restoration at the national and regional scales by successfully engaging seven COMIFAC (Central Africa Forest Commission) and ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) member states to formally commit to restoring 30.5 million hectares in the framework of the Bonn Challenge. Furthermore, 2018 saw the establishment of a financial mechanism to encourage NbS in 32 communes in Burkina Faso, giving 80 developers access to CFA 1.4 billion for the benefit of forest-dependent populations.

Also key to PACO's work was the catalysing of policies and instruments to effectively value and conserve nature, a mainstay of which is Integrated Water Resources Management. Since 2017, PACO has enabled the shaping and adoption of Guinea's national water policy, the revision of Niger's water and wetlands policy, and has supported the adoption of ECOWAS guidelines on water infrastructure development. Another focus of the Regional Office was on monitoring biodiversity-rich and protected

areas. In this sphere of action PACO is directly involved in two regional protected area observatories for Central Africa and for West Africa respectively, the West Africa Coastal Observatory, and several transboundary water-basin observatories for Volta Basin, Niger Basin, and Mono Basin. PACO also focused on capacity building and developing environmental leadership, and reached multiple milestones across the quadrennium. 2018 and 2019 saw education ministries in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal develop teaching materials to introduce environmental education in their respective national education curricula, reaching hundreds of teachers and tens of thousands of students.

ROWA – Regional Office for West Asia. Much like the rich tapestry of cultures interwoven throughout its ancient roads and cities, West Asia is home to diverse ecosystems that range from Mediterranean forests, to deserts, to marshes and coral reefs. IUCN-ROWA works in 13 countries of this region, focusing on critical issues such as land degradation, water use, biodiversity and habitat loss, and the protection of marine ecosystems. As protected areas are key to achieving success in these issues, it is no surprise that ROWA has therefore focused on bringing the region deeper into the fold of the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas. For example, 2018 witnessed the successful listing of a total of six sites in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates, which took the region closer to its goal of listing 12 protected areas from West Asia by 2020.

Nature conservation is unattainable without successful collaboration between multiple sectors, from government, to business, to civil society. ROWA has therefore also focused on capacity building and strengthened local engagement from 2017 to 2020. For instance, in 2017 the Regional Office signed an agreement with global power company AES Jordan to create demand-driven, Nature-based Solutions in East Amman to benefit local communities. Achievements under this initiative include the establishment of a seedling nursery with a production capacity of 80,000 plants per season, simultaneously meeting a critical need for employment opportunities and aiding the fight against desertification.

SUR – Regional Office for South America. South America is a continent of superlatives. It is home to the Amazon, the world's largest rainforest, and the Andes, the world's longest mountain chain above sea level. Travelling from the frigid high peaks to the sweltering humidity of the lush jungles, one finds not just a bewildering mosaic of natural ecosystems and wildlife, but of communities that rely on this natural bounty. Since its establishment almost 30 years ago, IUCN-SUR has been at the forefront of nature conservation in this rich region, helping to guide governments and society to walk a path of sustainable development. Protected areas are among the key issues in which SUR has made an impact over the past quadrennium, the highlight of which was the IUCN-organised Third Congress of Protected Areas of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAPLAC), held in the Peruvian capital of Lima in 2019. This drew 3,123 participants (including 153 indigenous peoples' representatives) from 58 countries and hosted 956 events, all of which were dedicated to the strengthening of protected areas for the well-being of society and sustainable development.

Another priority for protecting South America's nature is effective governance, which is also one of IUCN-SUR's strengths. The flagship project in this regard is the SUR-led 'Amazonia 2.0', born in 2017, which aims to protect 1.5 million hectares of Amazonian rainforest in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Suriname, through the leadership of indigenous and peasant communities. Finally, the Regional Office has excelled in communicating the achievements of the IUCN Secretariat, membership, and Commissions. Between 2017 to 2019, in collaboration with Members and partners, IUCN-SUR released a total of 138 publications, studies and outreach materials covering a wide variety of topics from protected areas, to water, to governance and rights, to climate change.

Washington D.C. Office. The IUCN Washington D.C. Office plays a unique role within the Secretariat. As many of the resources that power IUCN's projects and activities throughout the world come from international and governmental institutions based in North America, the Washington D.C. Office has played a key engagement role on behalf of the Union over the last quadrennium, in addition to collaborating with Members, Commission experts and partners across the continent. A significant achievement was the 2018 creation of a USD 8 million blended finance facility to support private investment in nature conservation. Coordinated with Coalition for Private Investment in Conservation, launched at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016, and funded by the Global Environment Facility, this initiative, for which IUCN has been the implementing agency, was the first conservation

financing model of its kind in the world. The crucial liaison role played by IUCN-US was demonstrated many times throughout the past four years.

Over this period, the D.C. Office has supported the delivery of more than USD 30 million in grant funding from the US government and US-based foundations to IUCN, across a wide range of issues. A good example is the USD 12 million W-TRAPS project, implemented in collaboration with TRAFFIC, covering wildlife trade issues in Africa and Asia. The period since the 2016 IUCN Congress has also seen the birth of the US National Committee, engaging around 50 new Members in the business of IUCN. Throughout the last quadrennium, the Washington D.C. Office has also worked closely with Canada to strengthen the Union's ties with Canadian Members – strongly represented in all four of IUCN's membership categories – and to guide the government's contributions to the post-2020 global framework on biodiversity.

2.6 Scaling up investments and private sector engagement

2.6.1 Grant-making at IUCN

The IUCN Secretariat has been expanding and consolidating its capacity for grant-making, awarding an increasing number of small and medium-sized grants in support of activities on the ground that are often carried out by IUCN member organisations. This growth in capacity is an acknowledgment of both the vast pool of capacities and valuable ideas that exist across the IUCN Membership and local organisations to address conservation needs, and the confidence that IUCN instils in its donors to oversee and accompany grantees in their much-needed work while also upholding fiduciary, social and environmental standards. The full suite of grant-making mechanisms in operation or approved during the 2017–2020 period is presented below.

Mangroves for the Future (MFF) saw a third phase of implementation running from 2014 to 2019, with over 250 partners across 11 countries in Asia. [This long-term programme](#) worked to protect and restore Asia's coastal ecosystems by building the resilience of coastal communities and promoting NbS. The three pillars of the programme were: applying knowledge, empowering women and their communities, and enhancing governance. The MFF Grant Facility was central to implementation of the programme, and during this third phase more than 160 projects – worth over USD 4 million – were implemented, 70% of them by NGOs and Community-Based Organisations. The projects directly benefited over 80,000 people living in coastal communities and had more than 300,000 indirect beneficiaries. Almost 80% of projects focused on improving the livelihoods of coastal communities that rely directly on natural resources.

Save Our Species (SOS). Launched in 2010, the [SOS initiative](#) has been funded by various donors and partners, the largest of which currently is the European Union. SOS supports science-based conservation action to ensure the long-term survival of threatened species and their habitats, by providing grants for the conservation of species that have been assessed as Vulnerable, Endangered and Critically Endangered. Informed by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ and involving collaboration with thousands of IUCN experts and scientists worldwide, SOS focuses its efforts where it can have the biggest impact. Between 2017 and 2020, 22 African countries and 13 Asian countries (including Central Asia) had benefitted from 120 SOS grants, 54 of which were in Madagascar, focused on lemurs. In total, SOS covers the conservation of over 344 species of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, plants and fish (both freshwater and marine) and invertebrates.

Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP) aims to double tiger populations in Asia by 2022. This IUCN-KfW (the German Development Bank) [programme](#), established in January 2014, funds efforts in support of conservation of wild tiger populations and their habitats, as well as the sustainable development of livelihoods for human communities living around key tiger habitats. Nine countries are eligible for funding: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal and Viet Nam. The size of grants offered ranges from EUR 700,000 to EUR 2 million, with the average duration of individual projects being three to four years.

The BIOPAMA Action Component is a EUR 21 million grant-making facility managed by IUCN in the framework of the [BIOPAMA](#) (Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management) programme – an initiative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States financed by the European Union's 11th

European Development Fund. The overall aim of the BIOPAMA programme is to contribute to improving the long-term conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions in protected areas and surrounding communities. The implementation of the Action Component is one of the major vehicles of the BIOPAMA programme in addressing priorities for action. It supports activities on the ground to strengthen the management-effectiveness and governance of protected and conserved areas. By adopting a landscape approach, these actions will contribute to enhancing local livelihoods through sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem services, as well as increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change. By the end of 2020, the BIOPAMA Action Component had awarded 94 grants in 46 countries for a total value of EUR 10,354,602. To support the ACP countries in confronting the COVID-19 crisis, the BIOPAMA Action Component organised a special Rapid Response Grant call in June 2020 and a call for Small Technical Grants. As a result, a further 72 grants are being negotiated.

BEST4LIFE. The [BEST initiative](#), financed by the European Union, is a funding facility for small-scale and medium-scale field actions that support the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystem services in 34 Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories of the EU. These European entities are of strategic importance for global and European biodiversity conservation. Located across all oceans, these places host unique but fragile ecosystems and account for 80% of the EU's overall biodiversity. Since 2017, IUCN has organised several calls for proposals under the BEST initiative, provided capacity building and awarded 91 projects representing a portfolio of EUR 9, 3 million. Thanks to a small grants approach, BEST grants have enabled local organisations to define and implement activities to tackle their own environmental challenges. More than 85 local and regional organisations benefitted from this tailored support, showing a multiplier and catalyser effect from the small grants in the Pacific, Amazonia, Caribbean, Macaronesia, Indian Ocean, South and North Atlantic and Polar/Sub-polar regions. The funded projects are highly diverse, addressing endangered species conservation, invasive alien species, sustainable water management, cultural, traditional and local knowledge, and supporting forest and marine conservation as well as piloting innovative conservation approaches.

Building livelihood resilience to climate change in the upper basins of Guatemala's highlands is IUCN's first Green Climate Fund project, approved at the end of 2018. The project aims to improve the climate resilience of livelihoods and ecosystems in target upper watersheds of the Guatemalan Altiplano, by promoting EbA. It includes a grants facility mechanism, which was launched last year. As part of this grants facility, at least 52 small grants (maximum size USD 45,000) will be awarded to grassroots organisations and 17 medium grants (maximum size USD 400,000) to second-level organisations to promote and implement improved agricultural and forestry practices, ecosystem restoration and soil and water conservation. These grants are expected to bring 10,000 ha under EbA measures and to reach a total of 50,000 beneficiaries, whilst ensuring the effective participation women (at least 30%), as well as the inclusion of indigenous people from the Guatemalan highlands.

Indigenous peoples' rights in Central America – Sub-granting project. The project aims to support organisations and/or networks of indigenous and Afro-descendants from Guatemala, Honduras and Panama that are legally constituted and have administrative, financial and accounting experience. Through sub-grants, these grass-roots organisations are able to enhance their governance structures and coordination capacity to implement advocacy agendas in order to promote respect for their collective rights in the face of the expansion of extractive /energy industries that may affect their lands and natural resources. Sub-grants have a maximum size of USD 20,000 per organisation and three sub-grants have so far been allocated to indigenous organisations in each country.

Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP). Through an investment of USD 219,000 from USAID, the [RCBP](#) Small Grants Program (SGP) is enabling implementation of 20 projects in the Central American region. Fifteen are bio-commerce projects and five cover sustainable landscape management by local organisations. These projects are located in high biodiversity areas in the lower basins of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, together reaching a total of 739 direct beneficiaries from vulnerable communities. The objective is to incentivise conservation and reduce threats to biodiversity in coastal marine ecosystems, mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs, and to contribute to the prosperity, governance and security of the communities associated with the use of these biodiversity components.

CEPF – Indo-Burma Hotspot (Asia). Since 2013, IUCN been the Regional Implementation Team for investments by CEPF in the Indo-Burma hotspot. IUCN provides CEPF grants for civil society organisations to help protect biodiversity hotspots, which are recognised as earth's most biologically rich yet also most threatened areas. During the period 2013–2020, phase 2 of CEPF was implemented across six countries in the Indo-Burma hotspot. Support worth over USD 15.5 million was given to 189 civil society-led projects, focusing on strategic investments related to species conservation, wildlife trade, improved management in production landscapes and protected areas, capacity building, and strengthening enabling conditions for conservation. This supported the creation or expansion of almost 230,000 ha of protected areas, significantly increased the capacity of more than 80% of the civil society organisations (CSOs) implementing the projects, and directly benefited more than 700 local communities, mostly in terms of increased food security and improved access to ecosystem services.

CEPF – East Melanesian Islands Hotspot (Oceania). As with Asia, IUCN is also the Regional Implementation Team for CEPF's investments in the East Melanesian Islands hotspot. Since 2017, IUCN and CEPF have facilitated and awarded to 64 different local and international CSOs: 22 large grants totalling USD 2,668,400 and 26 small grants totalling USD 452,687. These grants have directly benefited over 150 communities throughout the hotspot, through such topics as environmental education, resource management, training in ecological techniques, financial and organisational record-keeping, and legal awareness-raising. Communities have been empowered to manage and conserve 17 priority Key Biodiversity Areas, eight protected areas have been established (covering 31,020 hectares), and over 103,000 hectares are under improved management or protection. Information on the status of 23 priority threatened species has been improved through research on the ground, and over 25 local CSOs and networks have been strengthened through capacity building grants.

Energy, Ecosystems and Sustainable Livelihoods Initiative (EESLI). Using energy as a tool to drive biodiversity conservation and livelihoods outcomes, between 2017 and 2020 the [EESLI](#) project awarded USD 443,000 through 15 grants to CSOs, small and micro enterprises, communities and faith-based organisations in countries across the Pacific Islands region. Funded projects ranged from small hydropower systems in support of livelihoods in coffee-producing communities in the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area in Papua New Guinea, to the reinvigoration of traditional seafaring, navigation and shipbuilding practices for youth in Fiji, including conservation management of heritage timber species used in boatbuilding, to a combined coastal and terrestrial flora species replanting and solar PV project for an ecotourism business and communities on Koro Island, Fiji, following the devastation caused by tropical cyclone Winston in 2016. Large grants totalling USD 217,000 were awarded to governments and utilised for projects including community solar water pumps, household energy efficiency loan subsidy programmes, a tidal stream feasibility study, biofuel research, and community solar-lighting systems (in partnership with PNG Women in Agriculture).

Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) Financing Facility. The [Southern African Development Community \(SADC\) Transfrontier Conservation Area \(TFCA\) Financing Facility](#) is a EUR 23 million funding facility that aims to provide financial grants in support of conservation, development and management actions in SADC TFCAs. Funding for the Facility was approved in 2019, and financing and implementation agreements for IUCN to manage the Facility were finalised in July 2020. IUCN is working with SADC to establish the required governance structures, and an Operational Manual is being drafted to guide the principles and modalities of how the grant-making process will function. In the initial phase, approximately 80% of the grants will be allocated to three TFCAs: Kavango Zambezi, Malawi-Zambia, and Great Limpopo. The first grants are likely to be awarded in 2021.

Conservation Finance Initiative (CFI). IUCN, in partnership with CPIC, put forward a GEF proposal, approved by GEF Council in 2019, for a reimbursable grant of USD 8 million to attract additional public and private finance for an innovative financial vehicle to originate and grow a pipeline of conservation investment projects. In 2020, on collaboration with Mirova Natural Capital, IUCN has designed and launched the Nature+ Accelerator Fund, as part of the initiative, to provide USD 50 million in blended finance (USD 15 million concessional incl. GEF as an anchor investor, and USD 35 million in private financing) to support early and viable investment deals via equity and debt instruments, over ten years. The Fund will invest in projects that support marine and coastal resilience and fisheries; forest protection and sustainable management; forest landscape restoration (including agroforestry); green infrastructure for watershed management; and sustainable agriculture. It is expected to scale-up and grow a portfolio in excess of USD 200 million. This is the first accelerator fund to offer 'smart money' to project developers at a very early stage, combined with technical assistance and investment options for

upscaling. At the same time, the Fund has the potential to be highly catalytic in addressing the current gap in nature investments. The Fund is currently raising capital from both public and private investors, with a first close expected in 2021 upon securing additional USD 2 million (to GEF's USD 8 million) in investment to the Fund.

Small-scale Initiatives Programme (PPI) for CSOs in Central and Western Africa. This Small-scale Initiatives Programme (known by the acronym PPI from its full name in French) is funded by the French Fund for the Global Environment (FFEM) and the MAVA Foundation. It finances practical on-the-ground projects that benefit local communities and protect the environment, thus contributing to building the capacities and influence of African CSOs with regard to environmental issues. IUCN has been engaged for more than a decade in supporting CSOs in implementing conservation actions and such initiatives have proven to be an effective and viable path for securing nature conservation outcomes. During the 2017–2020 quadrennium, more than 180,000 ha of protected and conserved areas were established or formalised; 11 development and management plans were drafted and are being implemented; the conservation status of at least six flagship mammal species (including great apes, elephants and marine mammals) was improved at project implementation sites; about 2,500 tons per year of household waste was recycled and approximately 5,300 tCO₂eq per year avoided since 2017. These tangible results have been achieved through the granting of close to EUR 2.5 million to support the efforts of more than 65 CSOs from Central and West Africa. In addition to financial support, these organisations have also benefited from tailored capacity development covering both institutional and operational matters.

Small-scale Initiatives Programme for CSOs in North Africa (PPI-OSCAN). This PPI, which is currently in its second phase (2018–2021) aims to build the capacities of emerging CSOs in four North African countries (Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) through the implementation of on-the-ground conservation projects and a series of thematic training initiatives. Since 2014, the Programme has supported a total of 80 projects financed from a total budget of EUR 4.5 million. Around 20 CSOs have succeeded in accessing new funding to upscale their projects and achievements. PPI-OSCAN has contributed to building trust and strengthening collaboration opportunities with government institutions in fragile countries such as Libya.

Blue Natural Capital Financing Facility. The [Facility](#) became operational at the end of 2018 and is financed by the Government of Luxembourg. It consists of a grant-funding mechanism that seeks to advance financially viable coastal climate resilience projects with clear ecosystem services benefits in developing countries, especially small island developing states. The aim is to integrate NbS (e.g. coastal wetland or mangrove restoration) with modern data systems, marine technology, small renewable energy projects and clean-water solutions to strengthen the investment case for integrated coastal resilience management. So far, the Facility has screened over 100 projects and is supporting 8 projects in the coastal and marine space that combine a business model with NbS. It is currently supporting, with funding and technical assistance, six impact businesses on their way to becoming financially self-sustaining (i.e. bankable). If successful, and based solely on current donations, the Facility's current portfolio will protect 40,000 ha of mangroves, 400 ha of seagrass beds, and 5,200 ha of marine protected areas, while creating jobs in ecotourism, integrated shrimp farming, recycling of fishing nets and trading of blue carbon credits. The Facility's pipeline is still growing and other exciting NbS businesses are expected to benefit from its support.

Global Fund for Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA). Approved at the end of 2019, this is a fast-track innovative financing mechanism launched by IUCN and UNEP with the financial support of BMU-IKI. With a budget of EUR 20 million, the Fund aims to enhance the knowledge base, planning, and scaling up of EbA and access to public funding for catalytic adaptation interventions. The first call for proposals will be made on 25 March 2021, with grants in the range of EUR 50,000–250,000, in exceptional cases going up to EUR 500,000.

COVID-19 and Rapid Response Grants. In May 2020, [SOS African Wildlife](#) initiative used its Rapid Action Grants modality, normally available for conservation emergencies and to enable immediate responses to new and emerging threats, to respond specifically to threats linked to the COVID-19 crisis and its consequences. Proposals targeting terrestrial or freshwater threatened species in continental Sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar were invited, with a maximum grant size of EUR 100,000 and a maximum duration of 12 months. No matching funds are required.

In June 2020, the BIOPAMA programme also launched a call for proposals for Rapid Response Grants designed to address the risks and difficulties triggered by the COVID-19 crisis in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. The funded projects, which are expected to increase the resilience of protected areas and local community livelihoods to the impacts of the global pandemic, must be no more than EUR 50,000 with a maximum duration of 12 months. There is no match-funding requirement.

2.6.2 *Private sector engagements and partnerships*

Under the IUCN Business Engagement Strategy, the Secretariat has focused on three key areas: valuing biodiversity, promoting biodiversity net gain, and investing in nature. These initiatives contribute to IUCN's quadrennial Programme through engagement at the company and sectoral level as well as through multi-stakeholder coalitions. Indeed, IUCN's private sector engagements saw considerable expansion and consolidation in the 2017–2020 period, combining global-scale engagements with partnerships fostered at the regional or national level. Given the level of impact the private sector has on the environment, it is imperative to work closely with all industries in order to drive the nature positive agenda globally. The ambition is for private sector engagements and partnerships to continue to be strengthened in the years and decades to come.

Valuing biodiversity is a key entry point for business engagement. IUCN participates in multi-stakeholder coalitions, such as [Business for Nature](#), a global coalition of influential organisations and businesses calling for action to reverse nature loss, and [We Value Nature](#), a campaign targeting key business sectors to consider the risks and opportunities provided by nature. In these efforts, as on other issues relating to agriculture, biodiversity, climate change and ecosystem degradation, IUCN works with key partners. These include the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) – the only IUCN Member that focuses exclusively on the business sector – and the UN Global Compact, which supported the 'Business for Nature' virtual event for business and government leaders in June 2020 that called for global action on nature. IUCN is also a founding member of the Natural Capital Coalition, now known as the Capitals Coalition, and sponsored the World Forum on Natural Capital, and more recently, the 2020 Africa Forum on Green Economy.

IUCN has produced a number of new tools to support business, including [new guidelines](#) for developing and using biodiversity indicators for corporate performance monitoring, as well as [Guidelines on Business and KBAs](#) for companies operating in areas important for the conservation of species and ecosystems. Under the [MARPLASTICCS project](#), IUCN is working with the private sector in Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Thailand and Viet Nam to measure plastic use and waste in company value chains. In India, IUCN helped [Aditya Birla Group \(ABG\)](#) produce a sustainability framework and new biodiversity guidelines, while in Nigeria, IUCN published [lessons learned](#) from the independent IUCN Niger Delta Panel exploring oil-spill remediation. IUCN has collaborated with Shell for over 20 years. Current projects include contributing to new guidelines for renewables and piloting the Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions. With Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria, IUCN is helping to measure and monitor oil-spill remediation efforts and the company's impact on biodiversity. Lastly, the [BioBiz Exchange](#) has provided training and webinars to IUCN Members and partners, building capacity and peer-to-peer learning, as well as curating case studies for the PANORAMA Solutions platform on business engagement.

Promoting biodiversity net gain is integral to the independent advice that IUCN provides to [Newmont Mining](#), [Black Mountain Mining \(BMM\)](#) and Rio Tinto's [QIT Madagascar Minerals \(QMM\)](#) on their mitigation and offset activities. The BMM offset, for example, adds significantly to the protection status of a globally significant but under-represented ecosystem. Drawing on [IUCN's Biodiversity Offset Policy](#), adopted by IUCN Members in 2016, this work also helped to establish the first-ever [Global Inventory of Biodiversity Offset Policies](#). In collaboration with Electricité de France (EDF), Energias de Portugal (EDP) and Shell, IUCN is working on guidelines to [mitigate biodiversity impacts in renewable energy projects](#), including wind and solar. In Russia, IUCN's [Western Grey Whale Advisory Panel](#), an independent scientific body, advises Sakhalin Energy on mitigating its potential operational impacts on this Endangered whale and has contributed to raising the profile of the species' conservation at national level.

IUCN's partnership with the [International Olympic Committee](#) has produced a series of reports aimed at helping the sports industry to reduce the impacts on nature of its events and venues. IUCN also

advised on the candidature process for the Olympic Games 2024. IUCN is a member of the Responsible Steel Initiative, created in 2018 as the steel industry's first global multi-stakeholder standard and certification initiative. As a member of Nespresso's Sustainability Advisory Panel, IUCN advises the company on its biodiversity impact reporting framework. Nespresso participated in the creation of the Cerrado Waters Consortium in Brazil, using a landscape approach to develop restoration efforts in this important coffee region, and additionally supports outreach on key biodiversity issues, such as sustainable agriculture.

Investing in nature at a landscape and seascape level is critical for achieving sustainable development. In Brazil, the IUCN-led [Rio Doce Panel](#), an independent scientific and technical advisory body, has issued a series of recommendations to the Renova Foundation on the recovery of this important watershed, following a 2015 tailings dam collapse. IUCN liaises regularly with the International Council on Mining and Metals and served as a member of the Advisory Group for the Global Tailings Review, launched in July 2020, which brought Union perspectives to the generation of this new Standard. Backed by IUCN and Nespresso, the [Cerrado Waters Consortium](#) in Brazil launched a climate-smart investment scheme that now has broad public and private support to help safeguard nature and water supplies in central highland plains, an important coffee growing region. In Pakistan, IUCN has provided technical advice to the [China-Pakistan Economic Corridor](#), calling for measures to ensure environmental safeguards are in place in this key region. Through the [Shared Resources, Joint Solutions \(SRJS\) programme](#), IUCN worked with business and civil society to strengthen capacity and enhance climate resilience, water supply and food security in key landscapes of Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Uganda. As part of [SUSTAIN-Africa](#), IUCN developed inclusive green-growth strategies with farmers and other stakeholders in designated economic corridors in Mozambique and Tanzania that went beyond their operations and built sector and multi-sector coalitions to scale-up impact. Companies such as Toyota Motors Corporation also invest in biodiversity by directly supporting IUCN's work with the Red List of Threatened Species™.

Private sector partnerships around the world. A number of partnerships have taken shape with companies located regionally or nationally, focusing on sustainability, biodiversity protection, water management, community involvement and capacity building. These companies include: Aditya Birla Group (India), AES (Jordan), Engro Elengy (Pakistan), HSBC (Sri Lanka), ITC Ltd (India), Marriott Hotels and Resorts (Thailand), Mitsubishi Corporation (Fund for Africa and Europe), Siam City Cement (Asia), Tata Power (India), Tata Steel (India), TH True Milk (Viet Nam), and Toyota Motor Co. Ltd. (Thailand).

2.7 Gender and social inclusion

Gender equity and inclusiveness are given their rightful place. The IUCN Secretariat has taken significant steps to enhance and better integrate gender and social inclusion in its work during the quadrennium, and to ensure that environmental and social safeguards are well considered in its interventions. Some of our main achievements are:

- Adoption in 2018 of a new IUCN Gender Policy, which mandates gender-responsive programming across the IUCN portfolio.
- Provision of active support to governments and stakeholders to assist them in implementing gender commitments under the Rio Conventions.
- Inclusion of clear objectives on gender, indigenous peoples, and equitable and effective governance in the draft IUCN Programme 2021–2024 and Operational Plan, building on the cross-cutting approach of the 2016–2020 Programme.
- Supporting the development and implementation of indigenous peoples' self-determined strategies following the creation in 2016 of a new IUCN membership category for indigenous peoples' organisations.
- Implementation of greatly improved gender-responsive and socially-inclusive actions in regional and global projects.
- Rolling out IUCN's Environmental and Social Management System, initially developed for GEF projects, to IUCN's entire project portfolio from June 2016. This has resulted in the formal screening of all medium and large IUCN projects for potential environmental and social risks, and a guided self-assessment for small projects (those below CHF 500,000) which from 2020

onwards, also applies to medium projects (CHF 500,000 to 1 million). Where screening identifies risks, the project is either classified as a high- or moderate-risk project. Both categories require the preparation of mitigation measures in the form of an Environmental and Social Management Plan, which is monitored on a regular basis.

While these achievements show that we have come a long way in recent years, IUCN is well aware that more needs to be done and is planning to carry out further actions. Implementing these measures will require dedicated resources for supporting, monitoring, assessing and enhancing gender responsiveness and social inclusion across IUCN. The main actions planned are:

- Renewing of the Gender Focal Points network that brings together staff from across IUCN's Regional and Global Programmes to build capacity and coordinate actions for implementation of the 2018 Gender Policy.
- Implementing a Gender Marker system that will require all projects to report on their project and financial contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Providing additional technical resources and support for the mainstreaming of gender and social inclusion in projects and project indicators.
- Carrying out portfolio-wide qualitative assessments of gender and social inclusion results, as part of the monitoring and evaluation of the Secretariat's contribution to the IUCN Programme 2021–2024.
- Working together as a Union, across all IUCN Constituencies, to ensure meaningful gender and social inclusion.

In addition, **youth** engagement in conservation and intergenerational partnerships have in recent years become increasingly important for the Union. Similar to the gender and social inclusion efforts, youth engagement needs to be mainstreamed across the Union if to be fruitful.

2.8 Addressing the Resolutions and Recommendations of Hawai'i

Tracking progress with IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations. IUCN Members adopted 112 Resolutions and Recommendations at the Hawai'i Congress in 2016 (96 Resolutions and 16 Recommendations), a reduction of more than one-third relative to the number adopted by the Jeju Congress in 2012. This decrease resulted from the revision of the motions process during the quadrennium 2013–2016, which led to fewer motions being submitted overall but much higher quality, on average.

As of 2015, the Secretariat launched an Online Tracking System as per Resolution WCC-2008-Res-011 *Development of an automated system to record members' actions on Resolutions and Recommendations to improve reporting at, and between, World Conservation Congresses*. The web-based system allows all parts of IUCN – Members, Commissions, National and Regional Committees, Council, and Secretariat – to provide information on how they contribute to the implementation of Resolutions and Recommendations. The 'Activity Reports' thus generated are publicly available in the [Resolutions and Recommendations Platform](#), as are 'Progress Reports', in which designated Secretariat Focal Points provide an annual synthesis of activities for each Resolution and Recommendation adopted at the previous Congress.

In June 2020, the Global Policy Unit received a final round of updates from focal points, to complement the Progress Reports published in December 2019/January 2020. Based on the latest Reports and updates, 78% of the Resolutions and Recommendations are currently being implemented, with implementation initiated on 8% and advanced on 70%. Meanwhile, 14% were completed, while only 8% had not been started or there was insufficient information to report on progress (see Figure 4). The year-on-year trend shown in Figure 4 below demonstrates that, as the quadrennium advanced, more Resolutions and Recommendations reached advanced stages of implementation, and fewer remained in the recently initiated or still-to-be-initiated categories. Commissions and the Secretariat were each involved in the implementation of between two-thirds and three-quarters of Resolutions and Recommendations, and more than half of Resolutions were being implemented through a One Programme approach.

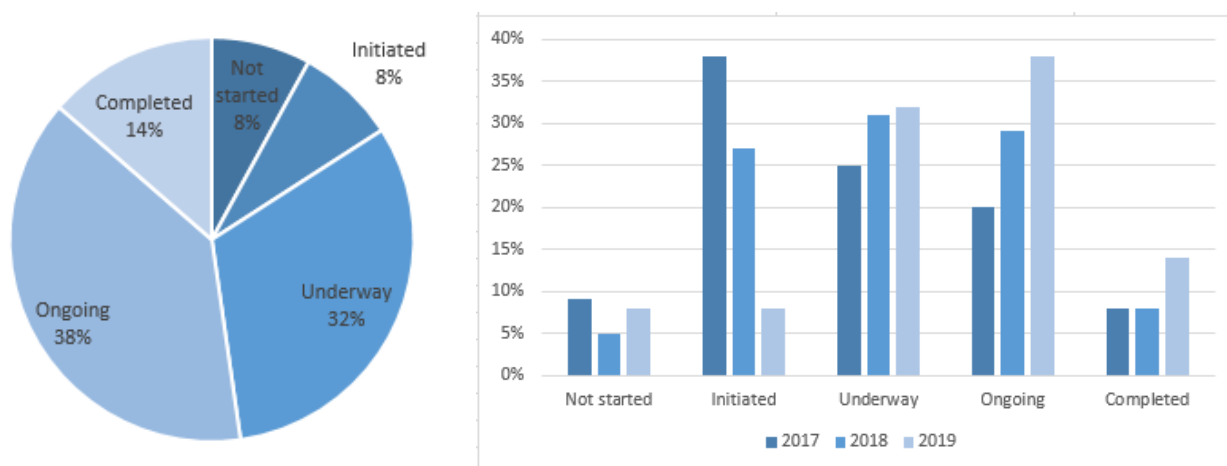


Figure 4. Progress on Hawai'i Resolutions and Recommendations (Source: Global Policy Unit, 2020)

The key implementation challenges faced include insufficient funding, uneven levels of commitment from the different IUCN constituencies, low political will to take action, coordination and reporting challenges, or a mismatch between the topic of the Resolution or Recommendation and the current IUCN and/or Commission Programme(s).

3. A unique Union

3.1 Membership

Numbers continue to grow. The global environment movement continues to gain momentum and IUCN's niche as a convenor provides its diverse membership with a unique opportunity to contribute to change. Since the 2016 Hawai'i Congress, 320 new Members have joined IUCN, including 13 new State Members (see Table 2 below). However, despite this, net membership figures have only increased by 76 to 1,457 Members as at 31 December 2020 (see Figure 5). The reason for this is that rescissions now take place every two years, rather than every four as was done previously. This has caused fluctuations in membership figures with numbers dropping as low as 1,319 during the period. It is important to note that the overall trend is still one of growth, showing the ongoing interest of organisations in joining IUCN and with membership continuing to become more diversified across the Regions (Table 2).

Table 2. IUCN membership numbers as of December 2020 by category and statutory region, showing change from 2016

Statutory Regions	State	Government agency	International NGO	National NGO	Indigenous peoples' organisations	Affiliate	Total 2020	Total 2016	Increase / Decrease
Africa	26	15	14	179	2	2	238	242	-4
East Europe, North and Central Asia	6	14	3	40			63	69	-6
Meso and South America	6	8	5	169	11	2	201	195	6
North America and the Caribbean	2	12	31	96	5	15	161	156	5
Oceania	10	10	1	27	1	2	51	56	-5
South and East Asia	16	22	4	228	3	5	278	268	10
West Asia	6	7		64			77	70	7
West Europe	18	30	47	208	1	24	328	325	3
Total	90	118	105	1011	23	50	1397	1381	16

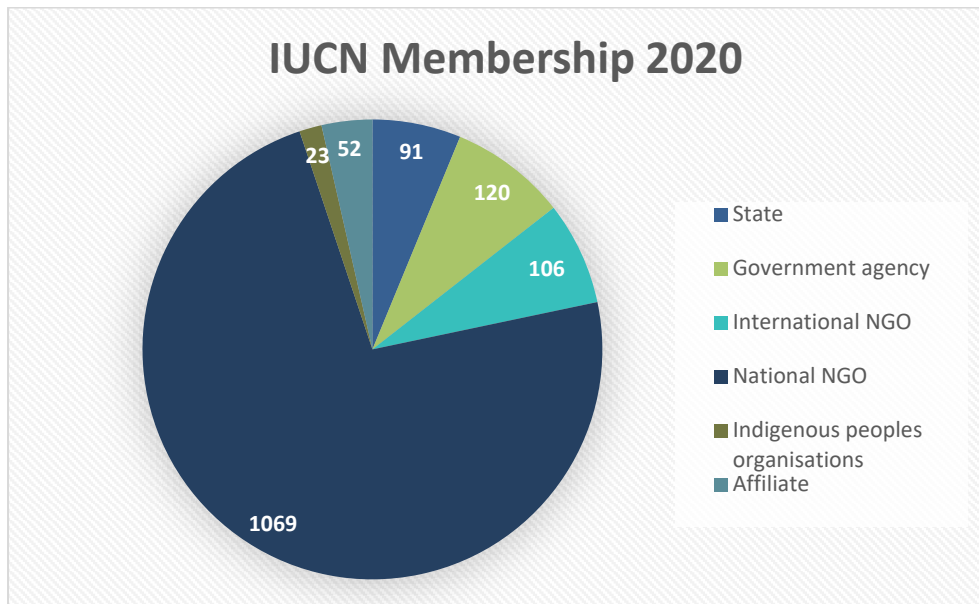


Figure 5. IUCN Members by categories (at December 2020)

In terms of new Members, the South and East Asia region saw the largest increase in new Members in the last quadrennium (70), closely followed by Africa (65) and West Europe (60). Meso and South America and North America and the Caribbean, added 41 and 40 Members respectively, followed by West Asia (23), East Europe, North and Central Asia (13), and Oceania (8).

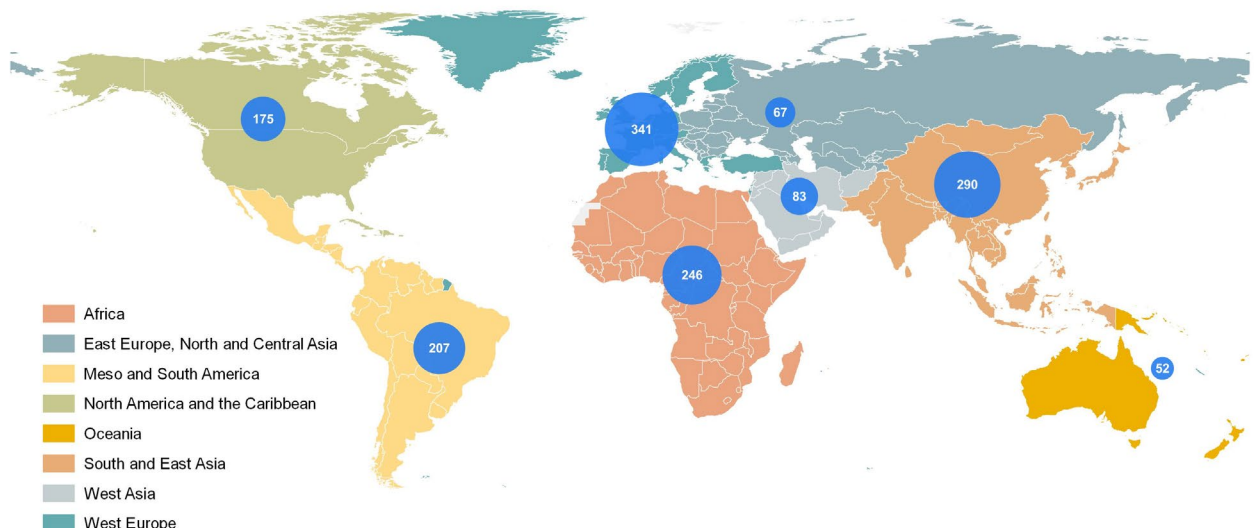


Figure 6. Size of IUCN Membership per statutory region (at December 2020)

Indigenous peoples' organisations (IPO) were welcomed as IUCN Members under their own membership category in 2016. Since then, the IUCN Secretariat and CEESP have kept organisations

in the sector informed about IUCN's efforts to support and engage with indigenous peoples. A global meeting of IUCN IPO took place during the IUCN Mesoamerica Regional Conservation Forum in May 2019. This meeting brought together IPO Members to share their experiences in conservation and to discuss the further development and implementation of a self-determined strategy identifying joint priorities for advancing their rights and issues in conservation, engaging with each other and within IUCN moving forward. These priorities focus particularly on leveraging IUCN's convening power, knowledge generation, standard setting and policy engagement in regard to indigenous issues.

Strengthening National and Regional Committees. National and Regional Committees established by Members help to facilitate cooperation within the membership, as well as with other constituent parts of IUCN. These Committees, which enjoy a high degree of autonomy and financial responsibility, are of great importance for all Members and components of the Union and should act as a catalyst in the implementation of the One Programme Charter. Since the Hawai'i Congress, IUCN Council has recognised seven National Committees: Belize, Benin, Cambodia, Chile, Palestine, UAE, and USA. This brings the total number of recognised IUCN National Committees of Members to 67. The number of Regional Committees has remained unchanged at seven. The Working Group for National Committee Development has been engaging with Members from both West Europe and East Europe, North and Central Asia to establish an Interregional Committee for those two regions. The proposal is for the Committee to be established during the IUCN World Conservation Congress and for Council recognition to be sought thereafter.

Membership Strategy. During the Hawai'i Congress, Members mandated the Secretariat to develop an updated Membership Strategy – the previous version dating back to 2004. This task involved consultations with Members, Secretariat staff (including the Leadership Team), and IUCN Council, which endorsed the new Membership Strategy at its 98th meeting, in February 2020. The overall aim of the strategy is to strengthen engagement of Members in IUCN governance and activities, in order to realise the full potential of the Union. It should also serve to reinforce the Union's strategic priorities by helping to identify and recruit Members whose skills and expertise will contribute to the practical implementation of the IUCN Programme. Work has now begun on implementation, with the aim of ensuring that the Union achieves its full potential as an informed, skilled, connected, engaged and highly influential conservation movement capable of achieving the vision and mission of IUCN.

Regional Conservation Fora. IUCN Regional Committees and Regional Offices hosted several Regional Conservation Fora during this intersessional period (see Table 3). These provided opportunities for Members and Commissions to prepare for meaningful participation in the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020. In addition to provision of enhanced networking opportunities, the Fora facilitated the discussion of matters of regional and global significance, including consultation on the draft IUCN Programme 2021–2024, and discussion of a series of governance reforms proposed by Council.

Table 3. IUCN Regional Conservation Fora

Location	Region	Date (2019)
Guatemala	Mexico, Central America & the Caribbean	27-30 May
USA	North America	24-25 Jun
Tunisia	Mediterranean	24-26 Jun
Netherlands	Europe	1-3 July
Guinea Bissau	West & Central Africa	9-11 July
South Africa	Eastern & Southern Africa	23-25 July
Fiji	Oceania	29 July -2 Aug
Paraguay	South America	12-14 Aug
Canada	North America	5 Sep
Kuwait	West Asia	9-11 Sep
Pakistan	Asia	6-8 Nov

3.2 Commissions

From strength to strength. The Commissions have always been a cornerstone of IUCN, and the contributions that Commission experts make to the Union and its Programme continue to underpin many of the knowledge products, initiatives and networks that IUCN is best known for, and through which IUCN is keeping ahead of the game. The Commissions have continued to grow in size during the past quadrennium. In fact, by February 2020, we proudly saw IUCN surpass the milestone of 15,000 Commission members in total (without double counting those who take part in more than one Commission).

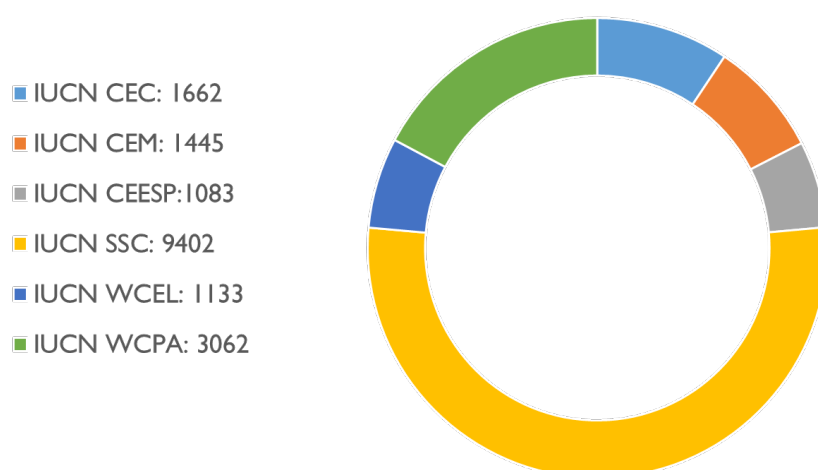


Figure 7. Number of experts in each IUCN Commission (as of February 2020)

In the year from October 2019 to December 2020, the six Commissions grew as follows:

- CEESP (Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy) 20%
- CEC (Commission on Education and Communication) 16%
- WCEL (World Commission on Environmental Law) 18%
- CEM (Commission on Ecosystem Management) 24%
- WCPA (World Commission on Protected Areas) 9%
- SSC (Species Survival Commission) 10%

Throughout the quadrennium, the Commission Support Unit at IUCN headquarters continued to provide support to the Commissions in administrative matters and communications. In 2019, IUCN's new Commission System also went live. Compliant with current data protection legislation and available in English, French and Spanish, the system enables Commission leaders to manage their membership directly and processes invitations and applications to join IUCN Commissions. The work and outputs of the Commissions rely on administrative, logistical and funding support from partners including IUCN Members; the Commissions are very grateful for this support.

Collaboration in the technical and policy arena, in relation to implementing the IUCN Programme, Resolutions and Recommendations, has been highly productive during the quadrennium. Table 4 provides a summary of the Secretariat's main engagements with the six Commissions between 2017 and 2020.

Table 4. Main Secretariat-Commission engagements over the 2017–2020 period

Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)	There has been close collaboration in jointly developing the recently launched IUCN Global Standard for NbS, which was approved by the IUCN Council in February 2020. This followed a jointly launched definition and report on NbS at the 2016 Congress, as well as steering of the related Resolutions process by the current CEM Chair. One of the Motions for consideration by the Congress in Marseille (n°073) concerns promotion of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS, with the process being led by Council and the Chair of CEM. The Secretariat also implemented its ground-breaking project on the Red List of Ecosystems
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	through CEM – work that included development of a database, assessments, development of a partnership agreement framework and creation of a logo. Additionally, drylands, coastal resilience and ecosystem governance continued to be key collaborative areas of work; alongside collaboration on ecosystem restoration activities in preparation for the launch of the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, and through the Fisheries Expert Group (FEG), contributing to policy work pertaining to the Global Biodiversity Framework 2021–2023
Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)	CEC aims to “ <i>support IUCN to unlock the potential of networks to connect conservation with human values, and to motivate conservation values, norms, behaviours and actions.</i> ” Collaborative achievements in recent years between CEC and the IUCN Secretariat include the establishment of #NatureForAll, planning for IUCN’s 70th anniversary preparations in 2018, including development of a strategy and visual identity, and preparations for the virtual Global Youth Summit in the run up to Marseille Congress. There was also close collaboration on the communication, education, intergenerational and youth engagement and other aspects of the IUCN Programme 2021–2024.
Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)	The IUCN Secretariat’s Global Programme on Governance and Rights (GPGR) has been working closely with CEESP for several years on a variety of topics. CEESP is actively engaged within all of GPGR’s key areas of work, focusing on indigenous peoples, gender equality and women’s empowerment, and governance of natural resources. Strong joint achievements include the development of the IUCN Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF), which since 2017 has been co-convened by CEESP and GPGR. CEESP’s Specialist Group on Gender worked closely with GPGR’s Gender Programme supporting analysis on critical importance of gender analysis to systematically mainstream a gender perspective in natural resource conservation management. Following the creation of a category of membership for indigenous peoples’ organisations (IPOs), GPGR and CEESP facilitated a process of developing an indigenous-led strategy, outlining their priority actions and practical steps for strengthening their rights, participation and engagement in conservation. This was drafted by IPO Members in 2018. Further, CEESP worked closely with IUCN’s Policy programme on the UNFCCC and the engagement of IPLCs and the development and advocacy that led to the establishment of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP)
Species Survival Commission (SSC)	<p>The Global Species and Key Biodiversity Area Programme of the IUCN Secretariat works closely with SSC to coordinate and support the work of the SSC Network to deliver the Species Strategic Plan 2017–2020 in a ‘One Programme’ approach. Activities included establishing new SSC Specialist Groups, carrying out joint projects, Red List assessments, conservation planning and action, influencing policy under multilateral environment agreements such as CBD, CITES, CMS and International Whaling Commission. Specific examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IUCN’s contribution to implementing CITES is delivered by the IUCN Secretariat’s Global Species Programme, coordinating and supporting the expert knowledge in the SSC’s taxonomic (animal and plant) and thematic (sustainable use) specialist groups; • SSC makes substantial contributions to the species elements of IUCN’s evolving position on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; • The IUCN Secretariat’s Global Species Programme supports SSC experts to produce, manage and publish IUCN Red List assessments; • The IUCN Secretariat and SSC work together on issues of critical conservation importance, e.g. collaboration between West and Central Africa Regional Office, Global Species Programme and IUCN SSC Antelope Specialist Group, for conservation of antelopes in Niger; • SSC experts have played a critical role in evaluating project proposals and in selecting the best projects for funding under IUCN’s grant-making mechanisms (SOS and Tiger Programme) and have provided advice and guidance on species conservation matters.
World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL)	WCEL and the IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC) have a long history of interaction spanning back to the 1970s when the ELC was established in Bonn to help the Commission (at that time, the Commission on Legislation and Administration) with provision of Secretariat support. Over the years, the Commission, ELC and the Director General’s Office collaborated in various efforts to advance environmental law as a distinct discipline to deliver conservation around the world, including through the development of important multilateral agreements such as CITES, CMS, and CBD among others, establishing centres of excellence and the Academy of Environmental Law and, more recently, supporting WCEL’s endeavours to foster collaboration with the judiciary. While both entities have different roles, these are complementary: the ELC is the IUCN Secretariat unit in charge of the IUCN Global Programme on Environmental Law and

	Governance, and WCEL is a global network of volunteers that provides expertise in the design and delivery of key initiatives.
World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)	<p>WCPA and the IUCN Secretariat's Global Protected Areas Programme (GPAP) have had a close working relationship for decades, since the establishment of WCPA 60 years ago, including jointly convening the IUCN World Parks Congress approximately every ten years (the last was in Sydney, Australia in 2014). Joint efforts over the past quadrennium – galvanised in an integrated programme of work – have yielded a suite of related products, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and maintaining the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas. Through joint efforts, the IUCN Green List Standard was published and adopted as policy, and programmes of work were commissioned globally. • Advising CBD Parties regarding the definition, identification and support of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM). A WCPA Task Force, involving the IUCN Secretariat, coordinated several workshops to develop OECM technical guidelines, subsequently published by IUCN. This guidance was taken up in decisions of the CBD, calling on IUCN and WCPA to support implementation. • Developing and influencing policy positions on area-based conservation measures, including protected areas and OECMs, in the process towards developing the post-2020 framework. These efforts supported the implementation of the CBD Aichi Target 11. • Jointly preparing and publishing technical guidance for protected area managers, including Best Practice Guidelines to support implementation of effective conservation governance and management globally. • Developing the Protected Planet Report Series and the PANORAMA (Solutions for Healthy Planet) learning initiative, together with several IUCN Members and partners. IUCN (Secretariat and WCPA) collaborated with other PANORAMA partners in founding the Pathfinder Award, in recognition of outstanding solutions globally. WCPA and GPAP also collaborate regularly in the preparation of each new Protected Planet Report. • LAC Regional Congress (CPALACIII) in Lima, 2019. WCPA worked with Redparques, GPAP, regional IUCN offices and other Commissions to organise and deliver a highly successful regional congress. Subsequently the region has followed up on the Lima Declaration with online events and a regional Protected Planet report. WCPA, GPAP and regional offices in Africa and Asia are also collaborating to prepare for regional park congresses in Africa and Asia in early 2022.

3.3 Secretariat

3.3.1 Staff worldwide

IUCN Secretariat is a decentralised organisation with headquarters located in Gland, Switzerland. As of December 2020, the IUCN Secretariat had a total workforce of 867 individuals, composed of staff members (94.4%), interns (1.3%), secondees (1.3%), Junior Professional Officers and volunteers (0.5%) based in 47 countries, with 78.5% working outside headquarters in its regional, country and programme offices.

Staff diversity, talent and gender balance as workforce assets. Ninety-eight nationalities are represented in IUCN's workforce, 67% being from least developed and developing countries. Over the course of the last four years, IUCN actively implemented policies and procedures that support diversity at the Secretariat, starting with the Talent Acquisition Policy put in place to attain gender balance and workforce diversity at all levels. In particular, candidate lists for positions at higher grades (SP and above) are required to include sufficient number of competitive female candidates. Compensation practices were also reviewed to do away with legacy practices that created inequity in pay between men and women.

To this effect, IUCN launched its first Global Pay Gap Report in 2018 to analyse – at global, regional and country levels – pay disparities and the factors that contribute to it. As a result, IUCN also released, in 2019, specific guidelines to enable adjustments that lead to pay equity. Diversity and equality were also made vital elements in Global HR's development programmes, such as the 'High Potential' and 'Emerging Leaders' initiatives launched in 2019. The main objective of these programmes is to enable the organisation to increase staff engagement and boost team performance, by developing future

leaders and high-potential employees and preparing them for further career opportunities. Both programmes initially had nine participants each, 44% of whom were women. In 2018, the Union also released the revised IUCN Staff Rules that reinforce the high-level principles that govern staff conditions of employment to deliver the vision and mission of the organisation.

To manage performance, attract and retain talent, initiatives including salary reviews and compensation benchmarking, staff promotions, engagement and 'pulse' surveys, together with action planning on results, compensation increases and awards, improvements to performance management, 360-degree leadership assessments, and monitoring of results vis-à-vis established scorecards, are among the ongoing measures being implemented by the Secretariat.

Monitoring our staff's engagement with IUCN. How staff feel about working at the IUCN Secretariat is assessed through extensive staff surveys as well as 'pulse' surveys. The 2019 Pulse Survey was benchmarked not only against the earlier 2017 Pulse Survey, but also against 60 other international NGOs and International Organisations, allowing IUCN to determine how the organisation is faring internally and in comparison with staff engagement in other organisations. The 2019 Pulse Survey achieved a 96% response rate from staff, the highest since global surveys were instituted. The top strengths and improvement opportunities (i.e. questions with the lowest scores) are highlighted here:

Strengths:

- 94% of staff showed an overall positive response on being proud to work with IUCN and believing in IUCN's mission (3 points higher when compared to benchmark organisations);
- 89% overall positive response of staff who said they looked forward to going to work (3 points higher than the previous Pulse Survey);
- 80% overall positive response of staff who said they would recommend to others that IUCN is a good place to work (4 points higher than the previous Pulse Survey).

Improvement opportunities:

- Only 50% of staff were satisfied with how IUCN recognises staff performance;
- 67% of staff had an overall positive response to senior leaders acting as effective role models (9% had an overall negative response);
- 73% of staff had an overall positive response to their own unit heads acting as effective role models (9% had an overall negative response).

Reinforcing professional ethics and safeguards. Equally important to note is IUCN's drive to enforce the Code of Conduct and Professional Ethics to safeguard staff members from harassment through the launch, in 2019, of the IUCN Policy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment. This was followed by a Secretariat-wide video awareness campaign that clearly communicated IUCN's 'zero tolerance' policy of harassment in the working environment, and a sexual harassment quiz that was introduced for all line managers. With effect from 2018, IUCN also promotes International Anti-Corruption Day and International Fraud Awareness Week as means of sensitising staff in general, and management in particular, to these issues.

3.3.2 Management and leadership

Director General. Three management changes at the highest level took place during the quadrennium. Ms Inger Anderson was Director General between January 2015 and May 2019, after which Dr Grethel Aguilar, IUCN's Regional Director for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, was appointed as Acting Director General until the appointment of Dr Bruno Oberle as IUCN's new Director General in July 2020.

Secretariat leadership. Since stepping in the Director General position, Dr Bruno Oberle has made a number of changes aimed at improving integration and coherence across the global one Secretariat and bringing efficiency at the heart of IUCN's operations. Following reflection on the managerial challenges of the Secretariat, it became apparent that there are three key different skill sets and knowledge required to lead the global Secretariat – Thematic, Regional and Corporate – each of these is now headed by a Deputy Director General (DDG). The Director General, three DDGs and the Chief Financial Officer now form the top leadership team, which meets on a weekly basis.

Underpinned by the objective to improve efficiency practices, the Secretariat is currently undergoing a review of its global presence to ensure the current map of IUCN offices is fit for purpose in the context of a fast-paced world. In addition, the current three global thematic programme groups: Biodiversity Conservation Group; Nature-based Solutions Group; and Programme and Policy Group are undergoing a merger process to address some of the current inefficiencies and to increase consistency with respect to technical work. The merger is expected to be completed by early 2022.

Wielding influence beyond the conservation world. The Directors General of IUCN, between 2015 and 2020, served on a number of advisory boards (or equivalents), including the 2030 Water Resources Group, the Global Green Growth Forum (3GF), Eco Forum Global (EFG), the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All), UN Global Compact, and Nespresso Sustainability Advisory Board. These engagements helped to leverage IUCN's influence and to push the conservation and sustainability message in a number of key networks and fora.

COVID-19 and crisis management. IUCN, as with all other organisations around the globe, also saw rapid implementation of changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretariat took a number of proactive and timely response actions, including establishment of an Emergency Team and issuing of various tools, notices and measures to ensure staff health, safety and well-being. With the great majority of the Secretariat's workforce compelled to adapt to new and different ways of working, IUCN afforded the necessary support to all staff members to enable everyone to work remotely (from home or other appropriate locations) and introduced flexible work arrangements. Through active planning and preparation, the Union was able to activate the global Business Continuity Plan.

3.3.3 Financial management

IUCN ended the 2017–2020 quadrennium with a CHF 1 million deficit. The forecasted CHF 2 million surplus was not achieved due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 5 shows the summary of financial results for the period 2017 to 2020 compared with the Financial Plan approved by the 2016 Congress. IUCN achieved a surplus in 2017, a deficit in 2018, a break-even result in 2019, and a deficit in 2020. Total expenditure was relatively constant over the four-year period, ranging from CHF 111 million to CHF 126 million per annum.

Table 5. Actual income and expenditure versus Financial Plan 2017–2020

	2017		2018		2019		2020		Total 2017-2020		Variance
	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	
	CHF m	CHF m	CHF m	CHF m	CHF m	CHF m	CHF m	CHF m	CHF m	CHF m	CHF m
Unrestricted income and expenditure											
Unrestricted income											
Membership dues	12	12	13	13	13	13	13	13	51	51	0
Framework income	12	12	11	10	12	10	12	10	47	42	5
Other unrestricted income	6	5	8	5	7	6	7	6	28	22	6
Total unrestricted income	30	29	32	28	32	29	32	29	126	115	11
Unrestricted expenditure	29	29	33	28	32	28	33	28	127	113	14
Surplus/(deficit)	1	0	-1	0	0	1	-1	1	-1	2	-3
Restricted income and expenditure											
Restricted income	95	104	93	109	89	120	78	129	355	462	-107
Restricted expenditure	95	104	93	109	89	120	78	129	355	462	-107
Surplus/(deficit)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total income and expenditure											
Total income	125	133	125	137	121	149	110	158	481	577	-96
Total expenditure	124	133	126	137	121	148	111	157	482	575	-93
Surplus/(deficit)	1	0	-1	0	0	1	-1	1	-1	2	-3

Figure 8 below shows actual unrestricted and restricted income, compared with the 2017–2020 Financial Plan. Unrestricted income was in line with planning. However, restricted income was well below plan. A growing project portfolio was not translated into higher levels of expenditure during the quadrennium. The COVID-19 emergency has also impacted expenditure levels as some project activities have had to be postponed. Significant expenditure increases are, however, expected over the course of the next programme period as the pace of implementation increases.

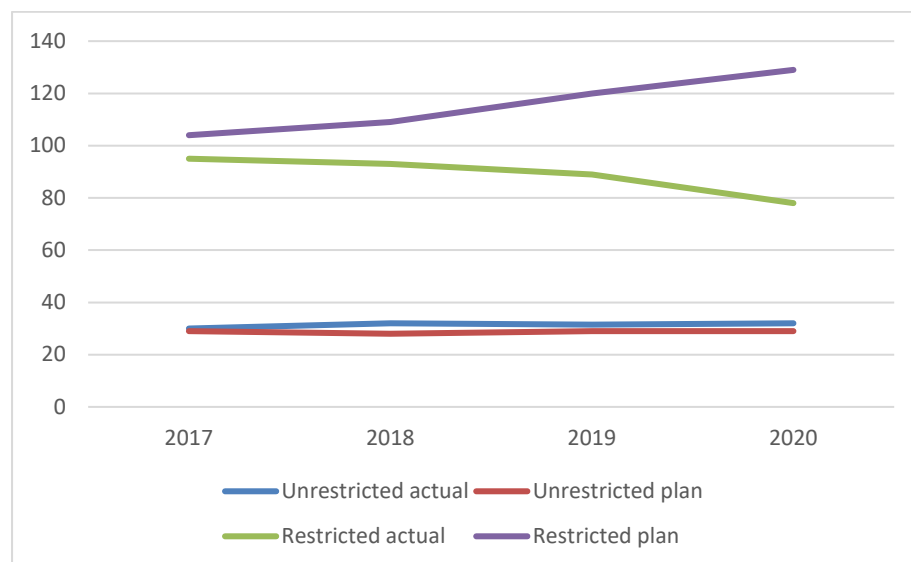


Figure 8. Unrestricted and restricted income versus plan

IUCN's unrestricted reserves declined over the four-year period, from CHF 19.5 million at the end of 2016, to CHF 15.1 million at the end of 2020. The reduction reflects the deficit experiences over the four-year period, foreign exchange adjustments resulting from the revaluation of country-office balance sheets into Swiss francs, reflecting the strengthening of the Swiss franc against most other global currencies over the period, and also as a result of allocations to designated reserves. IUCN reserves could be further impacted by financial losses resulting from the postponement of the IUCN Congress 2020.

The 2020 reserves total of CHF 17.6 million comprises CHF 15.1 million in unrestricted reserves and CHF 2.5 million in designated reserves.

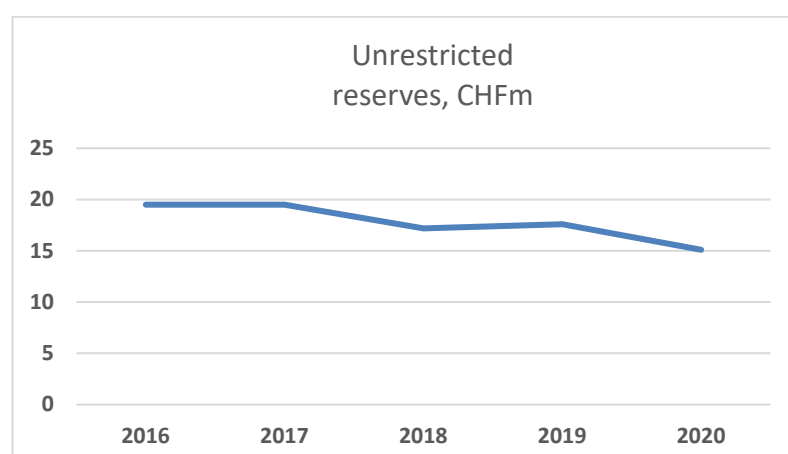


Figure 9. IUCN reserves

Looking ahead. It is important to note that the current business model of IUCN provides little opportunity for generating surpluses and building reserves which are necessary to manage risks and contingencies. While the growth in the portfolio represents an opportunity to implement IUCN's 2021-2024 Programme, it also increases risks, which need to be balanced by an increase in reserves. The

yearly planning and budgeting process is the backbone of the Secretariat's management system, and as such, the Secretariat has commenced a change process with the objective of strengthening the institution and improving its financial health. The aim is to move away from providing general resource allocations to a more strategic allocation mechanism, alongside a more programmatically optimal use of project funding. The new planning and budgeting process will also allow for a fully transparent resource allocation, whereby membership dues are utilised solely for activities that service the members, and framework funds – for innovation and other organisational development needs.

3.3.4 Resource mobilisation

During the period 2017–2020, IUCN continued to make great strides in growing and diversifying its project portfolio from CHF 304M at the start of 2017 to CHF 520M in 2020.

OECD donors remain the largest source of income. Official Development Assistance (ODA) remained IUCN's main source of funding through the provision of unrestricted income (provided by IUCN's Framework Partners) and restricted income for projects and programmes from bilateral government agencies (mostly from OECD DAC countries) and multilateral agencies. Income from bilateral agencies formed the largest share, representing 46% of total annual income during the period 2016–2020, followed by multilateral funding (23%). The latter saw an increase towards the end of the intersessional period due largely to IUCN's role as an accredited agency under both the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Income from foundations and the private sector remained stable, representing 8% and 3% respectively of IUCN's annual income over the past four years.

Framework Partners. These partnerships remain essential for IUCN's operations and its capacity to implement the Programme and develop the Union. Although membership dues represent an important part of IUCN's income, given their unrestricted nature, the other main source of non-earmarked funding is through Framework Partnerships that provide multi-year core contributions to support implementation of the IUCN Programme. Individual annual Framework contributions ranged from CHF 0.4 million to CHF 4.5 million (see Table 6). In addition to core funding, IUCN's Framework Partners also provide significant earmarked project and programme funding.

Table 6. Framework Agreements renewed during the period 2017–2020

Finland	Multi-year agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
France	Multi-year agreement with the French Development Agency, Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Ministry for Overseas Territories, Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The agreement includes both core and project funding as well as providing seven senior secondments to IUCN.
Norway	Multi-year agreement renewed with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).
Republic of Korea	Multi-year Framework Agreement with the Ministry of the Environment. The agreement includes core programme support as well as restricted support and provides a senior secondment to IUCN.
Sweden	Multi-year agreement renewed with Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).
Switzerland	Multi-year agreement renewed with Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).
USA	Annual Voluntary contribution received from the US State Department.

Significant shifts in donor policies and priorities. Donor shifts in priorities and trends to move away from unrestricted support to restricted programmatic funding led to the loss of two Framework Partners at the end of 2016 and 2017 (Denmark and MAVA) as well as to reductions in the level of anticipated core funding provided by Finland and Switzerland, while Sweden increased its core contribution. The Swiss franc appreciated by approximately 10% against other European currencies over the four-year period, negatively impacting total framework funding. Overall, this led to reduction in Framework funding from CHF 13.6M in 2016 to CHF 12.1M in 2020. Denmark re-joined as a Framework Partner in December 2020 leading to increased Framework Funding from 2021 onwards.

Having continually observed shifts in the donor landscape over the last decade, IUCN envisages itself becoming not only less dependent on Framework Partner funding, but also institutionally and financially more stable, while at the same time being able to reach beyond its immediate conservation constituency to maximise One Programme delivery. Achieving this is a challenge that will be addressed through a resource mobilisation chapter within IUCN's Operational Management Plan 2021–2024.

Growing and diversifying the Union's income base through building strong and sustainable partnerships has long been a strategic goal. During the quadrennium, IUCN was able to build broad strategic engagements with key partners and donors, such as the European Commission and the German development bank Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), renewing a three-year collaborative partnership, and with the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund. By 2020, the European Commission was IUCN's single largest donor with a portfolio of over CHF 120 million.

New agreements were signed with foundations based in Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America, to support IUCN's work on species conservation, plastics, oceans, disaster risk reduction, restoration, protected areas, water and agriculture. The MAVA Foundation remained IUCN's largest philanthropic partner and has been instrumental in supporting IUCN as a knowledge provider, through the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, the Red List of Ecosystems, and the IUCN World Heritage Outlook, the first global assessment of natural World Heritage sites.

IUCN's engagement with the private sector remains primarily focused on programmatic engagement. Private-sector engagement focused mostly on changing business practices by working with companies and key sectors to identify their impacts on biodiversity and to create innovative solutions, while a smaller portion of private-sector support was provided through donations and sponsorship, mostly for species conservation. The value of the portfolio funded by the private sector was on average CHF 15 million.

Project portfolio. IUCN's project portfolio has shown steady growth from a total of CHF 304 million in 2016, to a level of CHF 520 million in 2020, as shown in Figure 10 below. This considers both the portfolios managed from HQ and from the regions. During this quadrennium, IUCN made a concerted effort to increase its average project size and continued strengthening its relationship with funding sources that work at scale by incorporating grant-making mechanisms. The total value of projects contracted above a threshold of CHF 5 million therefore increased during this period. The changing composition of the portfolio reflects IUCN's increased role as an implementing agency, as well as growing donor confidence in IUCN's ability to design large, multi-year programmes that support the delivery of the SDGs and the broader 2030 agenda.

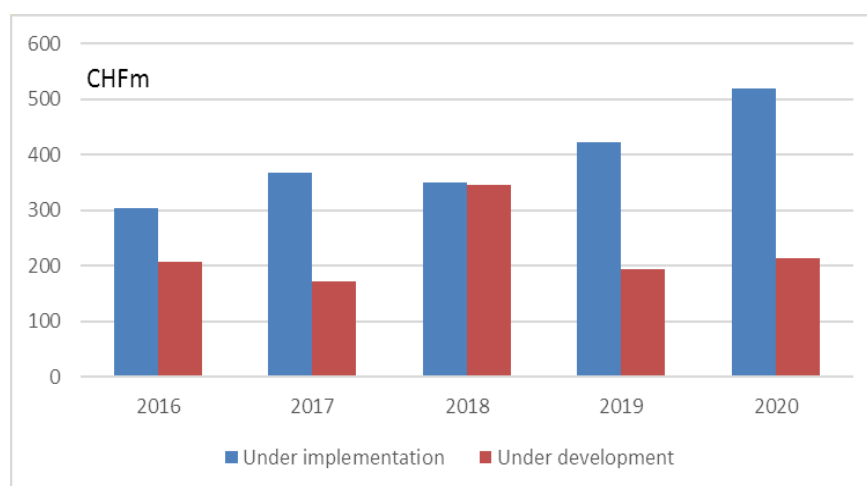


Figure 10. Overall value (CHF millions) of IUCN project portfolio – all donors

Major resource mobilisation achievements include:

- BIOPAMA II – A six-year programme, supported by the European Commission, which aims to improve the long-term conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, in protected areas and surrounding communities. Total value: CHF 48 million.
- A regional programme 'Landscape and Integrated Water Resources Management in Eastern Africa' – supported by the Government of the Netherlands (CHF 12 million).
- The signing of two large agreements for projects in West Africa for Forest and Mangrove conservation as well as Protected Area Management – supported by the European Commission (CHF 19 million).
- A number of large projects signed with KfW/BMZ, including:
 - Linking the Central American Landscape – a CHF 22 million regional initiative;
 - Transfrontier Conservation Area Financing Facility for Southern Africa – an initial grant of CHF 13 million was provided with a view to leveraging additional funds to reach EUR 100 million in the medium to long term for conservation and management action in Southern Africa;
 - Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (CHF 13 million).
- Regional Coastal Biodiversity Programme – supported by USAID (CHF 9.5 million).
- Two large projects on Coastal Resilience in Mozambique and a Regional Partnership on Water in Central and West Africa – supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (CHF 13 million).
- Two global initiatives to address marine plastic pollution in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Pacific SIDS – supported by the Governments of Sweden and Norway (CHF 10 million).
- West Africa Coastal Areas Management Programme (WACA) – supported by the World Bank (CHF 8.5 million)

Growing GEF and GCF portfolios. The relationship with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) has been significantly strengthened now that IUCN is seen as a credible supplier of projects. The increases in resource mobilisation have therefore been driven primarily by the growth in IUCN's GEF and GCF portfolios. Since taking on the role of GEF Project Agency in 2014 and becoming a GCF Accredited Entity in 2016, IUCN has developed GEF/GCF project portfolios with an estimated value in excess of USD 236 million (combining grant and co-financing amounts). The growth trends from 2017 for both GEF and GCF portfolios are shown in Table 7.

IUCN's GEF/GCF portfolios are supporting Members in Africa, Asia, Central America, Eastern Europe, the Middle-East, and Oceania. Projects are prepared at the request of, and endorsed by, governments (often State Members) and in close collaboration with the GEF and GCF Secretariats. Both portfolios have spearheaded the development of synergies and collaborations with other agencies in the specific contexts of FLR, indigenous peoples, land restoration, and both coastal and freshwater resources management. Both are predominantly focused on applying landscapes approaches to environmental threats or climate change issues and have a strong emphasis on mobilising the private sector in providing solutions and sustainable initiatives.

Through its GEF accreditation, IUCN is also eligible to the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), both for supporting climate change adaptation needs of beneficiary countries. By the end of 2020, it had one project (USD 5 million) under implementation and two projects in the pipeline (USD 7.2 million).

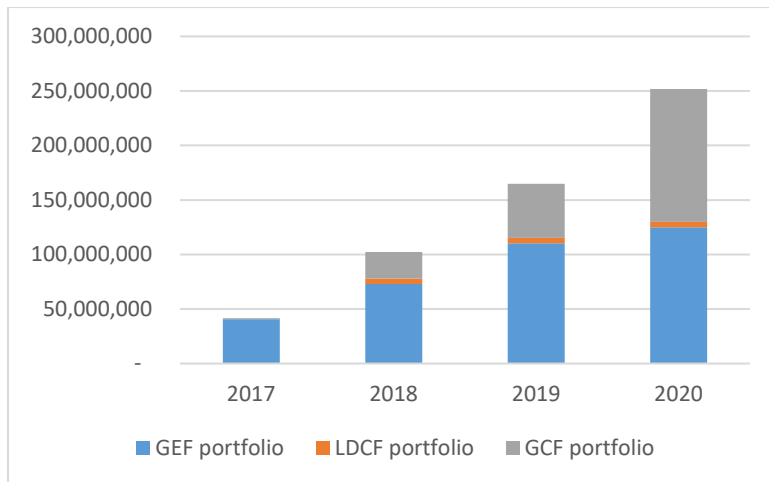


Figure 11. Overall value (CHF millions) of IUCN project portfolio – with GEF/LDCF/GCF component

Table 7. GEF/GCF portfolio 2017–2020. Only GEF, LDCF and GCF funding is shown (no co-financing values)

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of GEF projects	11	18	24	34
Total GEF grants (USD)	40,572,761	72,995,991	110,115,990	147,628,398
Number of LDCF projects	0	1	1	2
Total LDCF funds (USD)	0	5,000,000	5,000,000	6,299,998
Number of GCF projects	3	4	6	7
Total GCF grants (USD)	900,000	24,441,000	49,740,698	141,414,435

3.3.5 Upgrading policies, procedures and guidelines, IT infrastructure and systems

Minor amendments were made to IUCN's **Procurement Policy** to clarify and highlight frequently encountered problems, such as the applicability of the Policy to contract extensions and ongoing contracts, including office lease agreements. The latest revision was issued in February 2018. In addition, a new Policy for Selection of Implementing Partners and Grant Recipients came into effect in March 2020. This aims to ensure that Implementing Partners for IUCN's projects are duly vetted and their inclusion in a project proposal is both justified and approved.

Since February 2019, the IUCN Secretariat has new **global travel insurance** provision, which also includes travel safety advice and monitoring. This further improves IUCN's ability to respond to health and safety incidences and to fulfil our duty of care to our staff. A new IUCN **Travel Policy** for non-staff was introduced in April 2019 to clarify particular requirements and allowances pertaining to IUCN-funded travel by individuals who are not employed by IUCN, such as consultants and conference participants.

IUCN updated its **Time Management Policy** to coincide with the global rollout of the **Time Management System**. This system, which is fully integrated with the HR and finance systems, provides an efficient tool for recording and managing staff time. It also improves resource planning as well as compliance with donor reporting requirements.

As part of IUCN's increased focus on risk management, a foreign exchange hedging strategy was introduced. In addition, work to implement a global banking strategy and e-banking platform to increase efficiency and control across all IUCN offices is underway.

A new project budgeting framework has been developed to drive consistency in budget development and to ensure that project budgets accurately reflect the full costs of project implementation, including the environmental and social safeguards, monitoring and evaluation, and risk management.

In relation to project management, several improvements were made:

- The Programme and Project Portal, launched in 2016, was implemented to ensure that all IUCN projects are managed in a common way and visible globally.
- The Project Appraisal and Approval System (PAAS), which is applied to all Secretariat projects, was taken online in 2019. This offers a modernised user experience for project managers and eliminates the need for paper-based project screening and approval throughout the project cycle.
- Updates and upgrades were made to IUCN's Project Guidelines and Standards, such as the inclusion of new project types, among them services agreements, and simplified procedures for the project concept phase.

During this quadrennium, IUCN continued to invest in information systems. The deployment of IUCN's **Information Systems Strategy** (approved in 2015) has progressed well and as planned, and all external IT audit points have been closed to satisfaction. Investments made have resulted in common technology infrastructure, supporting systems and applications, and standard global processes, now being in place across the global Secretariat. This has resulted in increased operational efficiency and a more secure operating environment, through improved staff productivity, reduced procurement and support costs, higher security standards and improved resilience against disruption events.

Other main achievements include:

- Implementation of a Commission system to manage efficiently the key processes of the six Commissions around standard processes.
- Upgrading of our main financial system (NAV) in 2019 – the first upgrade since the system's initial implementation in 2011. The upgrade provides new functionalities and an updated user interface, thereby improving key processes. The new version will extend the system's life by at least five years.
- Successful improvement and testing of IUCN cybersecurity protections using an external firm at the end of 2019. Processes are now in place for efficient tackling of security events.
- Implementation of a global Service Portal has been to handle efficiently all Information Systems (IS) incidents and has been expanded to other teams, such as Global Communications and Global Programme Operations Unit (GPOU).
- Application of additional modernisation of procedures and practices, including online availability of salary slips and the use of DocuSign at headquarters for electronic document signature.

3.3.6 Communications

After a major overhauling of IUCN's communications, efforts are paying off. Since 2017, IUCN has revamped its website content and significantly revised and reformatted its corporate Annual Report. It has also revised its Communications Strategy and in 2018 completed the preparation of a series of derivative strategies (covering content, media relations and social media). In addition, many communications standards and tools were revised in 2017, namely the website governance policy, media relations policy, writing for the web, IUCN style guide, and social media policy. The photo policy has yet to be updated.

The Global Communications Unit (GCU) has also increased its focus on policy-related communications and has launched a new series of Issues Briefs to help communicate IUCN work to informed, non-expert audiences. In an effort to increase awareness of IUCN's contribution to the SDGs, GCU has realigned its top-line messaging and is working to reach specific stakeholder audiences. It has also started producing a series of outputs to communicate how IUCN's work is aligned with global societal challenges, such as food security, climate change and poverty reduction (for example a [brochure on IUCN and the SDGs](#)) and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2019 and 2020, IUCN launched its campaign to promote the IUCN World Conservation Congress through media, IUCN Members, and potential participants and sponsors, a new IUCN Congress website, content marketing, and two promotional videos that reached 2.65 million views. IUCN's media relations efforts resulted in some 150,000 articles mentioning IUCN, and social media reached over 26 million people. Twitter engagement outperformed industry benchmarks by 33%, and Twitter and Facebook audiences grew by 37.4% and 11.3% respectively, compared to 2018. IUCN's website

received an average of over 9.2 million page views each year, a 27% increase from 2018. IUCN Issues Briefs – plain-language summaries explaining complex conservation issues – were the most-accessed web content, with nearly 1.3 million views, an average of 460% more each year over 2018.

3.3.7 Reviewing, monitoring and assessing our performance

From 2017 to 2020, IUCN undertook over 50 evaluations and reviews (terms which are synonymous with each other), ranging from small projects to large multi-country initiatives and strategic reviews of IUCN programmes, most of which were undertaken by external teams under the supervision of either the Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit at headquarters or by Regional Offices. The evaluation function in IUCN plays the role of providing evidence for sound decision-making on change, and an increasing number of M&E officers are being recruited to form part of large projects and programmes, in particular those funded by GEF and GCF.

Reviews of IUCN's donor-funded projects and programmes, and strategic engagements, undertaken in the period 2017–2020 are accessible via [IUCN's Evaluation Database](#) on its main website (under Resources).

3.4 One Programme approach

An increasing trend in One Programme engagement. In 2020, 63% of Secretariat projects reported involvement with constituencies of the Union. A substantive area of One Programme engagement and delivery relates to the development and application of IUCN knowledge products such as the Red List of Threatened Species™, the Red List of Ecosystems, for which Members and Commission experts are significantly engaged. However, this major area of activity is, at the moment, only tracked in the Project Portal when activities are directly associated with Secretariat-managed projects, which does not capture the significant direct input from IUCN Commission members and several IUCN Members.

Over the last four years the nature of the IUCN project portfolio has shifted significantly as IUCN builds and now begins to implement major transformative initiatives as an accredited agency to both the GEF and GCF. This has major positive implications for the One Programme engagement as the IUCN Secretariat assumes a broader oversight role to guide the implementation of these initiatives, creating the space for IUCN Members to assume a more direct execution role in terms of hands-on delivery. The same trend also exists in IUCN's growing role in the management of re-granting instruments such as BEST, BIOPAMA, the EbA fund and most recently the GEF-supported innovative Inclusive Conservation Initiative which facilitates direct re-granting to indigenous peoples' organisations.

Table 8. Number (*) and % of active projects in 2017–2020 that engage Members, Commissions and Committees

	N° and % in 2017		N° and % in 2018		N° and % in 2019		N° and % in 2020	
Total projects	421	100%	446	100%	478	100%	463	100%
Projects with Members	177	42%	213	47.8%	192	40%	185	40%
Projects with Commissions	96	22.8%	104	23.3%	100	21%	90	19%
Projects with Reg./Nat Committees	9	2.1%	12	2.7%	25	5%	19	4%

Source: IUCN Project Portal, March 2021.

Remaining responsive. Joint actions by the IUCN Secretariat, Commissions and Members is an increasingly common feature across numerous aspects of IUCN's work. These can range from rapid reactions to produce unified messages, such as the [IUCN statement on the COVID-19 pandemic](#), to joint planning, fundraising and advice for advancing the implementation of specific policies and frameworks, fomenting the uptake of IUCN knowledge and executing actions on the ground that lead to positive change.

As part of its engagement with Members, the Secretariat responds to regular requests from State and Government Agency Members to support the development of large-scale initiatives under the GCF and GEF and to strengthen their policy engagement, including their contributions to global policy processes

and negotiations. Under the IUCN Programme, the Secretariat has strongly supported the improved planning and management of landscapes and seascapes, including restoration initiatives, biodiversity conservation, and climate-change resilience and mitigation actions, including NbS integration. A key part of IUCN's support to governments has included harnessing investment opportunities that create incentives to strengthen environmental sustainability, including job opportunities, biodiversity benefits, and climate-change resilience of value chains and productive uses of landscapes.

Members demonstrated their engagement with IUCN and the importance they place on IUCN's role as a neutral convening platform, by playing a fundamental part in the organisation of, and participation in, the 11 IUCN Regional Conservation Fora that took place across the world between May and November 2019. In addition to a number of high-level meetings, these Fora also allowed for matters of regional importance, the IUCN Programme 2021–2024, the preparation of motions and the next session of the IUCN World Conservation Congress to be discussed.

3.5 Patrons and Ambassadors

In 2010 IUCN launched two complementary initiatives to engage prominent individuals: Patrons of Nature, aimed at accessing additional networks of influence and funding, and Goodwill Ambassadors, aimed at raising visibility and awareness among a wider audience.

Patrons of Nature underwent a shift after 2016 by which newly joining Patrons were requested to make both a financial and a time commitment to IUCN, while IUCN sought to increase its communication efforts for and with the Patrons, and ensure a more systematic engagement of Patrons in IUCN's programmatic work. As a result of a proactive recruitment campaign, the group now consists of six honorary Patrons and 13 Patrons who contribute USD 1 million per year to IUCN's unrestricted income (see below). In honour of IUCN's 70th anniversary, the Patrons pledged to scale-up their engagement to address IUCN's global priorities, namely species extinction, climate change, water scarcity, deforestation and ocean acidification. Indeed, there are today ongoing efforts and budding partnerships for joint work on species and ocean conservation, for highlighting the crucial role of nature in achieving the SDGs, and for assisting certain countries in their ecosystem restoration efforts after the devastating wildfires of 2019. For the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, Prince Albert II of Monaco, in his role as IUCN Patron of Nature, has agreed to act as a Special Advocate for the Ocean to emphasise the urgent need for action in this critical time for nature. The Patrons will be actively deployed and visible throughout the days of the Forum, where IUCN also hopes to cultivate and recruit new Patrons of Nature for the coming quadrennium and beyond. More information on the IUCN Patrons of Nature can be found on the IUCN website, [here](#).

Goodwill Ambassadors. The objective of the Goodwill Ambassador Initiative is to invite internationally well-known and environmentally credible personalities to promote IUCN's message to wider audiences, with the specific objective of raising the visibility of IUCN in the run-up to IUCN World Conservation Congresses. Achieving this objective has proven to be challenging due to IUCN's somewhat limited capacity, budget and 'celebrity appeal'. As of end-2020, IUCN has four Goodwill Ambassadors – for more information, please visit the IUCN website, [here](#).

3.6 External reviews (2018 and 2020)

External Reviews have been a key element of IUCN's change management agenda since 1991, occurring every four years at the request of IUCN's Framework Partners. The outcomes of these periodic assessments are an important ingredient in the renewal of framework agreements.

Review of IUCN's governance. In June 2018, IUCN commissioned an external governance review, in conformity with its commitment to do so every four years. The objective of this participatory review was to contribute to continued improvements in the effectiveness of IUCN's governance structures, processes and functions, including Council's role and responsibilities, and to provide recommendations to ensure alignment of IUCN's governance with global best practice. The Management Response to

this review, developed by Council's Governance and Constituency Committee in 2019, and adopted by Council in February 2020, is currently being implemented.

The review of IUCN's governance is a strategic exercise and its recommendations are of strategic importance. The review has identified a number of weaknesses in the governance of the Union and the Director General stands ready to work closely with Council to improve the current governance structures, processes and functions. Adapting to the challenges of the decades to come, the Secretariat will continue to support the growth and strengthening of the Union.

Review of IUCN's Programme 2017–2020. The 2015 external review of IUCN's Programme focused on specific strategic aspects of IUCN, such as its niche, knowledge products, Commissions and organisational fitness for purpose. The findings and conclusions of this review fed into the design of the 2017–2020 Programme. The review commissioned in 2020 took a different approach, since its objective was to evaluate overall performance in implementing the IUCN Programme 2017–2020 to ensure accountability of IUCN towards its Members, donors and other stakeholders. This review was also intended to provide lessons learned and generated recommendations to enhance effective implementation of the Programme 2021–2024. The Management Response to the review was developed by IUCN's senior management and approved by the new Director General in August 2020. The main issues highlighted refer to boosting IUCN's monitoring and evaluation capacity and culture, and the need to shift towards systemic learning and innovation, resource mobilisation, and reaffirming the gender dimension and social inclusion in IUCN's work.

3.7 Preparing the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020

Crucial decisions. IUCN's Council decided, at its 94th meeting (April/May 2018) to hold the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020 in Marseille, France. The host country offered all the goods and services required for the Congress, at Parc Chanot, and has shown unwavering support for the event since signing the host country agreement in 2018. Convening the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020 in France has considerable symbolism, since the Union was originally established in France, in the town of Fontainebleau, in 1948. In light of the COVID-19 situation, the IUCN Council and the French Government jointly took the difficult decision to postpone the Congress from June 2020 to January 2021; a second postponement, to September 2021 was decided thereafter. Nevertheless, the commitment to delivering an impactful Congress did not change and remained in line with the words of President Macron at the UN General Assembly in September 2019: *"The fight for biodiversity, too, will be the focus of major meetings in 2020, with the International Union for Conservation of Nature World Conservation Congress in France and the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Beijing. We need clear actions to be taken by 2020"*.

Open to the general public. Thanks to the French Government, this IUCN Congress has, for the first time ever, an entire area specially dedicated to the general public: the *Nature Generation Area*. This area, which has been re-designed to take into account of social distancing requirements, is intended as a place where visitors will learn about biodiversity issues, take part in activities aimed at conserving biodiversity, and gain understanding of biodiversity restoration, in line with Congress themes. It has been conceived not simply as a series of stands, but rather as a place for innovative, creative and fun experiences. The Nature Generation Area, which will be free of entry charges, will include workshops, screenings, games and sporting activities. Visitors can also purchase Congress day-passes in order to participate in official events.



Strategic focus. Seven themes were chosen for this IUCN World Conservation Congress due their global relevance and strategic importance for the conservation community and the sustainable development agenda: 1). Managing landscapes for nature and people; 2). Conserving freshwater to sustain life 3). Restoring ocean health; 4). Accelerating climate change mitigation and adaptation; 5).

Upholding rights, ensuring effective and equitable governance; 6). Leveraging economic and financial systems for sustainability; and 7). Advancing knowledge, learning, innovation and technology.

To ensure succinct and clear messages are communicated to the Union's stakeholders and global constituencies, these themes will coalesce around three key outcomes: Post-COVID nature-based recovery; Post-2020 agenda and the biodiversity crisis; and the climate emergency.

Forum programme. The Forum at Congress required an immense participatory planning exercise. To define its programme (agenda), a call for proposals, open for over two months (7 May to 17 July), received a record number of nearly 1,450 proposals. As there are only ~350 available slots available, there was only space for one in four of the proposals received, so competition was unavoidable. This reduced number of Forum events was in response to requests made by the IUCN Membership, as part of the evaluation of the 2016 Congress, to have less events taking place simultaneously at the next Congress. Each proposal was reviewed by at least two independent technical reviewers, for which we recruited over 700 volunteer technical reviewers who assessed the proposals on the basis of pre-defined selection criteria. A strategic review, by a 12-member advisory panel representing the Secretariat, the Commissions and the Council, was the last step in determining the selection of proposals for inclusion in the official Forum programme.

Aiming high with four Summits. Another unique feature of this Congress are its four major Summits, each with its own character and expected impact: World Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nature (IP Summit); CEOs Summit; Global Youth Summit; and Local Authorities Summit.

Members' General Assembly. IUCN Council approved, in February 2020, the following strategic topics for discussion at the Members' Assembly:

- Transforming subsidies for nature;
- Building a culture of conservation – values and choices;
- Biodiversity and health in the face of climate change.

Following the postponement of Congress, IUCN Council approved, in April 2021, the following strategic topics for discussion at the Members' Assembly which will contribute to achieving the goals of the IUCN Programme by enabling all constituent parts to better understand current conditions and dynamics, clarify IUCN's role, strengthen their capacity, and mobilise and engage support from internal and external audiences. The three topics have been strengthened by adding a focus on the impact of COVID-19 on conservation:

- Structuring economies in a post COVID-19 world;
- Building a culture of conservation through new alliances and strengthening the agency of key actors;
- The influences of biodiversity loss and climate change on public health.

Improvements to the motions process. Motions, and the resulting Resolutions and Recommendations, are the mechanism by which Members both guide the policy and Programme of IUCN and influence third parties. Since 2016, the motions process has been supported by an online system designed specifically for that purpose. Following feedback received from Members after the 2016 Congress, Council proposed a series of amendments to the Statutes, the Rules of Procedure for the IUCN World Conservation Congress and the Regulations to further improve the motions process. These amendments were approved by Members through an electronic vote conducted in March 2019. The two main changes to the motions process can be summarised as follows:

- More time was provided for the various steps of the process – in particular, submission, online discussion, new and urgent motions;
- The motions process was launched earlier than before, in order to take advantage of the Regional Conservation Fora that took place in 2019.

Of a total of 221 motions submitted, 128 were accepted, including 11 that had been sponsored by IUCN Council and 8 motions that were part of the appeals process. This is IUCN's highest ever figure, and represents an increase of approximately 60% from the Hawai'i Congress. Online discussion of motions took place between December 2019 and March 2020, with 100 volunteers from across the Secretariat facilitating this key step in the process. During this period, Members were able to support motions, express concerns, debate their pros and cons, and suggest edits to the text with the aim of reaching

consensus. Commissions, National and Regional Committees, and the Secretariat were also able to participate through the provision of technical and scientific advice.

The postponement of the Congress from June 2020 to January 2021 triggered a number of changes to the motions process' timeline including new dates of publication of the Motions Working Group's (MWG) decisions specifying which motions were submitted to the electronic vote and which were sent to Marseille for further discussion and vote; publication of the final version of all motions in the three IUCN official languages prior to the electronic vote; an additional online discussion of governance-related motions; and importantly, the electronic vote of motions that took place in October 2020. As a result, the 109 motions put for electronic vote became IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations and immediately after entered into force as part of IUCN's general policy. 19 motions are still pending further discussion before their vote in Marseille alongside 11 governance-related motions.

For further information on the World Conservation Congress, please visit our website: <https://www.iucncongress2020.org/>

4. Looking to the next decade

4.1 The IUCN Programme 2021–2024

A game-changing Programme for IUCN. The IUCN Programme 2021–2024 has a major new feature that sets it aside from previous editions: this Programme calls for the mobilisation of the entire Union, and for the first time, sets its ambition in a decadal timeframe (2021–2030). This high-level and results-orientated Programme embodies the IUCN One Programme Charter and includes and invites contributions from across the IUCN Membership, Commissions and Secretariat to deliver high-impact targets. It represents the first quadrennial piece of a longer-term strategic framework, which aligns with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

This Programme is the result of a fantastic iterative team effort, which began with the preparation of a first draft and its publication for comments in May 2019; continued with fruitful discussions involving over 2000 participants at 11 Regional Conservation Fora for IUCN Members that took place in all IUCN regions between May and November 2019 (see Table 3); benefitted from the online submission of comments and other feedback from various sources; and reached a turning point at the Programme Workshop held at IUCN headquarters in January 2020. Here, fresh ideas on how to integrate the main inputs provided by Members, while also achieving a streamlined, outward-facing and impactful Programme, were deliberated on by regional and global Secretariat staff, Commission members (including several Commission Chairs) and the Chair of the IUCN Council Programme and Policy Committee.

This broad-based process resulted in Council approving the draft IUCN Programme 'Nature 2030' at its meeting in February 2020, and endorsing its onward transmission to Members for consideration and approval during the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020. 'Nature 2030' defines five overarching areas of work and sets aspirational targets, together with indicators to measure success. It will deliver concrete and tangible positive impacts related to **People, Land, Water, Oceans and Climate** using five pathways to transformative change (see Figure 12).

As crosscutting conduits to change, these five pathways will define the actions that enable delivery of the five Programme Areas. They will act as a guiding, organising and convening tool to ensure that the Union's collective actions help drive the transformative shifts required. These calls to action are embedded in the '5Rs': **Recognise, Retain, Restore, Resource and Reconnect** (see Figure 12). Under this new Programme, IUCN interventions will systematically address and incorporate inclusive leadership and partnerships, including with youth, women, indigenous peoples and environmental defenders. Delivering the Programme will be supported by three key enablers necessary to bring about the intended transformations described in the Programme: the application of available technology and data, including innovative uses; the power and outreach of communication, education and public awareness; and the leveraging of investment and sustainable financing.

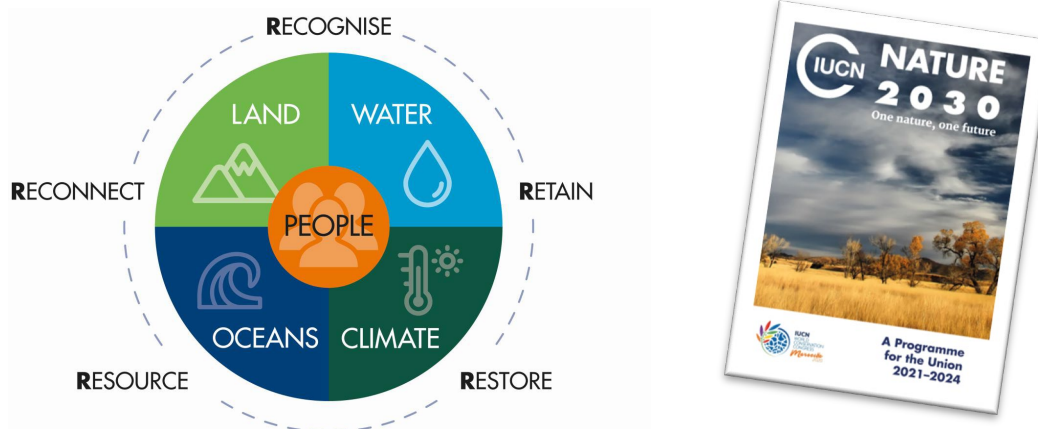


Figure 12. Five Programme Areas driven by five change pathways (5R's) in the “Nature 2030” IUCN Programme

How will we know we have succeeded? This new Programme will oblige the Union to critically assess progress against its Impact Targets, celebrate its achievements and learn from its failures. Since truly transformative outcomes are never achieved alone, and can only result from partnerships and joint actions, we must be ready to recognise all contributions to the achievements of the Impact Targets. For this, IUCN will create a digital platform where all parts of the Union can voluntarily share their contributions and commitments to meeting Programme targets, as well as their commitments against global policy targets such as the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. For this mechanism to work, it must be used, implying that it should also: be as ‘light’ as possible, build on available information, be spatially explicit, be considerate of restrictions and reservations to sharing such information, provide maximal benefits to all users, and yield the most informative documentation possible. Through realising such a platform, we can truly show the strength of our Union.

4.2 One Nature, One Future, One Union

“The future of life on earth depends on the choices we make and the way these decisions are implemented over the coming years.”¹ We are facing a rapid and unprecedented loss of biodiversity and a climate crisis. Global population rates continue to rise, while natural resources continue to be exploited in an unsustainable manner. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that environmental degradation influences public health. It is therefore evermore evident that the challenges that our globalised world faces require collective action internationally and at all levels of society if the future of life on earth is to be safeguarded.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the global economy to shrink by an estimated 3.3% in 2020, and severe long-term economic consequences are predicted. Global fiscal support to stimulate and recover economies has reached USD 16.7 trillion (April 2021). However, nature has been largely neglected in existing stimulus packages, with only USD 56 billion of spending directed towards natural capital measures. This is despite the undisputed fact that nature itself is the foundation for life and prosperity. The decisions taken now regarding how the world will recover from the pandemic will affect our future for decades to come. Embracing this challenge as an opportunity, through the Nature-based Recovery Initiative, IUCN calls on governments to ensure that that investments to aid economic recovery do no additional harm to nature and livelihoods; and at least 10% of the total global recovery investment be directed to initiatives that protect and restore nature. Building on the Dasgupta Review: The Economics of Biodiversity, which demonstrates that the global economy is embedded within nature, it is evident that only through investing in nature will we ever be able to build forward better.

With the urgent need for investments in nature, and for development of globally recognised metrics, indicators and knowledge products which allow all stakeholders to monitor their impacts on nature in a consistent way, IUCN has launched the Finance for Nature Initiative which aims to make the case for nature finance and treating nature as the invaluable asset that it is. The Union has the capability,

¹ Opening line of ‘Nature 2030’ IUCN Programme 2021–2024.

network and knowledge to convene and mobilise the global conservation community to provide standardised data and serve as a knowledge hub on nature and biodiversity.

Building on post-COVID recovery momentum, the timing of the 'Nature 2030' IUCN Programme is impeccable as it comes out with a strong call for mobilisation of the entire Union. We must secure equitable governance of natural resources and ensure that nature's contributions to human health and well-being are recognised – across all sectors. A systemic, global issue such as biodiversity loss and climate change require a global and coordinated response. The Union has the required scientific knowledge from the local to transboundary level and can support decision-makers across sectors to enhance political will. What is more, the IUCN Programme for the first time sets its ambition in a decade long timeframe (2021–2030), in line with United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which further reinforces the fact we are all in it for the long run. Progress will be captured and monitored via the IUCN Contributions for Nature Initiative – a digital platform where all parts of the Union can voluntarily share their contributions and commitments to meeting Programme targets

Communicating the positive contribution of nature on our society allows us to promote the added value of nature in sectors that are considered drivers of biodiversity loss, such as agriculture. Conserving living, biodiverse soils and landscapes can boost yields while helping nature and society. Both farmers and conservationists benefit from fertile soils. In line with the 'Nature 2030' Programme, the IUCN Agriculture and Land Health Initiative aims to guide the growing demands from governments and private sector for viable strategies that support land-based activities and rural livelihoods without compromising biodiversity. IUCN is looking to broaden its engagement with the land-use and agriculture sectors to help restore and maintain critical ecosystem services and the biodiversity upon which food and nutrition security depend. In addition, as the leading authority on nature conservation globally, IUCN already offers a palette of conservation work across the world. As Director General, my ambition is to support the Union in scaling up its CBD engagement and beyond.

The Secretariat is confident in delivering the IUCN 'Nature 2030' Programme and continues to work to secure enhanced political will, committed and innovative partnerships and leadership at all levels to embrace and help implement the changes that are needed across economies and societies to protect our natural world and its contributions to people and livelihoods. The Union is well equipped to support the decision makers in addressing these challenges. Global collective action and at all levels of society is required and it is the Union that will make the change! It is time for a dynamic and inclusive conservation movement, and I am confident that we are the Union that will lead the world in addressing the planetary crisis.