



Documents of the Extraordinary Council Meeting of the IUCN Council by conference call on 28 September 2022

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** Note that for reasons of personal data protection in line with IUCN’s data protection policy, the relevant background papers such as CVs are not published.*

[Compiled by Louise Imbsen, Governance Assistant]

¹ Note that the documents submitted to the Council for consideration may differ from any of these documents subsequently approved by Council, modified as the case may be, and attached to the summary minutes of the Council meeting.



INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

**Extraordinary meeting of the IUCN Council regarding the
“Monetization of IUCN Knowledge Products”**

by conference call on 28 September 2022

Summary Minutes

(Reviewed/approved by IUCN Council members in accordance with Regulation 52)

Attendance: The list of participants is attached hereafter as Annex A

Preliminary note: Purpose, agenda and background documents of the meeting can be viewed [here](#).

Agenda Item 1: Introduction by the President

The President opened the Extraordinary Council meeting that was called by Council members to address concerns on monetizing IUCN Knowledge Products (KPs). She recalled the purpose of the meeting, which was twofold:

- i) Seeking information and clarification from the DG to enable Council to exercise its oversight and strategic direction roles in a constructive manner with regard to IUCN knowledge management and in particular its revenue generation aspects;
- ii) Opportunity for IUCN Council, Commissions and Secretariat to discuss and clarify issues regarding the governance of IUCN Knowledge Products.

The President expressed disappointment that the written response from the DG to the questions raised by Council members who had requested the meeting was only shared two days in advance of the meeting. Council understands the need to mobilise funds for IUCN Knowledge Products, but Council would like to know the strategy, the vision behind it and how it will be enabled to execute its oversight role.

Agenda Item 2. Presentation of the concerns leading to requesting an extraordinary meeting – by a member of the group of Council members requesting the meeting

The Chair of the Programme and Policy Committee (PPC) presented Councillors' concerns on behalf of the PPC and also the Governance and Constituency Committee (GCC) and highlighted that not all Council members had seen the presentation (the slides can be viewed [here](#)) in advance.

The Chair of PPC stressed that knowledge products were key to IUCN. The IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations, Council Decisions and publications of relevance to knowledge management and knowledge products had been well presented in the [document](#) provided by GCC .

The concerns can be summarised in four areas:

- i. Ensuring that Council is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities of strategic direction and oversight (Art. 37 IUCN Statutes), and the issues that the Council must review and decide on, are fully provided to Council. IUCN is a science and knowledge-based organization and knowledge management is at the heart of its Mission which is to “influence” societies. The Principles of Conservation Commons (Principle 1), which IUCN called on all sectors of the international community to endorse, state that “The Conservation Commons promotes free and open access to data, information and knowledge for conservation purposes”.

- ii. General concerns related to overall trends of monetization of Knowledge Products.
The Council understands monetization of Knowledge Products as the establishment of operational models which generate revenues through payment of fees or other forms. Council is concerned this may limit access (including by IUCN Members, Commission members, and the public) to information, publications, etc. produced under the umbrella of IUCN. The chair of PPC highlighted that most Knowledge Products were developed by the volunteers of IUCN Commissions. The Secretariat recruitment for a Head of IUCN Knowledge Management and IUCN Publishing House and the Academy are considered as indicators for a trend towards monetization. Council asks to have detailed information on the governance structure of the key Knowledge Products and the roles of the various components of the Union, and that any proposed changes are brought to Council for discussion and approval.
- iii. Specific concerns related to the IUCN Academy.
Council seeks clarity on the governance structure of the Academy, especially on who takes what decisions (on content, fundraising, pricing, etc.) and the lack of consulting Council. Council criticizes the limited consultations with IUCN constituencies, who developed content that is being considered for the use of the Academy. Therefore, a specific document outlining the strategy for development of the Academy and its business plan should be provided to the Council for discussion and approval.
- iv. Lack of transparency in the process.

In summary, this leads to the following conclusion:

- a. The concerns on monetizing knowledge products raise questions of how Council is consulted on new initiatives and activities being implemented by the Secretariat, and how Council is empowered and enabled to fulfill its obligations and decide on these issues.
- b. The shared responsibilities of the Secretariat, Council, and the Commissions should be recognized as well as the need to ensure the sustainability of IUCN KPs.
- c. Council looks forward to discussion and should consider requesting the DG to develop, for Council approval, a clear strategy on knowledge products within IUCN in support of the implementation of the approved IUCN Programme.

Agenda Item 3. Presentation of the strategy for knowledge management - by the Director General (highlights from the DG's written response to the issues and questions raised)

The DG followed the structure of the submitted document named "DG responses to Council's questions on IUCN Knowledge Products" (*it can be viewed [here](#)*).

The DG highlighted how important this discussion is, as it goes beyond the question of monetizing IUCN Knowledge Products. It is about what is IUCN at its core and what it can become in future, as it touches on the content of IUCN's work and on the financial sustainability of the organisation. The topic is not new, as outlined in the document provided by the Chair of GCC that outlines all Resolutions, Recommendations and Council decisions on knowledge management and knowledge products from the past 22 years. At least six Councils have already discussed this topic. The discussions are twofold: on one side, to offer our knowledge to society and stakeholders in the easiest way for their use and progress; on the other side, having a sustainable financial structure behind it that helps the Union to further develop the basis of knowledge.

One of the main concerns obviously seems to be the monetization of Knowledge Products. The DG's definition of the term monetizing, is based on the Oxford English dictionary: "Monetisation is a) the

conversion of an asset, debt, etc. into cash or a form easily converted into cash; b) the action or process of earning revenue from an asset.” According to this definition, he concluded that he is not monetizing IUCN’s Knowledge Products. He is aware of the IUCN Members’ position and of the legal situation of the Knowledge Products. In many cases, the IUCN Secretariat is not the owner of the products and also from an Intellectual Property perspective, it would be impossible to monetize them.

The DG agreed with the need for a strategy and accepted the Council’s request. He presented the analysis of the IUCN Knowledge Products indicators (IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, KBA (Key Biodiversity Areas), World Database on Protected Areas (Protected Planet) and IBAT) that are outlined in the document. It is key to understand that none of them, except IBAT, are income generating. IBAT is the only Knowledge Product that knew an attempt to be monetized. The costumers pay to access the data. Other types are the Knowledge Products standards, which are the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas and the Nature-based Solutions (NbS).

The Knowledge Products link to the IUCN financial strategy and budget, which is core as the financial strategy recognises two sets of financial challenges. The first is related to the management and delivery of the large project portfolio of the Secretariat¹; the second, a growing demand for services from Members and a growing number of resolutions, which have to be implemented with very limited related income (membership dues)². Details can be read in the DGs response document. Basically, the DG is asked to balance the risks and find new sources of income. To bring in new revenues, diversification is needed. IUCN’s assets are its constituency, presence around the world and its legitimacy. Building on these assets, monetization of the Knowledge Products would be one option of diversification of revenue. If we aim to have the Knowledge Products as public goods, it would need to be at least partly covered by Membership Dues, which are already over stretched by a growing number of demands for services.

DG suggests not to focus on the negative and divisive word “monetisation” but on the concept of “generating value for nature, Members and the Union’s finance”. The Union as a non-for-profit organisation will not use the income generated by its assets to pay shareholders, but to recover the costs of the current work and to reinvest in the Union to adapt to the fast-changing world, and progress as a Union.

DG called on Council to focus on using our assets to generate income. The question was not to monetize, but discussion should focus on how to create new income, amongst other through Knowledge Products. After the reorganisation of the Secretariat in 2021, reflections started on how to achieve this and the process is still in the conceptual phase.

The IUCN President said that all agree that the IUCN Knowledge Products were one of the Union’s *raison d’être* and that they shall support and empower our Members. We recognize that Knowledge Products are not capable of surviving by their own, they need to be managed, invested in and they need to be relevant at the time they are produced and that will need income. The President reiterated that the aim of this meeting was to understand the ideas of the DG on how to create this income.

Agenda Item 4. Discussion on specific risks/issues regarding monetizing knowledge products, the governance of Knowledge Products and the IUCN Academy

[Note: This section groups the questions or remarks made by Councillors on related topics and adds the responses from the DG.]

¹ Implemented to a large extend through IUCN Members.

² See among other: [IUCN External Review 2017-2020](#), commissioned by the Framework Partners. [IUCN Financial Plan 2021-2024](#), adopted by Members by electronic vote in 2021. [Presentation made by the Treasurer](#) of IUCN at Council 107 Agenda Item 2bis: Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021.

Question: In the Financial Plan are references to cost recovery. Would monetization of Knowledge Products mean making profit or just cover the costs?

DG response: The Financial Plan does not specify how we should do the cost recovery. In the DG's opinion it is the cost recovery of what we spend. As IUCN is a Not-for-profit Association according to Swiss Law, every surplus created needs to be reinvested.

Question: Through its online platform, the Academy brings together a wealth of IUCN capacities. However, much of this wealth is developed through the Members' and Commissions' voluntary contribution. Most importantly are to name the NbS Standard and the Red List. In the last Steering Committee of CEM³ a lot of concerns were raised on this matter. It was suggested to have a Member decision on the role of the Academy. The Academy as it stands today has reputational risks for IUCN. The Courses are at a very high cost. One course costs around CHF 4'000, which is very difficult to pay when one has more pressing expenditures. The course lasts for 6 weeks and the certificate only valid for 4 years. Will this contribution from the ones who developed the indicators be accredited or compensated? The Commissions haven't been involved in the development of the courses. Why are there partnerships with the listed universities? We have professors from other universities in the Commission and there is no collaboration with them. Others offer these courses for less fees.

DG response: The Academy is to increase the capacity building. As explained above, the Knowledge Products are one of IUCN's core assets. IUCN is not good enough in promoting them. Around the world, IUCN offers courses here and there in an uncoordinated manner. The main mission of the Academy is to provide a roof for all capacity building activities to improve the quality, efficiency and impact of capacity building activities.

On the structure of the Academy, it is one of the 95 Units in the Secretariat (95 includes all regional and country offices). The objective for this Unit is to be self-sufficient and to deliver a reasonable amount of overhead, like all relevant Units inside the Secretariat.

One additional course on Nature-based Solutions is offered, as this is a space where IUCN should become a stronger actor. We fully recognise that the Standard is delivered by IUCN, and in particular by the Commissions. However, we don't use the Standard itself in the course. We use only for free accessible scientific literature, like the other multilateral organisations, which have another funding model behind, or universities that have used our data, and offer classes at similar prices or a bit higher. Legal verification confirms, there is no regulation preventing the Academy to offer "Professional Certificates", because these are not academic credentials and they have not been presented as such. We have put in place quality assurance processes to guarantee the quality of the programme.

The partnerships with universities are necessary for "thinking support", in terms of pedagogy and dealing with courses. Therefore, the initiative reached out to reputable academic institutions from all continents to support its work. Seven renowned academic institutions accepted the proposal to partner and signed MoUs (a non-binding instrument) with IUCN for this purpose.

Summarizing the concerns that the Commissions were the actors developing part of the content and they were not consulted on how the content is used, also by the Academy, the President called for a greater effort in bringing the Commissions into the thinking and working of the Academy.

General remarks raised by several Councillors: In order to take informed decisions, we need to have access to the information enough time in advance of the Council meeting. Further, more detailed information was expected in response to the questions.

³ The questions and concerns from CEM are attached to the Background and agenda of the meeting (which can be viewed [here](#)).

A Councillor observed that there was currently not a good business model for use of IUCN data and proposed three categories: i) publicly accessible, ii) for producers and users, iii) for those who make money with the data.

DG response: Thanking the Council members, the DG considered these good opportunities, which could be explored together.

Question: Concern about misrepresentation of certain issues in the DG's paper and the way Knowledge Products and their functions were presented. Their impact on conservation has not truly been considered. Also, the concerns on the governance of Knowledge Products and the Academy have not been properly addressed in the paper. There seems to be divergent views between Council and DG, as it's not a simple equation of costs and revenues. IUCN is not a business! The discussion should centre on how the Knowledge Products generate revenue and contribute to the implementation of the IUCN Programme, which is the mandate given by Members. When the DG refers to the assets of the Union, he puts knowledge forward, without mentioning the Commissions. We do not object to ensuring financial sustainability of the Knowledge Products and the Union, but to the way it is done. The DG argues that there is no monetization but issues a vacancy notice that says we want to have IUCN publications generate revenue. Can this be considered anything else than a plan to monetise IUCN publications? This question was raised by IUCN Members who thought Council had agreed to this. Therefore, Council demands a clear strategy on the governance and management of knowledge products. In the meantime, concerned Council members requested suspension of all activities that could be considered monetizing knowledge products or modification of their governance. Councillors asked for a business plan of the Academy. Instead very little information had been shared. Little to no consultation with IUCN Constituencies and Commissions on the model of the Academy, or the use of the content. They would like to know who was consulted and the outcomes of the consultations, and any concerns raised. The implementation of the Academy started without any approval by the Council on the details of its structure, purpose or governance. Additionally, there had been no request for the Academy, neither in any Resolution, nor in the IUCN adopted Programme. The governance of the Academy remained unclear and it seemed to be very Secretariat centric, which goes against the One Programme approach. Strategy and business plan of the Academy needed to be shared with Council for discussion and approval.

DG response: The DG had concentrated on three points raised. The complaint of not having responded to the questions was not justified. The first question was: "What is being proposed or planned in terms of monetizing knowledge products and what are the Knowledge Products concerned by this approach?". The DG's response was clear: "There is currently no proposal to monetise our knowledge products." Question 2 to 8 were therefore referring to the response to question 1. Acknowledging that some Councillors might not agree on the content, the DG considered his responses were clear.

On the publishing house, the DG explained that IUCN used to have a publishing house since its creation until a few years ago. Probably, due to lack of management attention, the position needed to be closed. There was no Council decision to establish the position, nor to close it. The aim of the publishing house is very similar to the Academy. We are producing hundreds of publications in the name of IUCN in an uncoordinated way. Some are assessed through a formal scientific review process, most are released by IUCN Offices or Units without a strategy behind them. The income through publications declined from a couple of CHF 100'000 to zero in this period. The idea of having a specialist publishing house is to bring structure into the publications. According to the DG, some publications were not meeting the quality standard of IUCN. We need to bring order in the publishing house and ensure quality assessments. The vacancy as such is not linked to monetizing IUCN Knowledge Products. Every publishing house, public or private, has two possibilities: either the reader or the author pays to cover the costs. Otherwise, fundraising for this would be needed.

The DG referred to the document for the answers on the questions regarding the Academy and offered to provide more details for the continued discussion if required.

Question: The responses in the document are all about costs and revenues, it doesn't mention benefits for conservation or Members. There is a general ignorance of the role of the Members and the Commissions, the focus of the documents seems to be on Secretariat and its HQ, which is worrisome. The goal of the meeting should be that any monetization should be done in a collaborative manner, with Members and Commissions and that it has a sign-off by Council. The One Programme approach and the general governance of IUCN shall be respected. More focus on the how than on substance is required, how is it designed, in collaboration with whom, for what purpose, and how does it serve the IUCN mission. Monetization as such does not need to be problematic. There are some models that could work, as long as it is done in a careful way. The Academy should go back to the drawing board. I can see the added value of this type of initiatives. It has lot of potential, but there are too many things that are unresolved, unclear and that go against IUCN's mission. Design shall be revisited together with the Members and the Commissions.

DG response: Finance is indeed very present in the DG's document, as its topic is monetization. Fundamentally, the DG agreed with Councillors' comments on starting to think together on how we can monetize, because currently, we are not monetizing.

Question: When reading the responses in the DG document, I don't understand the concerns. If I was to suggest a way to earn money from its reputational expertise, then organising courses in the style of the Academy is exactly what I would suggest. I presume we are not making more money from Members, but from the outside. The professional courses on NbS or Red List, is what I would advise as a consultant. Others, such as the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) and consultants like Prize Waterhouse, are offering courses on IUCN products, making their money based on IUCN products. Let's not allow these consultants to make exorbitant fees, but let's use our expertise. Professional courses are normal to be renewed every three years. It is common to be kept up to date. The answers in that section are rather helpful. It is good to know who got scholarships etc. The main concern seems to be the involvement of the Council. It was launched in Marseille, but without involvement of Council. So, it is a problem of process and not substance.

DG response: The DG said he was also a bit surprised about the questions asked but will take them seriously and accepted to reflect together on a strategy. He added that in his previous experience as a Minister working with Parliament, he was used to present final proposals and not work in progress. But he understood that it required a different approach in IUCN.

General remark: Some Councillors suggested that the DG consult more with Council before working on things that have not been requested by Members.

Question: In terms of process, we need an open and participative dialogue, taking into account the Council, the Commissions and Member Committees. This topic is not only important within IUCN, but also at global level. If we have the process clear, we know which way to take and how to get the information. This allows us to stick to the process.

In terms of content, I'm worried about the monetization of Traditional Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples. Like with all knowledge products, it needs to be clear how we ensure protection that the knowledge is used in a good manner.

The other aspect is benefit sharing of the data used and how it is distributed. There could be a knowledge protocol, indicating who is the holder of the rights of the generated knowledge.

DG response: The DG agreed to start the planning of the further development of the Academy together. Traditional Knowledge could also be offered through the Academy or in another context.

Remark: We should leave this meeting with a clear strategy on how to utilise the IUCN Knowledge Products. That strategy needs to be approved by Council. This also applies to the Academy. The

Academy might be included in IUCN Secretariat for now, but it might become broader. It could support knowledge generation as well as dissemination of knowledge. We need a clear strategy on the Academy and how it links to the Knowledge Products and how the different IUCN constituencies can be part of it. We shall not continue to discuss if the Knowledge Products are monetized or not, but we should move forward on how the Council can take informed decisions based on timely submitted documents. I see the willingness of the DG and his openness to doing that. Let us build on this positive way of cooperation.

The DG agreed and thanked for the remarks.

Remark: The product we call IUCN, is the result of thousands of peoples' work, both in terms of Commission Members and IUCN Members. We need to understand that the DG has a sustainable plan for moving forward, ensuring the Programmes of the whole Union. The Secretariat is always a servant to its parties, which are the Members. Councillors are representing the Members and they are expressing concerns that these constituents don't work well together. GCC Chair shared a document with previous discussions on the topic. It is time to move and have a dialogue in an open manner. Some of this information needs to come to the Council, it is a matter of process. If this is done, Council will assist in making sure that the revenues of these products are in accordance with the Statutes, the Member's decisions and for the benefit of the Union across all constituencies. The revenue-sharing mentioned earlier is interesting too. If revenue is generated, how is it distributed.

The DG agreed and thanked for the remarks.

Question: On the Academy, in the answers provided, it doesn't mention if the capacity-building is across the entire IUCN Secretariat, i.e. only for the HQ or also in the Regional Offices. I see it as an anomaly that the Academy has been established without consultation with Council. Which body within IUCN decided on the development of the Academy in phases? The DG mentioned that some courses already took place, where did the revenues from these classes go? This points to the transparency issues. Many IUCN Members across the African Region support this meeting and expect a proper strategy on how we move forward on IUCN Knowledge Products which IUCN has produced. We hope that the Academy is something that our Members will be looking up to as a way of improving themselves and their work.

DG response: The DG explained that he had taken the decision to establish the IUCN Academy, as, in his mind, it was part of his responsibility to deliver the Programme portfolio. He was unhappy about how the capacity building had been delivered so far. So, he created a Unit to improve this. Once this was done, he hoped to expand its scope beyond the Secretariat portfolio and go in the direction Council is proposing. Councillors' comments were pushing him to move quicker than he was planning. He accepted to reflect together how we can move quicker towards a broader scope of the Academy.

On the question on the financing of the Academy, it comes through the projects. If in a contract of a project, a budget line relates to capacity-building and the Academy supports or delivers this budget line, then the money will be channelled to this unit to execute its work. From all units in the Secretariat, we are expecting a certain degree of overhead in order to generate money to go to the reserves. I'm expecting the same from the Academy. This overhead, if possible, funds all type of activities inside the Secretariat and beyond in a non-specific way. It flows into the budget. The DG added that while visiting and engaging with Members, he also discussed the Academy. In general, the reaction was very positive to the project. The DG did not ask Members' approval, as this is not his role. He also organised meetings with specific groups of Members on topics of the Academy. So, he is in discussion with the Membership on that, as projects are delivered in the Regions of the Members.

On the last question, the Academy is working on the portfolio. So, a large amount of the work of the Academy is not in headquarters, but in the regional offices in order to support them to deliver their work on capacity building.

Question: I would like to zoom out and look at the issue from a strategic perspective on the future of IUCN. I am speaking from FAC perspective, which means long-term and financially. We are living in very uncertain times. When we were planning the financial plan 2020-2024, we didn't know about the pandemic, the war or the economic crisis. All these make it even more important to focus on the sustainability of IUCN. Five years ago, IUCN reserves were about CHF 20 million, now they are around CHF 17 million, but FAC established that we needed at least CHF 25 million reserves to face any contingency for our financial stability. We need reserves for difficult times. In order to get those reserves, we need financial surpluses. If you look at the Financial Plan, we are thinking about the need for investments, for strengthening corporate functions, for strengthening programme development and for carrying out investment to strengthen our work and do more conservation. The plan calls for innovative and new income streams, diversifying, private sector engagement and blended finance. This was just a brainstorming of options, we are not thinking about a mechanism, but rather about the need to start thinking about the long-term financial stability of the Union. This is important in a long-term perspective in a difficult world. We should look at the plans presented and discuss from this strategic and financial stability angle.

I'm slightly concerned, it's one year since Marseille. We need to move from an antagonistic approach to a more constructive and collaborative approach to tackle the issues the world is facing, also in the light of the upcoming CoPs, war, the world going back to coal. We should be thinking about how IUCN can make its voice heard in the current global scene. We need to move towards a more strategic perspective, look at these bigger issues and work towards a more collaborative approach between Secretariat and Council because we only have three more years to deliver.

The President thanked the Council members for bringing the discussion back on track and agreed that this case shouldn't set precedents of calling exceptional Council meetings on topics that don't fall within its priorities. However, as many Council members have said, this was a pressing concern and had been raised time and time again and touches on the very essence of the organisation. Knowledge Products are the service we provide. Any plan on Knowledge Products and the strategy should be brought to Council's attention. So that we can help steering it and be sufficiently engaged.

The DG agreed and thanked for the remarks.

Question: I would like to ask three open questions. First, what can IUCN do to prevent that IUCN Knowledge Products are monetized by others? We should have a proposal ready, as this work is done by the Commissions and Members, supported by Secretariat, but monetized by others. What can we do to maintain the high level of expertise? In every intervention I make on behalf of IUCN, I mention that our work is based on science and expertise. This is what makes the credibility of IUCN. Many domains in which we are intervening are conflictual, like trafficking, smuggling, hunting, poaching. If we don't have our credibility, our interventions lose weight. On the Academy, I'm in favour that we can find a means to make IUCN's work known to other audiences, in other languages than the three official IUCN languages. This should also be addressed to people with hearing or seeing difficulties. We can become more inclusive. This would allow us to also reach out to other people than the experts.

DG response: The DG welcomed other aspects that had not been mentioned before. Indeed, there are many organisations or individuals that take IUCN Knowledge Products and monetize them. We are not able to stop this now, because we don't have an adequate intellectual property right protection and trademarking of our products. We didn't develop these types of tools in the past. He agreed to include this element in the reflections as we discuss our Knowledge Products and how to bring them to the public.

However, the DG also cautioned that some types of inclusion could be very costly.

Question: One of the wonderful things in IUCN is the transparency. I had expected much more action, we have a lot of discussions and only a few outcomes. Many of the Councillors have been teaching at highly respected universities, why not involve them in the restructuring? Commissions and Members

can better contribute than Regional Offices. The Regional Offices are to implement the IUCN One Programme, with which they are already behind schedule. They have their own agenda which they do not always share. Regional Offices are part of the IUCN Secretariat and implement whatever decisions taken. They cannot be movers of educational institutions or knowledge providers. I think we should restructure and bring others on board. The focus shall not lie in monetization, but on knowledge sharing, knowledge preservation and conservation. We need scientific information for conservation. This brings us sustainability for IUCN.

The DG acknowledged this comment considering it in line with the other comments and looked forward to working with Council on these topics.

Agenda Item 5. Closing by the President

The President thanked the Council for the rich discussion and the DG for answering all the questions, and considered this Council meeting as very productive. There was broad support in Council to support the DG and Secretariat in finding ways of ensuring that our Knowledge Products are supported financially and that they reach the Members that we are all here to serve.

A particular concern was the relationship between the Council and the DG. Whilst the DG has a perception of Council as a parliament, the Council understood itself as the body that had been established by the Membership to oversee the work of the Union and the Secretariat. Instead of being antagonistic, the Council is a body of volunteers who believe in the Union and want to progress it. She invited the DG to engage with Council, to empower Council members so that they can support the initiatives that are important for the Union.

The President thanked the Council members who have been very transparent on how they feel and think we should move forward.

We want to be a Council that acts and if we move together with the DG on this exciting process on the future of Knowledge Products, this could be a big achievement of the Council.

She thanked particularly the Chairs and members of the Commissions without whom we would not have been able to talk about the Knowledge Products

[The Council accepted the President's proposal to prepare a draft decision together with the Secretary to Council and send it to Council members for approval by email. The following decision was approved by Council by email on 3 October 2022]

COUNCIL DECISION

The IUCN Council,

Having heard the concerns raised by Council members during the Extraordinary Council meeting of 28 September 2022, regarding the governance of IUCN knowledge products, a perceived trend towards their monetization, and the recently established IUCN Academy,

Having received the Director General's (DG) response both in writing and verbally during the meeting,

Disappointed in the level of transparency on the part of the DG in response to Council's repeated requests for information and clarification on these issues;

Noting Council's responsibilities under Article 37 of the IUCN Statutes for the oversight and general control of all affairs of IUCN, notably setting the strategic direction and policy guidance for the work of the Union, and recalling the DG's obligation to provide the Council with adequate information enabling it to exercise its functions,

Desirous to support the DG with the development of an appropriate model that delivers the financial sustainability of IUCN's knowledge products and the IUCN Academy, in full compliance with IUCN's policies, with the ultimate aim to better service the IUCN Members and components,

Requests the Director General to:

1. develop, by the end of 2022, in time for Council approval at its 108th meeting to be held in person in Abu Dhabi, a strategy on knowledge products, building on the comments and concerns raised by Council members during the Extraordinary Council meeting. Such a strategy should:
 - Present the different knowledge products of IUCN, with a summary of their governance, legal status, use, funder restrictions etc.;
 - Propose a strategy plan supporting the financial sustainability of each product, as well as a clear rationale and intent for the proposed funding approach;
 - Propose a process for consultation with IUCN Members, Commission members, partners, data providers and donors on the proposed plan;
 - Address the roles of the relevant components of the Union in implementing the strategy; and
 - Demonstrate delivery of the approved IUCN Programme.
2. develop, for Council review and endorsement at its 108th meeting, a strategy for the IUCN Academy. This strategy must include details of its intent, how it would contribute to building capacity of IUCN Members, and clarity on the roles of the components of IUCN and partners in its governance and delivery; and
3. put on hold any initiatives related to revenue generation from knowledge products within IUCN, or changes to their governance arrangements, as well as any new initiatives in the context of the IUCN Academy until Council approves the above-mentioned strategies and plans.

Extraordinary Council meeting (virtual) on 28 September 2022

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Apologies are listed in *red*, with a footnote wherever a proxy was designated. At any given time during the meeting on 28 September, 37 of the 38 members of the IUCN Council attended the meeting or were represented by proxy.

PRESIDENT

Ms Susan Lieberman, USA

Ms Razan Al Mubarak, UAE

South and East Asia**TREASURER**

Mr Kazuaki Hoshino, Japan

Mr Nihal Welikala, Sri Lanka and UK

Mr Ma Keping, China

Mr Vivek Menon, India

Ms Hasna Jasimuddin Moudud, Bangladesh

*Mr Jong Soo Yoon, Republic of Korea*³**COMMISSION CHAIRS**Commission on Ecosystem Management

Ms Angela Andrade, Colombia

West Asia

Ms Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri, UAE

Commission on Education and Communication

Mr Sean Southey, Canada/South Africa

*Mr Said Ahmad Damhoureyeh, Jordan*⁴

Mr Ayman Rabi, Palestine

Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy

Ms Kristen Walker Painemilla, USA

Oceania

Mr Peter Michael Cochrane, Australia

Ms Lolita Gibbons-Decherong, Palau

Ms Catherine Iorns, New Zealand

Species Survival Commission

Mr Jon Paul Rodriguez, Venezuela

East Europe, North and Central AsiaWorld Commission on Environmental Law

Ms Christina Voigt, Germany

*Mr Carl Amirgulashvili, Georgia*⁵

Mr Vilmos Kiszal, Hungary

Mr Samad-John Smaranda, Romania

World Commission on Protected Areas

Ms Madhu Rao, India/United Kingdom

West Europe

Ms Sonia Castañeda Rial, Spain

Ms Hilde Eggermont, Belgium

Ms Maud Lelièvre, France

COUNCILLORS ELECTED FROM THE REGIONSAfrica

Mr Brian Child, Zimbabwe

*Mr Ali Kaka, Kenya*¹

Ms Imèn Meliane, Tunisia

Ms Gloria Ujor, Nigeria

COUNCILLOR FROM THE STATE IN WHICH IUCN HAS ITS SEAT*Mr Norbert Baerlocher, Switzerland*⁶Meso and South America

Mr Marco Vinicio Cerezo Blandon, Guatemala

*Ms Ana Di Pangraco, Argentina*²

Mr Ramon Perezgil Salcido, Mexico

Ms Bibiana Sucre, Venezuela

APPOINTED COUNCILLOR

Mr Francisco Ramiro Batzin Chojoj, Guatemala

DIRECTOR GENERAL (non-voting)

Mr Bruno Oberle

North America and the Caribbean

Mr Rick Bates, Canada

*Mr Sixto J. Inchaustegui, Dominican Republic*³ Proxy to Kazuaki Hoshino, Japan⁴ Proxy to Imèn Meliane, Tunisia⁵ Proxy to Samad-John Smaranda⁶ Proxy to Marco Vinicio Cerezo Blandon¹ Proxy to Nihal Welikala² Proxy to Bibiana Sucre, Venezuela

From: [MELTANE Imen](#)
To: [AL MUBARAK Razan](#); [OBERLE Bruno](#)
Cc: [+IUCN Councillors 2021-2025](#)
Subject: Requesting a Council mtg to discuss monetizing IUCN knowledge products
Date: 12 July 2022 16:18:40

Dear Razan, dear Bruno,

Several IUCN Members have brought to our attention the [vacancy announcement](#) for the Head of knowledge management and publishing house in IUCN. While the vacancy announcement does refer to establishing IUCN as a leader in open access publishing, the primary focus of the announcement seems to be on generating revenues. This apparent shift in emphasis raises serious concerns among Members and Councillors.

IUCN publications, especially since the decline of printed copies, have been largely free of charge and easy to access on-line, which is a key factor to their success, uptake and use across the globe. This is particularly important in developing countries where access to scientific journals and commercial publications is limited.

As the scientific world moves towards free and open-access, thereby facilitating the delivery of science and research results to influence management, government and private sector decision-making, we see the move towards revenue-generating IUCN publications to be of serious concern and contrary to the mission and the spirit of the Union.

This trend of monetizing IUCN knowledge products potentially undermines the very nature of IUCN, and threatens the support of donors and Members. Although we understand the need to improve IUCN's financial sustainability, in our opinion, these monetization strategies should be discussed by Council. Several Council members have shared this same concern with regards to the new IUCN Academy and the high fees of the training offered there.

As per Article 51 of the IUCN Statutes, we hereby request that a special meeting of Council be convened to discuss the monetization of IUCN knowledge products and publications, preferably in late September.

Kind regards,

Angela Andrade
Ramiro Batzin
Sonia Castañeda
Said Damhoureyeh
Ana Di Pangracio
Hilde Eggermont
Sixto Inchaustegui
Susan Lieberman

Imèn Meliane

Ramón Perez Gil

Madhu Rao

Jon Paul Rodríguez

John Smaranda

Bibiana Sucre

Christina Voigt

Kristen Walker

From: [DE WEVER Luc](#)
To: [+IUCN Councillors 2021-2025](#)
Subject: Special meeting of the Council on monetizing knowledge products - poll to determine the date
Date: 19 August 2022 17:26:06
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear Council members,

The IUCN President has decided to convene a special (virtual) meeting of the IUCN Council to discuss the issue of “monetizing IUCN knowledge products” (working title pending the official agenda of this meeting) at the request of a group of Council members representing more than 1/3 of the Council on the basis of Article 51 of the Statutes.

I would appreciate your cooperation to determine the date of the meeting and kindly ask you to fill in the following poll, indicating as many availabilities as possible, by 24 August 2022:
<https://www.needtomeet.com/meeting?id=4fl8og8vV>.

The range of dates is a mixture between dates suggested by the Council members requesting the meeting and additional dates on which the DG will be available, taking into account also the availability of the President.

The time of the meeting will be from 10 AM to 1 PM UTC which will be as follows in your respective time zone:

| Time Zone | 26 September – 28 October | 31 October |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------|
| UTC | 10:00-13:00 | 10:00-13:00 |
| Auckland | 23:00-02:00(+1day) | 23:00-02:00(+1day) |
| Sydney | 21:00-23:59 | 21:00-23:59 |
| Ngerulmud/Seoul/Tokyo | 19:00-22:00 | 19:00-22:00 |
| Beijing/Singapore | 18:00-21:00 | 18:00-21:00 |
| Dhaka | 16:00-19:00 | 16:00-19:00 |
| New Delhi | 15:30-18:30 | 15:30-18:30 |
| Abu Dhabi/Tbilisi | 14:00-17:00 | 14:00-17:00 |
| Nairobi | 13:00-16:00 | 13:00-16:00 |
| Amman/Bucharest/Ramallah | 13:00-16:00 | 12:00-15:00 |
| Abuja/Brussels/Budapest/HQ/Madrid/Oslo/Paris | 12:00-15:00 | 11:00-14:00 |
| Tunis | 11:00-14:00 | 11:00-14:00 |
| London | 11:00-14:00 | 10:00-13:00 |
| Buenos Aires | 07:00-10:00 | 07:00-10:00 |
| Caracas/Santo Domingo/Miami/New York/Ottawa/Washington DC | 06:00-09:00 | 06:00-09:00 |
| Bogota | 05:00-08:00 | 05:00-08:00 |
| Mexico City | 05:00-08:00 | 04:00-07:00 |
| Guatemala City | 04:00-07:00 | 04:00-07:00 |

Thank you for your cooperation,

Luc De Wever

Senior Governance Manager

Secretary to Council

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)

28 rue Mauverney, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland

Tel. +41229990187

www.iucn.org



From: [DE WEVER Luc](#)
To: [+IUCN Councillors 2021-2025](#)
Subject: Extraordinary meeting of the Council on monetizing knowledge products 22 Sep 2022 – background and proposed agenda
Date: 19 September 2022 15:24:38
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Extraordinary Council 28 Sep 2022 - Background document with agenda.pdf](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.png](#)

Dear Council members,

I am writing on behalf of the President with a background note including a proposed agenda for the extraordinary Council meeting of 28 September 2022 from 10 AM to 1 PM UTC.

May I kindly ask that Council members who won't be able to participate in this meeting inform the President (cc to me) and include the name of the Council member who will have accepted your proxy.

Many thanks,

Luc De Wever

Senior Governance Manager

Secretary to Council

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)

28 rue Mauverney, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland

Tel. +41 22 999 0187

www.iucn.org



From: IMBSEN Louise <Louise.lmbesen@iucn.org>

Sent: 01 September 2022 18:00

To: +IUCN Councillors 2021-2025 <IUCNcouncillors2021-2025@iucn.org>

Subject: Special meeting of the Council on monetizing knowledge products – date, time and Zoom link

Dear Council members,

On behalf of the President, I have the pleasure to confirm that the special meeting of the Council will be held on 28 September 2022 from 10 AM to 1 PM UTC, taking into account the result of the poll and following consultation with the Director General.

The time of the meeting in your respective time zone will be as follows:

| Time Zone | 26 September – 28 October | 31 October |
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| | | |
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| Bogota | 05:00-08:00 | 05:00-08:00 |
| Mexico City | 05:00-08:00 | 04:00-07:00 |
| Guatemala City | 04:00-07:00 | 04:00-07:00 |

Please find herewith the link to Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84129295678?pwd=UDhLK3U1OXhKTGNBbnNMRy9SeXIBZz09>

Meeting ID: 841 2929 5678

Passcode: 997161

The agenda will follow as soon as confirmed by the President.

Thank you for letting me know in case you can't participate in this meeting, together with the name of the Council member who will have accepted your proxy.

Best regards,

Louise

From: DE WEVER Luc <Luc.DEWEVER@iucn.org>

Sent: 19 August 2022 17:26

To: +IUCN Councillors 2021-2025 <IUCNcouncillors2021-2025@iucn.org>

Subject: Special meeting of the Council on monetizing knowledge products - poll to determine the date

Dear Council members,

The IUCN President has decided to convene a special (virtual) meeting of the IUCN Council to discuss the issue of "monetizing IUCN knowledge products" (working title pending the official agenda of this meeting) at the request of a group of Council members representing more than 1/3 of the Council on the basis of Article 51 of the Statutes.

I would appreciate your cooperation to determine the date of the meeting and kindly ask you to fill in the following poll, indicating as many availabilities as possible, by 24 August 2022:

<https://www.needtomeet.com/meeting?id=4fl8og8vV>.

The range of dates is a mixture between dates suggested by the Council members requesting the meeting and additional dates on which the DG will be available, taking into account also the availability of the President.

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| | | |
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Thank you for your cooperation,

Luc De Wever

Senior Governance Manager

Secretary to Council

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)

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Tel. +41229990187

www.iucn.org



Extraordinary meeting of the IUCN Council regarding the “Monetization of IUCN Knowledge Products”

28 September 2022

This note is largely based on the notes from the group of Council members requesting an extraordinary meeting of the Council on “Monetization of IUCN Knowledge Products”. It is an attempt to group the issues and questions raised by the group in view of adding a structure and agenda for the meeting.

PURPOSE:

- Seek information and clarification from the DG to enable Council to exercise its oversight and strategic direction roles in a constructive fashion with regard to IUCN knowledge management and in particular its revenue generation aspects;
- Opportunity for IUCN Council, Commissions and Secretariat to discuss and clarify issues regarding the governance of IUCN knowledge Products.

EXPECTED OUTCOME:

- Council to take a decision on what course of action, if appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

IUCN members have adopted recommendations and resolutions on knowledge management including the principle of free and open access¹, with a certain understanding of the role of the Union and the interaction between its various components, especially Secretariat and Commissions. In addition, there are several Council decisions on knowledge management and knowledge products that set some IUCN policies on the issue².

Having learned recently about various developments on knowledge products with a trend towards monetizing them, and with a deviation from common practices and principles, especially with regard to the role of the Commissions (who in most cases have developed these knowledge products, often as volunteers, and sometimes in partnership with multiple other organizations, and now seem to be excluded from their usage or with their role in governance being limited), a group of Council members representing more than 1/3 of the Council members wrote to the IUCN President on 12 July 2022 requesting her to convene a special meeting of the IUCN Council in accordance with Article 51 of the Statutes, in order to seek answers to their questions and clarification from the IUCN Director General (DG).

¹ REC 3.085 Principles of knowledge sharing of the Conservation Commons

² These include: IUCN Council Decision C/78/23 (Jan 2012) and Annex 14 "A Framework of Principles for Managing Biodiversity Conservation Data and Information", IUCN Council Decision C/78/24 and Annex 15 "Policy for Commercial Use of IUCN Biodiversity Data", IUCN Council Decision C/82/13

The group requesting an extraordinary meeting of the Council is of the view that it is the role of Council to provide the strategic direction on such new developments, and expects the DG to consult with Council on such directions before they are implemented.

In a further message on 18 August 2022, the group requested the DG to provide, in writing at least a few days in advance of the Council meeting, an outline of the strategy on **knowledge management**, addressing the the following questions:

1. What is being proposed or planned in terms of monetizing knowledge products and what are the Knowledge Products concerned by this approach?
2. Why is there a need, from an IUCN Secretariat Perspective, to “monetize” some IUCN Knowledge Products?
3. What is the rationale and strategic move toward monetization?
4. How does this contribute to building the capacity of IUCN members?
5. Are there any specific considerations for the use of indigenous and traditional knowledge?
6. What are the benefits and added values of such a model, and what are the risks (reputational, legal, mobilization of voluntary efforts etc.)?
7. Who was consulted on monetization of knowledge products: Donors, Members, Commissions/knowledge providers? And what are the results of such consultation?
8. What are the roles for the components of the Union, particularly: Commissions, Members, Secretariat and Council
9. What is the existing business model for Knowledge Products and what are its limitations? How would the new Business model improve on the existing situation?
10. What are the links with the IUCN financial strategy and budget?
11. What revenues/costs are anticipated over time and what is the intended use of revenues (would revenues be share with the Commissions)? What are the anticipated risks in loss of funding (from donors)?
12. What is the legal basis for monetization? How are intellectual property rights dealt with?

In addition, the group raised a number of concerns with regard to the **IUCN Academy**, especially as the information on the website is very limited and many questions asked to the DG, particularly by Commission Chairs, remain unanswered. Some Commissions (e.g. CEM) have discussed concerns regarding the IUCN Academy, and documents outlining these concerns are shared separately. (Annex: CEM Steering Committee document on the Academy)

The group therefore requests that the written document provided by the DG also outlines the strategy for development of the IUCN academy and its business plan and that it be shared with the Council for discussion and approval. The document should provide answers to the following concerns or issues:

1. Rationale / approval for the Academy?

- Is there an established need or request from the IUCN constituency and partners?
- How was the IUCN Academy established?
- What consultations were undertaken before the establishment of the Academy, especially with the Commissions, Volunteers contributing to Knowledge Products and Donors to Knowledge Products?
- What is the financial model for the IUCN Academy and the business plan; what will profits be directed toward?

2. Using voluntary contributions (ownership issues; impact on willingness)

- What legal advice was received on ownership of the content and its use in forms other than its original intent? Were the donor agreements that led to development of historical content consulted before content was used and monetized?
- What are the plans to secure approval for use of the Academy content?
- Why are IUCN Commissions neither mentioned nor involved in the trainings ?
- A number of institutions – including some universities – are listed as “academic partners”. What is the role of these “partners”, and agreements did the Secretariat sign with them?

3. Certification / accreditation

- Does IUCN have the authority and accreditation to offer professional certificates? Is there a professional body that will recognize the certificates?
- It is not usual to have a qualification for a limited period of validity. Is there a professional body that decides/decided on this period of validity? And will extension/re-validation incur costs to the professional?
- How are people selected to be a trainee? And what qualifications are required for a trainee?

4. Fees / pricing

- How were the fees calculated?
- What comparison against similar initiatives (e.g. UN SDG Academy - where all courses are for free and provided by faculty in universities or professionals) were undertaken to determine the fees?
- What considerations were given to the target audience (especially small NGOs, IUCN members and young professionals) in developing countries?
- What considerations were given to specific waivers for IUCN members (current 10% discount is low)?

PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

1. Specific risks/issues regarding monetizing knowledge products

- In addition to the clarification required from the DG on the strategy for knowledge management (questions 1 to 12 above), also the following issues/risks could be discussed:
- Who from a legal point of view has the authority to propose and decide on charging for some IUCN services / products, and the respective mandate and role of DG and Council.
- Many knowledge products are funded through projects from public funding (governments, Members, others). Since donors in part fund these, and given IUCN outreach, if Knowledge Products are monetized, how would that affect donors' interest in supporting future work on Knowledge Projects? We note that some donor agreements expect publications / outcomes of projects to be freely distributed through open access.
- Impact on voluntary networks: most Knowledge Products are developed by the volunteers of the Commissions- if these are monetized, there could be expectation that some individuals contributing to these products get paid; furthermore, would those who developed and authored Knowledge Products, as volunteers, be charged for those products?

- Issues around ownership of the content and its use in forms other than its original intent.
- Issues around accreditation/certification (also specified under point 3 below).

2. The governance of knowledge products

- The legal situation must be clarified as to who owns the IUCN Knowledge Products and who has what authority with regard to knowledge products? (IUCN, the Secretariat, Commissions, Volunteers, Donors?)
- There are some specific concerns raised by Council members, in particular on the Red List and Green List, with the center of action moving away from the Commissions/experts to the Secretariat (some of these may warrant a separate discussion with the DG, as the issues are case specific- but it is important for Council to know the governance structure of the key knowledge products and the roles of the various components of the Union).

3. The IUCN Academy

- In addition to the questions above on the IUCN Academy, the following question could be discussed:
- What is the governance structure of the IUCN Academy? Who takes what decision (content, fundraising, pricing, etc.)?

PROPOSED AGENDA OF THE COUNCIL MEETING (3 hour meeting)

1. Introduction - by the President (5')
2. Presentation of the concerns leading to requesting an extraordinary meeting – by a member of the group of Council members requesting the meeting (20')
3. Presentation of the strategy for knowledge management - by the Director General (highlights from the DG's written response to the issues and questions raised) (20')
4. Discussion, and Council decision(s) on the way forward (2 hours and 10 min):
 - 6.1 Specific risks/issues regarding monetizing knowledge products (60')
 - 6.2 The governance of knowledge products (30')
 - 6.3 The IUCN Academy (40')
5. Closing by the President (5')

Extraordinary meeting of the IUCN Council regarding the “Monetization of IUCN Knowledge Products”

28 September 2022

This note is largely based on the notes from the group of Council members requesting an extraordinary meeting of the Council on “Monetization of IUCN Knowledge Products”. It is an attempt to group the issues and questions raised by the group in view of adding a structure and agenda for the meeting.

PURPOSE:

- Seek information and clarification from the DG to enable Council to exercise its oversight and strategic direction roles in a constructive fashion with regard to IUCN knowledge management and in particular its revenue generation aspects;
- Opportunity for IUCN Council, Commissions and Secretariat to discuss and clarify issues regarding the governance of IUCN knowledge Products.

EXPECTED OUTCOME:

- Council to take a decision on what course of action, if appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

IUCN members have adopted recommendations and resolutions on knowledge management including the principle of free and open access¹, with a certain understanding of the role of the Union and the interaction between its various components, especially Secretariat and Commissions. In addition, there are several Council decisions on knowledge management and knowledge products that set some IUCN policies on the issue².

Having learned recently about various developments on knowledge products with a trend towards monetizing them, and with a deviation from common practices and principles, especially with regard to the role of the Commissions (who in most cases have developed these knowledge products, often as volunteers, and sometimes in partnership with multiple other organizations, and now seem to be excluded from their usage or with their role in governance being limited), a group of Council members representing more than 1/3 of the Council members wrote to the IUCN President on 12 July 2022 requesting her to convene a special meeting of the IUCN Council in accordance with Article 51 of the Statutes, in order to seek answers to their questions and clarification from the IUCN Director General (DG).

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The group requesting an extraordinary meeting of the Council is of the view that it is the role of Council to provide the strategic direction on such new developments, and expects the DG to consult with Council on such directions before they are implemented.

In a further message on 18 August 2022, the group requested the DG to provide, in writing at least a few days in advance of the Council meeting, an outline of the strategy on **knowledge management**, addressing the the following questions:

1. What is being proposed or planned in terms of monetizing knowledge products and what are the Knowledge Products concerned by this approach?
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8. What are the roles for the components of the Union, particularly: Commissions, Members, Secretariat and Council
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- How are people selected to be a trainee? And what qualifications are required for a trainee?

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- How were the fees calculated?
- What comparison against similar initiatives (e.g. UN SDG Academy - where all courses are for free and provided by faculty in universities or professionals) were undertaken to determine the fees?
- What considerations were given to the target audience (especially small NGOs, IUCN members and young professionals) in developing countries?
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PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

1. Specific risks/issues regarding monetizing knowledge products

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- Issues around ownership of the content and its use in forms other than its original intent.
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2. The governance of knowledge products

- The legal situation must be clarified as to who owns the IUCN Knowledge Products and who has what authority with regard to knowledge products? (IUCN, the Secretariat, Commissions, Volunteers, Donors?)
- There are some specific concerns raised by Council members, in particular on the Red List and Green List, with the center of action moving away from the Commissions/experts to the Secretariat (some of these may warrant a separate discussion with the DG, as the issues are case specific- but it is important for Council to know the governance structure of the key knowledge products and the roles of the various components of the Union).

3. The IUCN Academy

- In addition to the questions above on the IUCN Academy, the following question could be discussed:
- What is the governance structure of the IUCN Academy? Who takes what decision (content, fundraising, pricing, etc.)?

PROPOSED AGENDA OF THE COUNCIL MEETING (3 hour meeting)

1. Introduction - by the President (5')
2. Presentation of the concerns leading to requesting an extraordinary meeting – by a member of the group of Council members requesting the meeting (20')
3. Presentation of the strategy for knowledge management - by the Director General (highlights from the DG's written response to the issues and questions raised) (20')
4. Discussion, and Council decision(s) on the way forward (2 hours and 10 min):
 - 6.1 Specific risks/issues regarding monetizing knowledge products (60')
 - 6.2 The governance of knowledge products (30')
 - 6.3 The IUCN Academy (40')
5. Closing by the President (5')

The IUCN Academy

General Comments:

1. The idea of an IUCN Academy would be welcome – especially if it meets an established need from the IUCN constituency and partners.
2. To be able to train and offer certificates, the Academy would need to be accredited as a training institution.
3. The trainers and assessors would also need to be accredited.
4. Without 2 & 3, the certificate(s) offered by the Academy would not be recognized as “authentic qualifications”.
5. Universities world-wide are going through this accreditation process which has, partly, stemmed from the proliferation of universities and training institutions that may be viewed as “bogus” offering dubious qualifications.
6. IUCN should not find itself in such an embarrassing situation.

Specific Comments – embedded in what is posted on the IUCN website

IUCN Academy

Launched in September 2021, the IUCN Academy harnesses IUCN expertise to propose learning journeys to those seeking to make a meaningful contribution to the dynamic world of conservation. **Was this with approval of ALL constituencies of IUCN – Members (or at least Council), Commissions and Secretariat?**

The purpose of the IUCN Academy is to put nature conservation at the heart of the green transition and to build the capacities of citizens of the world -professionals and postgraduate students alike- eager to make their contribution in the field of nature conservation more efficient and meaningful.

The IUCN Academy is developing its activities around three main priorities:

Sharing IUCN knowledge and expertise

Through its online platform, the IUCN Academy brings together the wealth of IUCN capacity (**much of this wealth is in the Members and Commissions**) development activities, and offers a catalogue of original courses, including Professional Certificates. (**Will this be an accredited certificate for it to be “recognized” as a qualification?**)

Supporting mutual and inclusive learning

IUCN Academy aims at offering its courses globally to all communities and to accelerate the dissemination of knowledge and skills on nature conservation. It will rely on the 60+ IUCN offices (**No mention of Members and Commissions**)

around the globe to deliver high quality learning experiences, which cater for local needs, and will encourage the participation of all communities in its programmes to foster mutual learning.

Proposing solutions adapted to the future of work in conservation

IUCN Academy is launching a portfolio of *Professional Certificates* to tackle the ongoing shift in conservation employment. Those certificates will provide participants with the right knowledge and skills to drive the green transition our societies are calling for. They represent *IUCN-certified credentials* awarded to those who have successfully completed all course requirements, including individual and group assignments. (**Does IUCN have the “authority” to offer “professional certificates? Is there a Professional body that will recognize the certificates?**)

Nature-based Solutions - PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE on IUCN Global Standard™ - NbS #4 (October 2022)

Nature-based Solutions - PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE on IUCN Global Standard™ - NbS #4 (October 2022)

last update on: 06/21/2022

The concept of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) is gaining momentum around the world and NbS are increasingly accepted and implemented to address our societal challenges. They can provide over a third of our climate mitigation needs while benefiting people and nature.

As the *author of the Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions™*, IUCN (**This was a joint effort involving the CEM and some Secretariat staff. But the CEM is not being involved in the training.**) is proposing a *Professional Certificate* to train individuals from all sectors interested in gaining expertise in the field.

The next edition of the Professional Certificate takes place from October to November 2022. APPLY FOR THE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE

What will you get from this course?

- The understanding of what Nature-based Solutions are, and the capacity to recognise examples of NbS
- The capacity to highlight the gaps in evidence-based data on Nature-based Solutions
- Methods to identify the starting point for integrating Nature-based Solutions into your work
- Improved critical thinking on the opportunities and challenges for Nature-based Solutions
- The ability to better reach, communicate and cooperate with other similar or complementary projects and initiatives
- An expanded ability to use systems thinking to assess and design Nature-based Solutions

Why should you take this course?

- Pave the way towards positive change as you gain expertise in using the assessment tool to evaluate NbS interventions
- *Explore new career paths as you become an IUCN-certified professional on the IUCN Global Standard for NbS™. (This implies that the certificate will be recognizable qualification)*
- Participate in the development of the Standard as you contribute to increasing the collective knowledge and share your experiences
- Join a network of peers for *continuous learning*, building collaborations and developing alliances on NbS. **(This implies there will/should be some continuous learning. Will this “promise” be honored?)(At what price?)**

Professional Certificate

Candidates who successfully complete the programme will be awarded an *IUCN Professional Certificate on the IUCN Global Standard on Nature-based Solutions™*. *Through this Professional Certificate, IUCN recognizes your capacity in providing advice and technical input for the design and assessment of potential NbS initiatives. (Will these “professionals be recognized by IUCN”- Members, Commissions and Secretariat, to “advise IUCN or provide technical input to IUCN? Who has*

expressed a need for this “expertise”?) (Can someone be certified after only a Master with no work experience...?)

As the IUCN Standard is constantly evolving, the *Professional Certificate will be valid for a period of 4 years*. **(This is not usual to have a "qualification" to have a limited period of validity! Is there “Professional Body” that decides/decided on this period of validity)** IUCN will provide candidates with the means to extend its validity beyond that period through subsequent training opportunities. **(Will this extension/re-validation incur costs to the “professional”)? This may give the impression that this is a revenue-generating venture for IUCN)**

Fees

- Partial scholarships available for low income countries
- Not-for-profit organizations: **2950 CHF**
- IUCN Members: 10% discount on Not-for-profit rate
- For-profit organizations: **3950 CHF**

These fees are extremely high for a 6-week non-accredited course. This amount could be enough for a full-time Master’s degree in many universities. The fees may thus be inhibitive and is likely to exclude many IUCN Members. Young professionals of IUCN will certainly find this beyond their reach.

Intensity

- 3-5 hours per week self-paced courses.
- 2 hours live meeting every 2 weeks.

 EDITION #4 STARTS OCTOBER 11, 2022

Registration is now open. **APPLY FOR THE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE**

Duration

Category

Modules

6 weeks

Nature-based Solutions

1 Create an account and subscribe

Trainers (University academic staff are currently needing to be accredited as trainers and assessors.)

Academic Partners

A number of institutions – including some universities – are listed as “academic partners. What is the role of these “partners”?

Conclusions

1. While the idea of an IUCN Academy may be good, it is necessary to consult fully with the IUCN constituency to establish the need and justification for the Academy.
2. As long as IUCN is not accredited as training institution and the trainers are not accredited as such, the “Professional Certificate” may be viewed as bogus. This can cause serious damage to the image of IUCN.
3. IUCN should consider partnering with accredited institutions (universities) who may host the training and issue the qualification/certificate.
4. The fees being charged are prohibitive, especially for a 6-week online course leading to a certificate that is valid for 4 years!

Additional ideas:

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (also known as International Union for Conservation of Nature) is constituted in accordance with Article 60 of the Swiss Civil Code as an international association of governmental and non-governmental members. Therefore, it has legal personality and may perform any act in conformity with its objectives: “Article 60 Associations with a political, religious, scientific, cultural, charitable, social or other non-commercial purpose acquire legal personality as soon as their intention to exist as a corporate body is apparent from their articles of association” **(Does IUCN by charging fees infringe the law?)**.

The objectives of IUCN shall be to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. (There is no mention of training or certification in any actions)

Price and how people can be selected to be trainees: what are the criteria?

As IUCN is an international NGO with knowledge that according to its statutes should be shared and disseminated to all, the new UNESCO Recommendations on Open Science, on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education, on Open Educational Resources, concerning technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and on Science and Scientific Researchers can impact the idea of the IUCN Academy. Considering the vast range of levels of income of the people and organizations, high fees discriminate against young professionals, small NGOs, and low income countries and run against the idea of a Union composed of countries and NGOs with commissions founded on volunteer members including young professionals who inspire to acquire expertise through their involvement in IUCN.

IUCN may want to do an analysis of what the **UN SDG Academy**: all courses are free and provided by faculty in universities or professionals (e.g., UNEP). It is possible to acquire a certificate or buy for a company depending on courses:

Blue Planet: It is possible to get a certificate: “**CERTIFICATES**: Students who successfully complete the course will be eligible to purchase a verified certificate signed by the course instructors”. (It is not a credit/ degree)

Nature-based Solutions for Disaster and Climate Resilience: “**CERTIFICATES - UNEP Certificate of Completion**: All learners have the opportunity to earn a free Certificate of Completion, awarded by UNEP, upon completing the course. If you would like to receive the UNEP Certificate, be sure to complete the post-course survey and follow the instructions carefully. Please note that these certificates will be generated manually by the UNEP team and sent to the email address you provide, so you may not receive your certificate right away. Your patience is appreciated”.

From: [Vivek Menon](#)
To: [AL MUBARAK Razan](#); [+IUCN Councillors 2021-2025](#); [DE WEVER Luc](#); [IMBSEN Louise](#); [AGUILAR ROJAS Grethe](#)
Subject: IUCN Resolutions Council Decisions and documents on Knowledge Products.docx
Date: 23 September 2022 18:09:16
Attachments: [IUCN Resolutions Council Decisions and documents on Knowledge Products.docx](#)

Dear Razan and fellow Councilors,

In preparation of the upcoming extraordinary Council meeting on monetizing knowledge products, please find attached a background document that compiles IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations, IUCN Council Decisions and publication of relevance to knowledge management and knowledge products. Collectively this forms a basis of IUCN policy which we may need to keep in mind during our discussions.

We would of course be looking at secretariats responses to the questions raises by council which I hope will be circulated soon but I though these might help us think a little before the meeting

Warm regards

Vivek

Vivek Menon
Chair GCC, IUCN Council

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IUCN Resolutions and Recommendation, Council Decisions and publications of relevance to knowledge management and knowledge products

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Resolutions</i> _____ | 1 |
| 2. <i>Council Decisions</i> _____ | 2 |
| 3. <i>Relevant publications</i> _____ | 6 |

1. Resolutions

[WCC Resolution 2.23 Improving IUCN capacity for strategic information management/information technology](#)

1. CONFIRMS that IUCN must make a serious and sustained commitment to build an information technology and information management infrastructure which is commensurate to its size and international mission;
2. REQUESTS the Director General, in consultation with members and Commissions, to identify resources to develop and implement a strategic plan for information technology which is adapted to the organization's international mission and the Secretariat's Component Programmes, and which supports implementation of IUCN's Overall Programme;

[WCC Resolution 3.085 Principles of knowledge sharing of the Conservation Commons](#)

ACKNOWLEDGING that open access to sharing and use of conservation data, information, and knowledge resources by all sectors of society is essential both to enable effective decision-making and to empower those concerned with the conservation of biodiversity and the natural world;

RECOGNIZING that **global inequities** directly restrict access to data, information and knowledge for many of the world's people, **with adverse impacts on the conservation of biodiversity and the natural world**; ...;

The World Conservation Congress at its 3rd Session in Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004: 1. **CALLS UPON IUCN members, and all sectors of the international community, to endorse the Principles of the *Conservation Commons* annexed to this Recommendation;**

Principle 1 - Open Access: The Conservation Commons promotes free and open access to data, information and knowledge for conservation purposes.

WCC Resolution 4.012 IUCN policy and strategy for the management of biodiversity data and information

RECALLING that IUCN is a signatory to the *Principles of the Conservation Commons*, supporting open access and fair use of biodiversity data, information and knowledge;

1. **URGES the Director General to develop a clear policy and strategy for the management of biodiversity data, information and expert analysis generated through the work of the IUCN Secretariat and Commissions;**
2. REQUESTS that this policy and strategy, including clear access and use guidelines, **support the fundamental principle of open access to these assets** as called for in the *Principles of the Conservation Commons*; and
3. CALLS FOR IUCN to play an active leadership role in the work of global, regional and national-level biodiversity data-sharing initiatives, **and to ensure that all non-sensitive biodiversity data generated by the Secretariat and Commissions be made freely and openly available through these processes.**

WCC Resolution 4.102 Advancing knowledge management in conservation.

AWARE that the subsequent IUCN Knowledge Management Study in 2004 (*Mobilizing IUCN's Knowledge to secure a sustainable future*) recommended moving beyond producing knowledge to:

- (a) **influencing change;**
 - (b) making better use of IUCN's intellectual capital by strengthening relationships **and sharing knowledge;**
 - (c) strengthening both external and internal aspects of managing IUCN's knowledge; and
 - (d) creating an enabling information and communication technology environment;
2. REQUESTS **IUCN's Council to give urgent consideration to knowledge management** within the Union's overall Programme before the 5th Session of the World Conservation Congress;
 3. REQUESTS the Director General, with the assistance of IUCN's Commissions, to formulate **standards and guidelines for better knowledge management across the Union.**

Note: This resolution does not seem to be fully implemented. IUCN Council only developed standards/guidelines for use of IUCN data.

2. Council Decisions

C/74/19

On the recommendation of the Programme and Policy Committee, the IUCN Council:

a) ENDORSES the proposed IUCN Framework of Principles for Managing Biodiversity Conservation Data and Information for implementation ([Annex 6](#)); and b) REQUESTS a report on the use of the framework for the second

Council meeting of 2011.

Note: this Framework is superseded by the one adopted in Decision C78/23

[C77/14](#)

Council, on the recommendation of the Programme and Policy Committee, ADOPTS on an interim basis the Policy for Commercial Use of IUCN Biodiversity Data; REQUESTS the Chair of the Species Survival Commission and the Director General to test the interim policy with corporations, seek further input from key IUCN constituents, and present a final draft of the policy at the 78th meeting of Council.

[C78/23 + Annex 14 \(A Framework of Principles for Managing Biodiversity Conservation Data and Information January 2012 \)](#)

Council, on the recommendation of the Programme and Policy Committee, **APPROVES the IUCN framework of Principles for Managing Biodiversity Conservation Data and Information.** ([Annex 14](#))

Note: Annex 14 to Decision C/78/23 mentions "IUCN has knowledge management needs beyond biodiversity data, and an overarching knowledge management policy and strategy is needed and is in development. This Framework will form part of the overall approach towards IUCN's relationship with knowledge. It is expected that such policy and strategy, when completed, will incorporate/supersede this Framework."

Note: it is not clear if such policy/strategy have been developed?

[C78/24 + Annex 15 \(Policy for Commercial Use of IUCN Biodiversity Data\)](#)

Council, on the recommendation of the Programme and Policy Committee, **APPROVES the Policy for Commercial Use of IUCN Biodiversity Data ([Annex 15](#)) which includes the Framework of Principles for Managing Biodiversity Conservation Data and Information which is presented as Annex 3 to the policy;** PERMITS for further minor adjustments and detailed modifications on Annexes 1, 2 and 4 to the policy, if required, so long as these remain within the intent and spirit of the overall policy.

[C/82/13 - Flagship knowledge products mobilized through IUCN](#)

The IUCN Council, *On the recommendation of its Programme and Policy Committee*, **Recognizes the data underlying the flagship knowledge products mobilized through the Union as global public goods**, consistent with the Preamble to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and

Requests the Director General to engage in discussion with the World Bank, other International Financial Institutions and interested governments, to **seek sustained investment in the development and maintenance of the knowledge products and their underlying data. This shall take place in full consultation with those IUCN Commissions, IUCN Member organizations, and collaborating partners**, which are involved in development and maintenance of the knowledge products. These knowledge

products are supported by standards, processes, relationships, capacity-building, and tools, in “baskets of knowledge” mobilized through IUCN.

[C/83/21 - The naming and governance of IUCN Knowledge Products \(Agenda Item 10.2.2\)](#)

Council, *on the recommendation of* its Programme and Policy Committee, Requests that the Director General conducts:

- A review of the naming and relevant branding issues of the IUCN Knowledge Products, through the Global Director, Biodiversity Conservation Group, working with the Head of Communications;
- A review of the governance of the IUCN Knowledge Products through the Global Director, Biodiversity Conservation Group, working with the Head, Science and Knowledge; and

Ensures both reviews engage with all relevant stakeholders in the Commissions, Members, Partners and Secretariat, with a view to providing two reports, one on naming and one on governance, both with recommended strategies on these aspects, to the first Council meeting in 2015.

Follow up:

*The document presented to PPC during C87, on which **no Council decision was adopted**. [The Minutes of C87](#) state the following: The Chair of PPC informed Council that the paper initially prepared about “Branding and naming of IUCN knowledge products and the coordination between them” had been withdrawn at the request of the Chair of SSC who considered it premature to develop this topic while the (complex) development of the Key Biodiversity Areas standard was still under consultation. He suggested bringing back this issue to PPC at a later stage.*

Note: This topic was not tabled again before the end of the Council term in 2016, and it’s uncertain whether it came back during the next Council 2016-21. Can the secretariat confirm?

[C/85/29 - Naming and governance of IUCN knowledge products \(Background document Agenda Item 5.2.2.2\)](#)

The IUCN Council, *on the recommendation of* the Programme and Policy Committee, requests the Director General to undertake a review of the branding and naming of IUCN flagship knowledge products and the coordination between them, ensuring continued engagement with all constituent parts of the Union during this process.

Note: Can the secretariat please provide an update on the advancement of this Council decision?

[C/87/20 - Development of the Natural Resource Governance Framework \(NRGF\) \(Agenda Item 6.2.3.2\)](#)

The IUCN Council, *on the recommendation of* the Programme and Policy Committee, Notes the significant progress that has been made in developing the Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF) over a relatively short period of time and commends the methods and processes used; Encourages early and proactive engagement among the different parts of the Union following the One Programme approach and principles; Recognises that further institutional support and dedicated fundraising is required; and Recommends that the on-going development of the NRGF remains a high institutional priority in the lead up to the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress and over the 2017-2020 Programme period.

C/87/21 - Development of the People in Nature (Agenda Item 6.2.3.2)

The IUCN Council, *On the recommendation of the Programme and Policy Committee*, Recognises the necessity for IUCN and the broader conservation community to be equipped to effectively address the knowledge gap on the role that species and ecosystems play in natural resource dependent people's livelihoods; Notes the significant progress over a relatively short period of time in framing the various components of People in Nature and commends and encourages the early and proactive engagement with IUCN's other flagship knowledge products, thematic and regional programmes;

3. Relevant publications

[*Mobilizing IUCN's Knowledge to secure a sustainable future*](#)

[IUCN Knowledge Products The basis for a partnership to support the functions and work programme of IPBES](#)

[Biodiversity for Business - A guide to using knowledge products delivered through IUCN](#)

[IUCN Director General's statement at Eye On Earth Summit, Abu Dhabi: Creating the enabling environment](#)

Director General's response to Council's questions on IUCN Knowledge Products¹

Purpose of document

The purpose of this document is to respond to questions raised by Council on the topic of knowledge products. It begins with answering questions related to knowledge products (Chapter I), followed by responses on the IUCN Academy (Chapter II).

I take this opportunity to thank Council members for raising these important questions.

¹ The use of the term "knowledge product" seems to have begun in earnest in around 2004, when it was used throughout a "knowledge management study" (full study available [here](#) and executive summary [here](#)) commissioned by IUCN in response to external reviews of IUCN from [1999](#) and [2003](#) and the [interactive sessions at the World Conservation Congress in Amman \(2000\)](#) and the [2003 Consultative Group on Commissions](#).

It is believed that the first time the concept of knowledge products based on IUCN standards is put into the formal scientific record is in: *Thomas M. Brooks, Stuart H.M. Butchart, Neil A. Cox, Melanie Heath, Craig Hilton-Taylor, Michael Hoffmann, Naomi Kingston, Jon Paul Rodríguez, Simon N. Stuart & Jane Smart (2015) Harnessing biodiversity and conservation knowledge products to track the Aichi Targets and Sustainable Development Goals, Biodiversity, 16:2-3, 157-174, DOI: 10.1080/14888386.2015.1075903*

Chapter I: Responses to Council Questions on Knowledge Products

1. *What is being proposed or planned in terms of monetizing² knowledge products and what are the Knowledge Products concerned by this approach?*

Response: There is currently no proposal to monetise our knowledge products.

There remains a need to ensure that IUCN knowledge products are supported by sound business plans to make sure that they remain fit for purpose and are sustainable.

2. *Why is there a need, from an IUCN Secretariat Perspective, to monetize some IUCN Knowledge Products?*

Response: Not applicable. Please see response to question 1 above.

3. *What is the rationale and strategic move toward monetization?*

Response: Not applicable. Please see response to question 1 above.

4. *How does this contribute to building the capacity of IUCN members?*

Response: Not applicable. Please see response to question 1 above.

5. *Are there any specific considerations for the use of indigenous and traditional knowledge?*

Response: Not applicable. Please see response to question 1 above.

6. *What are the benefits and added values of such a model, and what are the risks (reputational, legal, mobilization of voluntary efforts etc.)?*

Response: Not applicable. Please see response to question 1 above.

7. *Who was consulted on monetization of knowledge products: Donors, Members, Commissions/knowledge providers? And what are the results of such consultation?*

Response: Not applicable. Please see response to question 1 above.

8. *What are the roles for the components of the Union, particularly: Commissions, Members, Secretariat and Council*

Response: Not applicable. Please see response to question 1 above³.

9. *What is the existing business model for Knowledge Products and what are its limitations? How would the new Business model improve on the existing situation?*

Response: None of IUCN's knowledge products currently have a specific business model⁴. They have been developed and offered to the public without a business model in mind. The only exception is IBAT (Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool, see below).

² "Monetisation is a) the conversion of an asset, debt, etc. into cash or a form easily converted into cash; b) the action or process of earning revenue from an asset. Source: Oxford English dictionary (online)

³ The roles of the different components of the Union are found in the [IUCN Statutes and Regulations](#), namely: Articles 73-75 for the Commissions; Articles 18-20 for Members; Articles 37-38 for Council; and Articles 78-80 for the Director General and the Secretariat.

⁴ "Business plan" is a plan for the successful operation of a business, identifying sources of revenue, the intended customer base, products, and details of financing. Oxford English dictionary (online)

- a) The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ (herein “Red List”) is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the conservation status of biological species. It uses a set of precise criteria to evaluate the extinction risk of thousands of species. These criteria are relevant to all species and all regions of the world.

The aim of the Red List is to convey the urgency of conservation issues to the public and policy makers, as well as help the international community to reduce species extinction. The formally stated goals of the Red List are to provide scientifically based information on the status of species and subspecies at a global level, to draw attention to the magnitude and importance of threatened biodiversity, to influence national and international policy and decision-making, and to provide information to guide actions to conserve biological diversity.

The annual cost to maintain the Red List system at the current low technical level is assessed at CHF2.5mil for the Secretariat only^{5 6 7}. To upgrade the maintenance at an up-to-day level would require roughly CHF5mil. To develop the Red List process itself (new taxon, new technologies, new types of data) we estimate a yearly investment of CHF10mil.

CHF20mil per year would be required to update and integrate all IUCN knowledge products and to make them accessible through a central IT backbone⁸.

There is no income generated by the Red List.

- b) KBA (Key Biodiversity Areas) helps to identify and designate areas of international importance in terms of biodiversity conservation using globally standardised criteria. KBAs extend the Important Bird Area (IBA) concept to other taxonomic groups and are now being identified in many parts of the world, by a range of organisations.

This knowledge product has several owners, one of which is IUCN. The custodianship lies with Birdlife International, that is managing the data for all the partners.

There are no expenses related to KBA⁹.

There is no revenue coming to IUCN from KBA.

- c) The World Database on Protected Areas (Protected Planet) was jointly established by UNEP-WCMC and IUCN. The product is housed and managed by WCMC. The data belong to the reporting authorities in countries.

WCMC does not charge for the use of the knowledge product¹⁰, however, it does charge for services rendered to serve up these data, or to analyse and present them, and especially for commercial purposes.

⁵ This covers only the contribution of the Secretariat to the Red List process: a) maintenance of the IUCN Species Information System and Service; b) delivery of 1/3 of the extinction risk assessments; c) quality control of all assessments; d) maintenance of the IUCN Red List website as well as e) fundraising including for part of the assessment work done by the Species Survival Commission (SSC) experts.

⁶ The partners of IUCN fund, generally in-kind, other elements of the Red List system, in particular 1/3 of the extinction risk assessments. Members of SSC offer the rest of the extinction risk assessments.

⁷ Note that the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) of the data that are at the basis of the Red List system are not owned by IUCN. They rest with the original owner. IUCN and the Red List Partners are allowed to use them.

⁸ This is a very rough figure. We are currently absorbed in covering the urgent needs.

⁹ It can be assumed that there are some costs related to the governance, and that funds are being spent on KBA assessments through the project portfolio. We did not have sufficient time to derive the data for this report.

¹⁰ Nor does IUCN.

There are no expenses related to the World Database on Protected Areas, although funds have been and are being directed by IUCN to UNEP-WCMC through its project portfolio (e.g. BIOPAMA) that support the update of data in the WDPA, capacity development to provide data, and for the preparation of reports.

There is no revenue coming to IUCN from the World Database on Protected Areas.

- d) IBAT, established in 2007, is a tool to “monetise” the above-mentioned products. IBAT is a web-based map and reporting tool that provides access for customers to the following datasets: IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, World Database on Protected Areas, and World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas.

IBAT is developed and maintained by the IBAT Alliance: BirdLife International, Conservation International, UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), and IUCN.

The success in the market is very limited and the income generated – low, if compared with the size of the databases and the potential market. The 2021 income covered the IUCN system costs of CHF200k and generated an additional return of CHF150k, that was used to support the Red List of Threatened Species.

- e) The Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas is a standard for the evaluation of Protected Areas. The Green List represents a management approach and certification programme for protected areas in order to enhance the effective and efficient management of natural capital.

The uptake to date has been limited: 60 Protected Areas (PAs) have been certified (and 60 countries engaged in commitments to assess in future additional 600 sites), out of the approximately 270,000 areas listed in the World Database on Protected Areas globally.

The Green List doesn't have a particular business model. The work relies on support by public and private donors so far, however, the Green List Development Plan identifies the need to seek investment to cover the costs incurred by sites and IUCN to support achievement of the Standard.

There are low expenses related to the maintenance of the Green List Standard.

There is no revenue coming from the Green List Standard.

- f) The term Nature-based solutions (NBS) refers to the sustainable management and use of natural features and processes to tackle socio-environmental challenges. These challenges include issues such as climate change, water security, water pollution, food security, human health, biodiversity loss, and disaster risk management. The NbS Standard aims to equip users with a robust framework for designing and verifying that NbS yield the outcomes desired, in solving one or several societal challenges.

The IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions is a self-assessment tool that consists of eight criteria and associated indicators, which address the pillars of sustainable development (biodiversity, economy and society) and resilient project management. The document itself is made up of the Standard and the associated guidance which will instruct users how to perform a self-assessment.

The knowledge product does not have a business plan.

There is no income generated by this knowledge product.

The concept of NbS is gaining a lot of traction, including by its inclusion in the UNEA text earlier in 2022. The Nature-based Solution Standard itself has had little uptake, at scale, to date. The potential is big. We are reflecting how to accelerate the uptake of the Standard and how to position IUCN in the markets that will arise by such a global uptake. This could lead to the formulation of a business model to be discussed with Council.

- g) The Red list of Ecosystems (RLE) is a global framework to monitor and document the status of ecosystems. The RLE is a risk assessment tool and is ideally suited for conservation agencies to engage at a national level, in terms of increasing knowledge on conservation status and subsequently assisting with the decision making and priority setting process for action at technical, political and financing levels.

The RLE has the potential to be an important and cost-effective tool to assist countries with environmental monitoring and their international reporting requirements (e.g. SDGs, Aichi Targets) in a manner that is comparable over time and repeatable; for example, being able to carry out repeat RLEs every 5 years.

By integrating different conservation tools (e.g. with the IUCN Red List, Biodiversity Areas, and World Database on Protected Areas), the RLE provides a basis to move to a more strategic conservation planning focus and brings conservation into macro-economic planning, national land/water use, and fiscal planning.

There is not a specific business plan related to the Red List of Ecosystems. It can be used by all kind of actors and is not generating revenue for IUCN.

10. What are the links with the IUCN financial strategy and budget?

Response:

IUCN is confronted with two sets of financial challenges. The first is related to the management and delivery of the large project portfolio of the Secretariat¹¹; the second, with the growing requests of Members, which need to be implemented with very limited related income (Membership dues)¹².

IUCN portfolio of projects has been growing steadily for the past several years. The surplus¹³ generated by this think-thank¹⁴ part of the Secretariat is low, among other, because many of the projects are funded by national or multilateral Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) budgets, what limit the surplus rates. Consequently, IUCN is leveraging the already low own reserves more and more. This poses a critical risk to the Union. The IUCN Financial Plan adopted by Members requires the DG to: a) constantly assess the relation between risks and reserves, b) increase the level of the reserves (what logically implies higher surplus rates from the portfolio), c) improve the

¹¹ Implemented to large extend through IUCN Members

¹² See among other:

[IUCN External Review 2017-2022](#), commissioned by the Framework Partners.

[IUCN Financial Plan 2021-2024](#), adopted by Members by electronic vote in 2021

[Presentation made by the Treasurer of IUCN at Council 107 Agenda Item 2bis: Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021](#)

¹³ Surplus is an amount of something left over when requirements have been met; an excess of production or supply.

¹⁴ Think tank is "a group of experts who provide advice and ideas on political, social or economic issues" Oxford Language dictionary (online)

efficiency in delivering the portfolio, d) differentiate the set of donors that fund the portfolio and e) create new types of income, independent from ODA and with higher rate of return.

The part of the Secretariat that supports the different organs of the Union is confronted with growing requests from the Members (e.g., the long list of Resolutions that requires the Secretariat to act, Congresses, Regional Fora), the Council (reports, Committees, Task forces, working groups to be supported and accompanied) and the Commissions (funding, administrative support, content work, Congresses). Additionally, the IUCN Statutes ask the Secretariat to communicate the work of the Union, to coordinate the policy advocacy, to have a legal Counsellor and to represent the Union centrally and regionally, engaging with and coordinating the Members at the same time, amongst other activities. All these activities must be funded by the stable stream of unrestricted money coming from the membership dues. A rough estimate shows that we are spending in these services double the money we are receiving from the Members. This was possible to date by matching the own unrestricted funds by philanthropist support and by cross subsidising these costs with money from the portfolio. This is becoming more and more difficult.

The Members' approved IUCN Financial Plan requests that the financial situation of the organisation is improved – both through increasing the financial reserves and through income diversification.

To diversify the income, we need to explore new services, new markets and new audiences. In this search we must rely on the assets of the Union: a) broad membership and therefore representation and legitimacy; b) presence on the ground through Members and regional offices of the Secretariat and c) scientific, political and management knowledge.

I suggest not to focus on the negative and divisive word “monetisation” but on the concept of “generating value for nature, Members and the Union’s finance”. The Union as a non-for-profit organisation will not use the income generated by its asset to pay shareholders, but to recover the costs of the current work and to reinvest in ourselves and our work to adapt to the fast based 21st century world, and progress as a Union.

After the reorganisation of the Secretariat in 2021, we have started reflections on how to achieve this and we are still in the conceptual phase. We are not aiming to monetise knowledge products but to develop new services. As soon as we have the consolidated figures of what the potential implications are (financial, reputational, legal, etc), I will bring this discussion back to Council.

11. What revenues/costs are anticipated over time and what is the intended use of revenues (would revenues be share with the Commissions)? What are the anticipated risks in loss of funding (from donors)?

Response: See response to Question 10 above.

12. What is the legal basis for monetization? How are intellectual property rights dealt with?

Response: See response to Question 10 above.

Chapter II: Responses to Council Questions on IUCN Academy

1. What is the Academy?

Response

The IUCN Academy was created and officially launched in September 2021 during the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille. The Academy aims to provide quality assurance and pedagogical support to the numerous capacity building activities across the IUCN Secretariat.

Its mission is to improve the quality, efficiency and impact of capacity building activities delivered by the IUCN Secretariat through its donor-funded portfolio of projects – including both implementing and executing activities.

Since its launch, it was decided to develop the concept of IUCN Academy in phases

Phase 1: Initiation Phase (2021-2)

The objectives of Phase 1 are the following:

1. Identify and pilot the domains of activities (Done)
2. Develop academic partnerships that support the activities (Done)
3. Develop the tools necessary to perform the activities (Done)

Phase 2: Experimental phase (2023)

Phase 2 will concentrate on developing further the domains of activity of the Academy, with a special focus on Category 3 activities (see below), support to enhance the quality and impact of the capacity building components of IUCN projects through the provision of: **pedagogical support and quality assurance services, tools and templates.**

Phase 2 will also concentrate on:

1. Improving further the IUCN Academy Learning Platform
2. Developing activities in partnership with IUCN Commissions (already underway, see below)
3. Operationalising further the academic partnerships

Phase 3: Scale up phase (2024)

Based on the results of the phases 2 and 3, a model of institutionalisation and expansion will be developed and tested.

Cooperation

Due to the mission of the Academy its main partners are internal to the Secretariat: Centres and Regions, that are in charge of parts of the project portfolio.

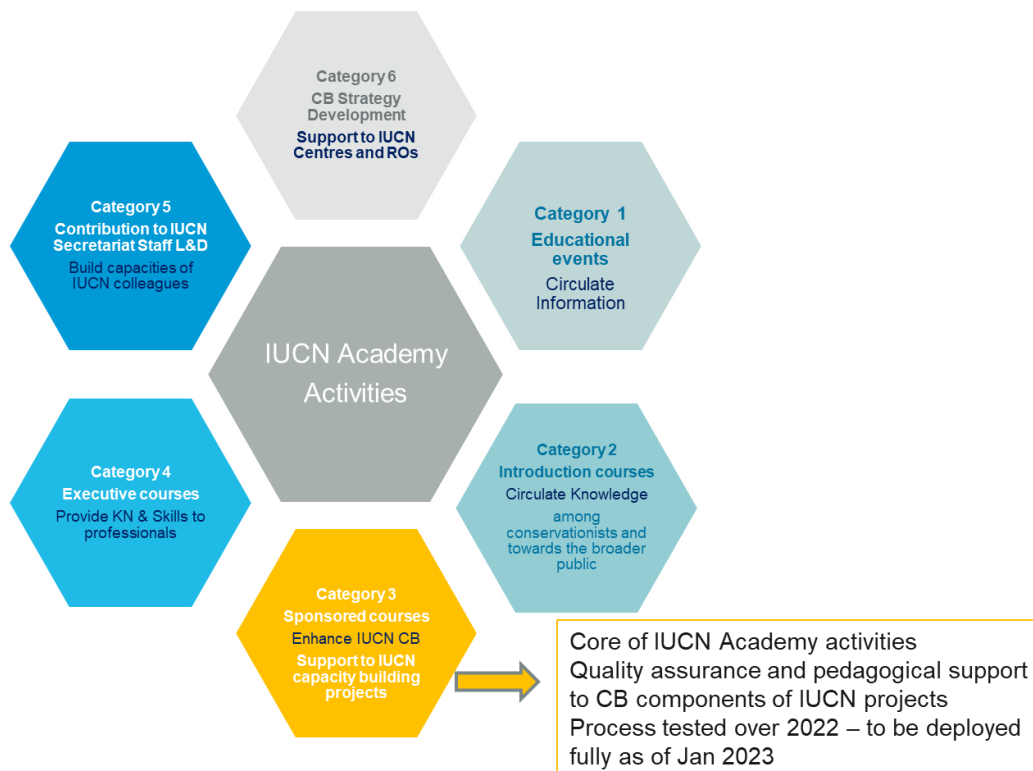
The need for a multi-disciplinary approach in training around nature conservation is considered essential by experts. Therefore, the initiative reached out to reputable academic institutions from all continents to support its work. Seven renowned academic institutions accepted the proposal to partner and signed MoUs with IUCN for this purpose. These include: [University of California, Berkeley](#), [University of Cambridge](#), [Tsinghua University](#), [The Australian National University](#), [State University of Campinas – Unicamp](#), [Stellenbosch University](#), [ETH Zurich](#).

Several Commission members have been contacted or associated in the development of pilot courses, notably for the Red List of Ecosystems Specialised course for assessors and the Professional Certificate. The aim of the Academy is to expand further this collaboration as the number of courses grows.

With regard to IUCN Members. The Academy is currently working to develop a model whereby courses responding to specific Members' needs would be developed and offered for free.

The domains of activity of the Academy are the following

Figure 1: Identification and piloting of IUCN Academy domains of activity



Category 1: Educational events

- **Purpose:** Communicate about IUCN and latest developments in the conservation domain
- **Audience:** Specialised and non-specialised audience depending on event
- **Format:** Online or onsite
- **IUCN Academy Learning Platform:** As a place to communicate about the event

Category 2: Introduction courses

- **Purpose:** Provide an insight on IUCN main activities.
- **Audience:** Both general (for those who wish to understand the basics of a topic), and specialised (for those eager to get an insight into another domain)
- **Format:** 1 to 2-hour self-paced e-learning courses
- **IUCN Academy Learning Platform:** Provide LMS for the courses
- **Pilots to be published before end of 2022** – e.g. IUCN – Who we are, World Heritage and Conservation, Gender and Conservation

Category 3: Sponsored courses

- **Purpose:** Increase quality efficiency and impact of the capacity building components of IUCN projects
- **Audience:** Course beneficiaries as determined by donor

- **Format:** Potentially all delivery formats, determined by project (Online, onsite, synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid)
- **IUCN Academy Learning Platform:** Provide hosting and tools for all course formats
- **Pilots: all sponsored and available for free**
 - Red List of Ecosystems: Specialised Course for Assessors
 - IUCN Med Courses for Small NGOs of the Maghreb region (in French and Arabic, including a Communication course and a Fundraising course)
 - Cours pour l'AFD sur le Standard mondial de l'IUCN pour les solutions fondées sur la nature

Category 4: Executive courses

- **Purpose:** Enhance knowledge and skills of professionals
- **Audience:** General and specialised, insisting on the primary role of nature in tackling today's environmental challenges
- **Format:** Subject to course objective (online, onsite, synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid)
- **IUCN Academy Learning Platform:** Provide hosting and tools for all course formats
- **Pilot:** Professional Certificate on the IUCN Global Standard for NbS

Category 5: Contribution to IUCN staff L&D (learning and development)

- **Purpose:** Enhance knowledge and skills of IUCN staff
- **Audience:** IUCN staff
- **Format:** Depending on course objective
- **IUCN Academy Learning Platform:** Provide hosting and tools for all course formats
- **Pilot planned for 2023:** The IUCN Global Standard for NbS

Category 6: Capacity building strategy development

- **Purpose:** Support IUCN Centres and Regional Offices in their strategic thinking over capacity building
- **Audience:** IUCN staff
- **Format:** Facilitation of strategic thinking sessions around the role of CB in our work
- **Pilot:** Facilitation of the development of a strategy for IUCN Med capacity building activities

2. Rationale/ approval for the Academy?

Responses to questions under this section:

Donors and partners have warmly welcomed the idea of IUCN strengthening its capacity building tools and becoming more efficient in delivering this important service. The Academy is one of the 95 Units in the Secretariat (95 includes all regional and country offices), that specialises in making our donor-funded work better. The activities of this learning platform are therefore regulated by strict donor contracts and legal agreements. The objective is for this Unit to be self-sufficient and to deliver a reasonable amount of overhead, like all relevant Units inside the Secretariat.

The Academy has been and continues to use only published papers and publicly available information, at the disposal of any academic institution or company. Since its establishment, the IUCN Academy has reinvested some of the revenue generated into important free courses for IUCN constituencies and beyond, for example, the Red List of Ecosystems course for assessors, where the

Academy invested the equivalent of CHF15000 in work hours and tool development; as well as introductory courses under preparation (World Heritage and conservation, Gender and Conservation, IUCN – Who we are?).

3. *Using voluntary contributions (ownership issues; impact on willingness)*

Responses to questions under this section:

Members, Commission members and Secretariat staff are meant to benefit from the activities of the IUCN Academy in different ways – by having access to the courses; as well as contributing to the development of courses. The Academy is already offering Member discounts on its programmes and, through its scholarship scheme, it is also supporting the development of the capacities of IUCN Members. With the growing requirements from donors and financiers, through the IUCN Academy we have the opportunity to support Members in strengthening their internal capacities to enable access to grants and funding.

A number of Members from the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) have expressed support to working with the Academy¹⁵. The Academy is receiving and will continue to seek inputs from Commission members for its courses, and it will a) remunerate them for that work; and b) give recognition on its online platform.

4. *Certification / accreditation*

Responses to questions under this section:

There is no regulation preventing the Academy to offer “Professional Certificates”, because these are not academic credentials and they have not been presented as such.

We have put in place quality assurance processes to guarantee the quality of the programme, among others: study regulations and programme requirements, listing all requirements to obtain the certificate, including individual and group assignments.

Experts in training and capacity building say that many professional qualifications require continuous education to remain valid. This is also a guarantee of quality as we make sure people remain up to date with the NbS Standard development to keep the certificate. The professional body is IUCN, through its staff who co-authored the Standard, and through CEM, should the Commission agree to participate in this project.

Participants are selected to be a trainee by filling an application with information about qualifications, degree, place of study, et al. This is the standard in academic world. CEM for example is supporting a NbS course of the Oxford University, which accepts people in the same manner and is based on the same literature.

The fact that the development of a knowledge product is donor funded does not prevent people to develop a training on the subject and to use the published insights.

This is a separate service which requires an additional level of effort. Our Commission members, IUCN Members and academic partners regularly “monetise” their expertise on these knowledge products through consultancies or through offering courses (e.g. [Oxford University NbS course](#); [Hull University NbS course](#))

¹⁵ In addition, following conversations on the back of C107, the Chair of Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) was invited to sit on the Advisory Board of the Academy, and was approached with concrete suggestions on how to collaborate together. We are still awaiting a response.

5. Fees/pricing

Responses to questions under this section:

Fees are aligned with market price for equivalent executive courses, such as GBP3200 private sector, GBP2500 public sector for Oxford course on NbS vs CHF3950 for-profit sector, CHF2950 non-profit sector. At this stage, there is a 10% supplementary discount for IUCN Members for the Academy. The Academy is still at the early stage of its development, and is actively looking into sponsorship opportunities to wave fees for Members in the long run. This would indeed contribute to IUCN's value proposition to its Members.

The Academy is developing a portfolio of free courses, financed by donors. The first one was the RLE course for assessors within which the Academy, as mentioned above, added another CHF15000 for pedagogical support to staff and development of the course on the learning platform.

There are also supplementary discounts on the non-profit fee for Members and the Academy put in place a scholarship scheme through which it subsidizes seats for participants from developing countries. Around 25 to 30% of the participants joined the course with a scholarship and more than 85% of the scholarship requests have been accepted – those refused were due to the quality of the application. The Academy is currently looking for sponsorship to increase the number of seats offered at a minimal cost to these constituencies.