

# **Mobilizing IUCN's Knowledge to secure a sustainable future**

## **The IUCN Knowledge Management Study**

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**December 2004**

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## Introduction

The purpose of the Knowledge Management Study is to frame discussions on knowledge management across the Union. The study is intended to provide insight into new approaches to harness IUCN's knowledge for greater impact in the world.

At the end of 2003, IUCN commissioned an investigation into the field of knowledge management – current theory and practice, the experience of other organizations, and observations on how IUCN could both strengthen and transform its operations through knowledge management. This investigation was initiated in response to external reviews of IUCN, in 1999 and again in 2003; in response to interactive sessions and resolutions at the 2000 Congress in Amman, and in response to the 2003 Consultative Group on Commissions. More recent reports (the 2004 External review of the Commissions and the meta review of IUCN programme evaluations) have also raised the challenge of knowledge management.

The goal of the Knowledge Management Study is to:

Move the debate within IUCN on knowledge organizations, knowledge networks and knowledge management beyond the current level of concept papers, consultations and external reviews towards implementation.

More specifically, the Study has been designed to:

- Raise awareness and understanding about state-of-the-art / cutting-edge knowledge management practices
- Assess where IUCN is at the moment in terms of its ambitions to be a knowledge-based organization
- Develop practical options for debate to move forward in becoming a knowledge-based organization

## *The Challenge*

IUCN has long thought of itself as a knowledge-based organization. Its Commissions function as expert networks. It has been a prolific publisher over the years of scientific knowledge grounded in local applications. IUCN has worked extensively with networks and in partnership with many organizations from the grassroots to global negotiations. It has embedded knowledge as one of the three anchors for its programmatic framework of Knowledge, Empowerment and Governance.

*IUCN's 'core business'... is managing knowledge for biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. In doing so IUCN pledges itself to:*

- *Recognize, respect and promote dialogue between different knowledge systems;*
- *Promote the integration of traditional, local and scientific knowledge in the management and conservation of natural resources;*
- *Promote and facilitate the exchange of knowledge across the world and from site to site and country to country.*

This reflects the emergence of a genuine knowledge culture across the organization. IUCN does not need to reorient itself as a “knowledge organization” in the same way that other agencies, like the World Bank and UNDP, needed to rethink their fundamental basis for operations.

However, a knowledge culture is based not only on the values, mission and vision of an organization, but emerges from:

- the ease with which knowledge is shared internally
- effective collaboration with stakeholders to promote knowledge flows,
- broader communications of its knowledge, and
- visible progress and success around issues where knowledge is being brought to bear.

Several attempts have been made over the years to develop strategies and plans to move forward; and a number of new initiatives to mobilize IUCN's knowledge are under development. But the Union believes that it could be doing more. New approaches may be available to accelerate knowledge sharing. Other organizations may have models that IUCN could adapt for its own use. The challenge for IUCN lies in strengthening its emergent knowledge values and behaviours, and building supporting mechanisms to mobilize more effectively the richness of the knowledge and relationships that exist throughout all parts of the Union.

### Summary of Knowledge Management Recommendations and Resolutions, 1999-2004

1999	<p>IUCN External Review proposed a knowledge management model comparable to the current “Global Practice Areas” recently established at IUCN. The Review team advised that no more than six of these areas be set up.</p> <p>“The Union’s distinctive competencies – scientific knowledge and institutional capacity – ...should be organized in a limited number of thematic knowledge management areas. The purpose of the knowledge management areas, as the heart of the Union’s ability, is to synthesize and disseminate best practice; to assess and provide professional capacity to programmes and projects; and to service selected international institutions and processes.”<sup>1</sup></p>
2000	<p>Amman Congress CEC Interactive Session 7: Mobilizing knowledge for biodiversity explored the context for KM at IUCN; what was underway in four Commissions to organize species and environmental law information, to provide a knowledge service to park staff and lessons learned by the CEC on KM; reviewed the experience of IUCN members and partners, and trends in the private sector; discussed competencies needed; and proposed a model for a virtual university as an organizing framework for KM at IUCN<sup>2</sup>.</p>
2000	<p>Amman resolution 2.23: Improving IUCN capacity for strategic information management/information technology</p>
2003	<p>IUCN External Review Recommendation 3.1: ... that IUCN aim to achieve effective knowledge management, rather than just information management, through its 2005-2008</p>

<sup>1</sup> External Review, 1999, pp15-16.

<sup>2</sup> CEC. Mobilising Knowledge for Biodiversity: Amman Congress 2000 Interactive Session Report, p5.

	<p>Intersessional period...</p> <p>The review suggested a number of themes to be explored in the Knowledge Management Study, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ways to integrate knowledge management more effectively into programme design;</li> <li>• Move beyond internal knowledge management to develop knowledge networks that link all components of the Union, and its partners, with the wider world;</li> <li>• Identify organizational and operational means of stimulating knowledge generation, with a focus on quality</li> <li>• Explore ways to make space for reflection and learning as core functions of any Programme activity, generating synthesized knowledge for both external and internal use</li> <li>• Have a strategy for engaging with research and staying at the cutting edge of knowledge advancement</li> <li>• Consider the issue of intellectual property rights in the context of IUCN knowledge management</li> </ul>
2003	<p>The report of the Consultative Group on Commissions (2003) noted the strengths of IUCN's Commissions, but also highlighted structural impediments hampering the performance of these critical knowledge networks. The report recommended creating a shared vision and innovative Union-wide strategy for building knowledge networks as a crucial component of the next Intersessional Programme.</p>
2004	<p>2004 External Review of IUCN Commissions recommended that the current systems and technology for communication within and between Commissions be examined to devise ways to strengthen their role as knowledge providers for IUCN, to increase the participation of individual members, and to further innovation, interdisciplinary work and cross-Commission collaboration.<sup>3</sup></p>
2004	<p>The results of a meta-evaluation – assessing more than 70 of IUCN's programme evaluations – found that projects were not adequately connected to a policy framework, and that knowledge management and learning strategy frameworks were not in place to synthesize, share and disseminate best practice. There was a need to improve communications, feedback systems, opportunities for dialogue and lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation work<sup>4</sup>.</p>

## What does IUCN mean by Knowledge Management?

Traditionally, knowledge management is defined as the practice in which an organization “consciously and comprehensively gathers, organizes, shares, and analyzes its knowledge in terms of resources, documents, and people skills.”<sup>5</sup> It is typically considered to be an internal management tool to strengthen operational efficiency.

The term is elastic, however, and can be stretched to include both internal and external processes.

<sup>3</sup> Rich tradition, focused future: Brochure on the Knowledge Management Study distributed at Congress, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> [[http://searchdomino.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid4\\_gci212449,00.html](http://searchdomino.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid4_gci212449,00.html)]

- Internal processes: how an organization systematically collects, archives and retrieves the knowledge of its staff and how it manages internal communications among its staff in order to strengthen its knowledge base.
- External processes: how an organization flows its knowledge into the hands of the people it most wants to use it; how it strengthens its knowledge through its interaction with external groups; how it learns whether its insights have made a difference.

In conversations with IUCN Commissions, senior and program staff, it is clear that the term “knowledge management” is used more broadly. This is not surprising: there is an intricate relationship among the following:

- knowledge held individually or collectively (in informal and formal institutions)
- the collaboration among groups of individuals and institutions to share and create new knowledge
- communications processes that facilitate the creation, exchange and dissemination of knowledge, and
- management processes needed for “scale”: the challenge of replicating successful knowledge sharing programs and achieving greater size—and thus impact.<sup>6</sup>

Merged into knowledge management are concepts of dialogue, social networks, building relationships, and learning through constant interaction with users, who have their own knowledge and perspectives to contribute. This study therefore reflects the blending of several fields: the management of relationships (networks, partnerships, alliances) for knowledge generation and sharing, communications management, for enrichment and dissemination of knowledge, and the processes for management of knowledge as an organizational asset and for scale and impact.

### **Why does IUCN need to strengthen its knowledge management?**

From time to time, IUCN stakeholders in the Knowledge Management study have raised the question, “knowledge for what?”, recognizing that knowledge initiatives need to be aligned with organizational purpose and objectives. That question could perhaps be reframed as:

- What knowledge does IUCN need to acquire and to share about what is changing in the world, with respect to the state of its ecosystems, protection of species, the social and economic dimensions of conservation, and the sustainable use of natural resources?
- What processes and tools are available that will help IUCN apply and advance its knowledge to secure a sustainable future?

More narrowly, the focus of the study is on four principal challenges that have been identified through meetings with Commission Chairs, program and IUCN HQ staff.

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted from Emerson, J. et al. “The Blended Value Map: Tracking the intersects and opportunities of economic, social and environmental value creation”. 2003. [www.blendedvalue.org](http://www.blendedvalue.org)

*1. Influence and impact on policy and practice*

How can IUCN bridge the gaps between science, policy and practice? Does IUCN have some fundamental gaps in its own knowledge base with respect to the interface of social, environment, and economic issues? Or does the problem lie more in a lack of understanding of the processes of influence and engagement of target decision makers? How can IUCN build the capacity of people to influence change? Questions of the lack of purposefulness of IUCN knowledge products, the supply model versus the demand model, all derive from the more fundamental challenge of how to identify what needs to be changed in the world, who is in a position to effect that change, what knowledge that person needs to have in order to develop the appropriate policies or practices, and how to get that knowledge to them in the most effective way.

*2. Horizontal knowledge flows – Interconnectivity*

The flow of knowledge throughout the organization faces many impediments. How can IUCN address the lack of connectivity across the parts of the organization? What are mechanisms that will assist with flowing knowledge from Commissions into countries and regions? How can the new networks established through Secretariat projects be connected with the existing Commissions as the “in house” networks of the Union? How can the Union manage the relationships that it now has, both within the organization and with its partners and stakeholders, in order to realize the value of the organization beyond the sum of the parts?

Related to this is the question of how the Commissions can manage their networks better, in particular how to engage volunteers more effectively in knowledge sharing, as a resource for strengthening the knowledge base of the Union overall. Where these in-house networks do not suffice, what are the mechanisms for engaging new partners and expertise?

*3. Vertical knowledge flows*

The knowledge produced by the individual parts of IUCN often remains at the level of the individual unit and therefore does not have the organizational learning impact that it should have. There are insufficient mechanisms both to systematically capture this knowledge as a corporate asset, and to synthesize it for use at higher levels, or across a body of work, or across regions.

*4. The quality of IUCN knowledge*

This is perceived by some to be inconsistent. Many project and program managers cannot stay on top of current thinking in their fields (no access to state of the art knowledge, information overload, no time, too much field work, etc). Furthermore, the IUCN program is evolving into areas in which it has no substantive capacity. How can the knowledge base of IUCN and the expertise of its staff be strengthened? What other sources of knowledge and expertise might IUCN draw upon to achieve its Key Results?

These four issues are not unique to IUCN. Many other organizations, across sectors, have over the last ten years or so begun to investigate how to build and share their knowledge in order to be more effective in their work. The study therefore seeks to address the following:



- What are the major trends in the field?
- What are success factors for good practice?
- What is IUCN doing now to advance its knowledge management practices?
- What are its options for moving forward, in order to address the challenges of increasing its influence, improving its horizontal and vertical knowledge flows, and strengthening the quality of its knowledge contributions?

## A. Major trends and debates in KM

The field of mobilizing knowledge using new technologies has emerged from a convergence of influences over the past twenty years or more. Influences include private sector experience with knowledge management, social science experiments with social network analysis, shifts in international development assistance from technology transfer to capacity development, and the emergence of transnational governance through multistakeholder processes. Exciting as this convergence is, it has also led to lack of clarity as people appropriate terminology to apply to their own particular objectives, without necessarily developing a shared understanding of concepts and practices. Two appendices to this report provide supplemental information for this section on trends. Appendix A scopes the convergences of knowledge, technology, community and decision making. Highlights of IUCN's current practice are mapping against this table. Appendix B is a brief reference guide for a knowledge organization, providing short explanations for the following:

1. Principal distinctions among data, information and knowledge, including explicit, tacit and implicit knowledge
2. Terminology of knowledge processes
3. Typology of collaborative relationships
4. Inventory of communications practices and tools

The following section highlights the major trends and debates in KM of particular relevance to IUCN, as it explores how to move forward with its own KM practices.

### ***1. Convergence***

The field of knowledge management is no longer being treated in isolation from the fields of communications management and partnerships management, by other organizations or even by IUCN itself. In interviews with IUCN HQ staff, focal points and commission chairs, it was clear that expectations for the study cut across all these fields.

Knowledge concepts and practices for international organizations have emerged out of a cross fertilization of management approaches in the private sector, innovation in the uses of information and communications technologies, and processes for addressing international development through more consultative approaches. The table of convergences in Appendix A reflects the context and convergence of trends in knowledge based organizations. Seven influencing sectors, disciplines and communities are identified:

- Private sector information and knowledge management experiments

- Social science and popular culture influences, including social network analysis
- Technological evolution, including new approaches to collective ownership of intellectual property
- Lessons from the international development field on technology transfer, K4D and community capabilities
- Research sector (including academic, government, NGO, R&D departments in companies) on knowledge generation, research networks and policy influence
- Civil society engagement, networking and participation in decision making
- Multistakeholder processes as an emerging "sector"; new forms of governance through transnational, transectoral approaches

Each of these communities is learning and adopting tools and approaches from the others. For example:

In the private sector: From its own experiments, its interest in concepts of social capital and social networks, and its exposure to the demands of citizens for accountability, the private sector is learning that knowledge management processes now need to include not only ICT tools but also social management skills and an understanding of how to engage with citizens and communities.

In development assistance: The international development community is coming to understand that sustainable development involves mutual knowledge sharing and mutual capacity development, that the capabilities of the south need to be acknowledged and built upon, and that this process may be fast tracked and scaled up through the harnessing of new communications technologies.

At the level of citizen engagement: Citizens are beginning to see a number of paradoxes in these convergences: they have increasing ability to choose their own communities of influence (moving from physical place to virtual place). At the same time, this may be leading to growing isolation from their physical community, which has implications for participation in local democratic processes.

As IUCN begins to consider how to be more effective as a knowledge based, sustainable development driven organization, and more specifically how to mobilize its knowledge and its relationships, it needs to recognize that the field is fluid and dynamic; that there is no single approach in any given sector that is the model for IUCN to follow. Instead, IUCN will need to draw on the richness of all of this experience, and must continue to experiment and learn what approaches will best help it achieve its goals.

## ***2. Transition from the storage and retrieval of information to active engagement with the knowledge user***

Knowledge management began with the creation of electronic systems to map and store the intellectual capital of an organization, with search and retrieval interfaces for users. However, as can be seen in the table of convergences, "KM" has moved well beyond the systematic collection, archiving and retrieval of information. Merged into KM are concepts of dialogue, relationship building, and adaptive learning through constant interaction with users, who have their own knowledge and perspectives to contribute.

IUCN has a strong orientation to information management approaches; but in order to capitalize on trends in the field, these need to be reviewed in the context of how they will also support dialogue among users and how they will be monitored and adapted over time, based on knowledge gained from users. Some initiatives may well benefit from "Open Source" development approaches and from the computer gaming community: in both cases, there is a symbiotic relationship between the system developer and the system user.

### ***3. Shifting emphasis from knowledge to influence***

Knowledge management practice now includes the creation of internal communities to foster face to face and email interaction among staff. But, current studies indicate that these communities tend to be used for improving specific business processes (how work is being done), rather than leading to innovation (new knowledge) or change outside of the enterprise<sup>7</sup>. Knowledge management that restricts itself to internal knowledge sharing will not be sufficient to address all of IUCN's knowledge challenges.

A related concept, the "knowledge broker" (connecting those who know with those who need to know), is also too limited and too linear for IUCN. The potential for increasing its influence in the world is much greater through pursuing and strengthening new working relationships (multistakeholder partnerships, alliances, and so forth).

The emerging concept of knowledge mobilization may therefore be more useful to IUCN than knowledge management or knowledge brokering. Knowledge mobilization addresses how external knowledge (outside of the organization) is sought out and combined with internal knowledge to create new knowledge that meets the needs of target users/clients.<sup>8</sup> Knowledge mobilization emphasizes purpose (meeting the needs of clients) and looks to how one brings in the knowledge of others. It recognizes that organizing one's own intellectual capital does not necessarily lead to innovation or change; implicit in the concept is the need for working relationships with others.

In order to mobilize knowledge to have influence in the world, organizations may need to change their starting point. Too often, groups begin with what they know, or what they want to know, and then do the research. Only when this is done do they consider how this knowledge might be communicated to others for application to conservation and development problems. IISD is experimenting with a different approach: Having influence begins with determining what exactly it is you want to influence – what decisions do you want to influence; what specific changes do you want to see in the world. From there, you determine who you need to influence -- who is in a position to make or influence that decision or effect that change. Only then do you consider the knowledge question: what knowledge does that person need; what do you need to know in order to advise them, and how are you going to share that knowledge with them. A copy of IISD's Influencing Strategy is attached in Appendix C.

Having influence involves shifting the emphasis from knowledge itself to relationships and interaction.

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<sup>7</sup> Queen's Centre for Knowledge Based Enterprises: Knowledge management in organizations: the state of current practice (WP 03-02, 2003); also comment from Head of Knowledge Management, CIDA.

<sup>8</sup> [Adapted from: *Advances in Strategic Management Conference on Strategy Processes*, INSEAD, 2003: C. Annique Un and Alvaro Cuervo-Cazurra.

#### ***4. New focus on social capital and social networks***

Social capital is becoming recognized as important as intellectual capital. Social capital is built through interaction and leads to improved knowledge sharing. Organizations are now looking at the tools and training for staff to map their existing social networks and to understand how to build "social capital" with their colleagues, clients and audiences. Social network analysis is the mapping and measuring of how knowledge flows through these relationships. It is a new view of the old adage that "it's not what you know, it's who you know". As groups begin to explore how to bridge research, policy and action, it will become critical to understand how information flows through social networks and how to build social capital with decision makers to create those channels for knowledge.

#### ***5. Open Source/Open Content – addressing the democratization of knowledge sharing***

The concept of "Open Source" is of growing interest to knowledge based organizations. It originated in the practice among computer programmers to release source code for others to work with and adapt, with no retention of intellectual property rights (IPR). This practice has evolved into "Open Content" -- an ideology of collaboration that grants broader rights for sharing and use of new ideas and practices. Commercial control of intellectual property rights has been considered a significant barrier to knowledge sharing and knowledge generation among experts and organizations. By adopting principles of Open Content, knowledge sharing becomes more likely, and the protection of what may be desired to be public goods more feasible. Open Content is changing publishing practices by allowing IPR to remain the author's to share rather than the publisher's to sell. It forms the basis for IUCN's Conservation Commons.

Another interesting lesson from Open Source is the need for purpose, structure and process in the development of new knowledge. A new member of an Open Source community has to prove their expertise not through their credentials (education, employment, publications) but through their regular and substantive contributions to the community. Adoption of their work (revisions to source code for broader use) is through an inner circle of the originators or keepers of the source code.

Membership in IUCN's networks of experts is currently based on credentials (what the experts have done) and on social networks (how those experts become known to IUCN). It might be interesting to change the operating model for one or more of these networks to follow an Open Source approach: open community which members self-select to join, and that is task focused, with the expectation that members will make regular and substantive contributions towards the task.

#### ***6. Adoption of different modalities***

The Open Source approach to developing and applying new knowledge is only one model for collaboration. What is becoming clear in the KM field is that organizations can apply a variety of modes of collaboration both to improve the quality of their knowledge and get it into use more broadly. A typology of relationships is presented in Appendix B to this report. The models range from

informal internal networks to share information among staff to structured networks of individuals and organizations that are focused on specific objectives. The major distinctions revolve around issues of purpose (are there specific tasks and objectives to be met), membership (open or by invitation), beneficiaries (is knowledge sharing solely for the benefit of network members or is the knowledge generated for use beyond the network), structure (is the collaboration guided or facilitated in anyway) and governance.

There is growing interest in how collaboration among groups of people can be "governed" rather than "managed". An organization creates the space for knowledge sharing through providing leadership and resources, and through clear articulation of roles and expectations, and then lets the emerging community run itself. The boundaries for participation by internal staff and external stakeholders are quite porous. This process is becoming known as "post modern knowledge management". Key to this approach (indeed key to all models) is the upfront planning – the formulation of purpose, provision of resources, articulation of objectives and expectations.

Communications tools are as important for knowledge mobilization as models of collaboration, and again, need to be consciously chosen and deployed. Innovation – the generation of new ideas or new applications of existing ideas – often depends on how individuals communicate with each other or reach out to others. Tools vary according to the knowledge sharing relationships involved:

- Communications that support group processes (many to many): Based on principles of participation and the belief that solutions developed collectively are more likely to be implemented than those imposed by others. Innovation comes about through dialogue and joint problem solving
- Communications that support knowledge dissemination (one to many): The delivery of an individual's or organization's information, knowledge and beliefs to others. Innovation comes from feedback loops: encouraging responses to the knowledge provided.
- Restricted or secure communications (one to one, or a few to a few): Based on two concepts:
  - the desire to catalyze and support the interaction of individuals and teams and
  - the concept of "safe spaces", where individuals feel empowered to take risks and express thoughts more freely.
- Education and training: the transfer of knowledge and experience through formal and informal means.

A short inventory of these tools appears in Appendix B.

## ***7. Rapid Results Initiatives***

Organizations seeking to improve their knowledge base and knowledge practices should adopt the practice of rapid-results initiatives as proposed in the Harvard Business Review article, "Why Good Projects Fail Anyway"<sup>9</sup>, excerpted below:

Big projects fail at an astonishing rate...these efforts consume tremendous resources over months or even years. Yet as study after study has shown,

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<sup>9</sup> Matta, NF and Ashkenas, RN. "Why Good Projects Fail Anyway". Harvard Business Review, September 2003.

they frequently deliver disappointing returns – by some estimates, in fact, well over half the time. And the toll they take is not just financial. These failures demoralize employees who have laboured diligently to complete their share of the work....

[The authors found] that by designing complex projects differently, managers can reduce the likelihood that critical activities will be left off the plan and increase the odds that all the pieces can be properly integrated at the end. The key is to inject into the overall plan a series of miniprojects—what [the authors] call *rapid-results initiatives*—...each designed to deliver its result quickly... a rapid results initiative is intentionally commissioned to produce a measurable result, rather than recommendations, analyses or partial solutions...

This results orientation is important for three reasons. First, it allows project planners to test whether the activities in the overall plan will add up to the intended result, and to alter the plans if need be. Second, it produces real benefits in the short term [typically within 100 days]. Increasing pig weight in 30 farms by 30% in just over three months is useful to those 30 farmers no matter what else happens in the project. And finally, being able to deliver results is more rewarding and energizing for teams than plodding along through partial solutions...

[The approach challenges] the people close to the action to produce results – and unleash[es] the organization's collective knowledge and creativity in pursuit of discovery and achievement.

## **8. Adaptive management**

Concepts of individual and collective learning, adaptive management, and formal evaluation processes run throughout all the KM literature and practice. There is an increasing recognition that for learning to be transformational, there have to be mechanisms for monitoring work, relationships and knowledge exchanges as they progress.

Current research focuses on what is needed to be a "learning organization" -- one that takes an adaptive approach to its work, with shorter cycles of assessment and adjustment. However, none of the organizations interviewed in this Study really had good models and good practice for adaptive management. While their staff understand the need for learning processes, they are also stretched with actual project implementation, and look for ways of reducing their "reporting" burden, rather than adding to it.

Consequently, there is a growing trend within organizations like IUCN towards more informal "lessons learned" cycles, where knowledge gained is more rapidly and easily shared, and work adjusted accordingly. In general, there is growing acknowledgement that organizational cultures of adaptation need to be developed in order to respond more readily to changing circumstances.

## ***9. The international debate on K4D: Knowledge for Development***

The international Knowledge for Development debate has been narrowly interpreted as building telecommunications infrastructure and knowledge based services as part of economic development (rural telecentres; customer service centres; distance education delivery, etc.). And at times it is reduced to the challenge of bridging a perceived "digital divide" where the poorest countries and communities are left off the telecommunications grid. Interwoven with the K4D debate is the ongoing negotiation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), "to build a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life."<sup>10</sup> But what has not been fully explored through WSIS is where conservation and protection of the world's ecosystems fits into this people-centered ethic. The K4D debate is not yet about K4CD -- knowledge for conservation and development, or knowledge for sustainable development. Two silos are emerging in international policy making: one for environment and sustainable development decision making; and a separate one on building information societies, driven by the production of knowledge and the spread of telecommunications infrastructure, to improve economic and social development. And yet the policies and tools of the latter may serve to both advance and impede the goals of conservation and sustainable development.

Broader interpretations of K4D address the knowledge dimensions of development practices: what do organizations and communities "know" about social and economic development; how can they share that knowledge; how can they learn more and strengthen their knowledge base? Central to this is the growing understanding of grounding knowledge in local realities: "Scientific and technical knowledge that is not embedded within knowledge of the larger social and cultural context will, at best have a limited impact and, at worst, will distort development paths."<sup>11</sup>

IUCN is already sensitive to issues of capacity building, citizen and community empowerment and the value of local and traditional knowledge. But the Union may need to strengthen its understanding of the concept of "knowledge for conservation and development" – embedding its conservation knowledge in social, economic and cultural contexts in support of sustainable development. A recurring issue in the literature on knowledge practices is that internal organizational information and knowledge do not necessarily match external complexity<sup>12</sup>. An investigation into "knowledge for sustainable development" may reveal more about how local knowledge (and knowledge of local circumstances) can be mobilized in support of IUCN's work.

For example, several organizations interviewed noted that knowledge to support environment and development is more often about the lack of local capacity to use knowledge than about the lack of knowledge itself. Their

<sup>10</sup> World Summit on the Information Society. Declaration of Principles. [www.itu.org/wsis](http://www.itu.org/wsis)

<sup>11</sup> Stein, J. Opening Networks in Closing Systems: Knowledge Networks and Public Policy. 2003. Prepared for The International Development Research Centre in the preparation of its Corporate Strategy and Program Framework 2005-2010.

<sup>12</sup> Odeh Al-Jayyousi. "Knowledge creation in the water sector: towards a learning water organization". IN: International journal of water resources development 20 (2, 2004) : 165-175

stakeholders/audiences are aware of scientific findings, of policy frameworks, of legal requirements; but human capacity for implementation is weak and limited. What is missing is critical mass and continuity of people. Knowledge for conservation and development may become a useful framework to explore the relationship between what IUCN knows and what the communities in which it works understand and have the capacity to implement.

K4CD should also explore new forms of international governance. Every sustainable development organization is fascinated by the possibility that there may be new ways to move forward on decision making, new ways to foster political will on the part of nations, new ways to engage citizens and in so doing, catalyze collective changes in attitudes and behaviours. These new forms of governance are knowledge driven, consultative, problem solving; transnational, transsectoral, and indeed transgenerational, as they begin to include the next generation of decision makers. IUCN has already begun to play a part in such processes, through its role with the World Commission on Dams. The challenge here is one of scaling up: how can the knowledge of international governance gained from such experiments be replicated and applied to future processes, to become a new standard for international, knowledge based, sustainable development-centered decision making?

## **B. Success factors in strengthening KM practices**

The IUCN structure is unique among organizations in the environment, conservation and development fields. Many organizations have country offices; many have formal expert networks advising them, many have members, either institutional members or individuals who belong to the organization; but only IUCN has all three: IUCN has its country and regional offices; its has its Commissions as its networks of experts, and it has its institutional members. In some respects, agencies like UNDP might appear larger because of the size of their operations; but IUCN exceeds UNDP and even the World Bank when all of the members of commissions and the staff of the member institutions are considered in the equation of human resources and knowledge resources available for the Union to draw upon. Consequently, no single strategy or approach exists that has been developed by another agency that would meet all of IUCN's needs.

Furthermore, there is ongoing debate in the field of knowledge management about whether it is possible to set standards or benchmarks for knowledge management practices, and what those standards might be<sup>13</sup>.

Nevertheless, there are a number of knowledge management practices that appear consistently across a variety of organizations, regardless of structure and mandate. These "success factors" should be considered by IUCN as it begins to strengthen its own knowledge practices. The list of organizations interviewed, and details of their practices, are attached in Appendix D.

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<sup>13</sup>Skyrme, David. KM Standards: do we need them? In *Entovation International News*, September 2002. [http://www.skyrme.com/updates/u66\\_f2.htm](http://www.skyrme.com/updates/u66_f2.htm)



## ***1. A stated rationale for knowledge initiatives***

The rationale for adopting the language and practice of knowledge management varies from institution to institution, not surprisingly. In some cases, it is precipitated by crisis (financial crisis or a leadership change). In others, it is an attempt to gain competitive advantage. For example, The Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe noted that it was working in an increasingly competitive funding environment, and it needed to strengthen its ability to identify its expertise and bring its knowledge into play more rapidly than potential competitors. In one case, the organization recognized that knowledge retention was becoming an issue: that retirement of long time staff, and other staff turnover was leading to loss of methodologies that could be applied to new projects. In some cases, agencies began to ask fundamental questions about their role in the world, in response to growing criticism about aid effectiveness.

Where motivations have been clear from the start for introducing KM (as was the case with REC and UNDP), there has been some solid success with implementation. Where there has been a lack of shared understanding for the rationale for KM, implementation has been less than successful. The principal lesson here for IUCN is that there needs to be real clarity on the motivations for institutionalizing KM practices.

## ***2. KM efforts connected to both mission and operations***

KM should be dictated by the strategic plan of an organization – answering, for all staff, the “knowledge for what” question. KM practices must be tied directly to operations. Reviews of both CIDA and the World Bank noted this very significant disconnect between knowledge sharing initiatives and the actual day to day operations of the organizations. Of the development assistance agencies, UNDP was perhaps the most successful at reorienting itself into the business of providing advice for more effective development on the ground. Their SURF services then became the logical mechanism to broker people, institutions, and information. The introduction of the Global Practice Areas at UNDP is the mechanism to ensure that the advice and expertise of UNDP staff is the best that it can be. In general, they have been more successful at implementing “knowledge based” operations.

## ***3. Setting the objectives at the right level***

Unlike the research institutes and membership organizations, the development assistance agencies paid significantly more attention to starting with strategies for mobilizing knowledge. While beginning with strategic planning seems consistent with standard organizational management practices, experience seems to indicate that there can be real blockages to moving from strategy to implementation. This may reflect a common pitfall in attempting to structure knowledge sharing. Often a great deal of effort is invested in developing strategies, platforms, policies, protocols and so forth for an entire organization, only to have the whole system fail. The fundamental mistake is one of scale<sup>14</sup>: knowledge sharing works best when it is closest to the level of implementation

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<sup>14</sup> See also Nadim F. Matta; Ronald N. Ashkenas. Why Good Projects Fail Anyway. Harvard Business Review September 01, 2003.

and impact. One has to build the capacity to gather and communicate knowledge at the project/activity/field level before one can begin to aggregate up to corporate systems and general knowledge marketing strategies. The Chief Knowledge Officer of InfoDev noted that "knowledge flows are situation specific, and while infrastructure, systems and protocols are important, they must be designed and supported with specific purposes in mind." And the Executive Director of the Association for Progressive Communications confirmed that "knowledge flows better in time bound activities: the shorter, more focused the project the better the knowledge flows".

The research and membership organizations took notably different approaches to KM from the development assistance agencies. REC, APC, and TERI were looking for operational efficiencies; the champions were the mid level managers and even the staff, who were demanding better access to project and planning information. Their starting point tended to be the capturing of explicit knowledge in systematic ways for use internally. These organizations are all project oriented/project driven: consequently they have little time for extensive discussions and strategies for KM. They set up the systems they need, as they need them. Their primary "knowledge focus" is on how to have influence (getting their knowledge used by others) rather than how to support knowledge sharing internally. Their orientation is towards external knowledge communications.

#### ***4. Understanding the basic components of KM***

Much of current KM practice can be reduced to the following elements: good use of email functions and good design of web sites, combined with people learning how to plan and maintain interaction with each other and with external audiences. A success factor in good KM practice is the existence of strategies and tools to facilitate the following:

- a. Internal "KM": how an organization manages internal communications among its different parts in order to strengthen its knowledge base; how it is managing the archiving and sharing of knowledge products developed by its staff and partners.

In some organizations, the focus has been on the formation of structured communities of practice or thematic knowledge networks, supported by internal listservs and websites for exchanging information on their area of interest. In the research community, less attention has been paid to introducing such "communities", because informal channels for discussion already exist. Membership organizations (APC and TIG) strongly emphasized creating the space for dialogue among their members, but capturing that dialogue electronically so that it could be mined for ideas later. What is important is not the specific modality for internal communications but rather a combination of:

- the recognition that internal communications across the whole organization are necessary [and in IUCN's case, this would include individual members of Commissions, even staff of member organizations, as well as Commission Chairs, focal points and the Secretariat (HQ and country/regional offices).]
- the existence of tools actively deployed to support communications and the storage and retrieval of knowledge products
- regular examination of the sufficiency of these efforts and experimentation with new ways to improve communications.

- b. External "KM": how an organization flows its knowledge into the hands of the people it most wants to use it; how it strengthens its knowledge through its interaction with external experts and decision makers; how it knows whether its insights made a difference. Again, what is important here is not the specific modality for external KM, but whether there is:
- consideration of different modalities for collaboration and communication required, and selection of those that may be most appropriate for the task at hand
  - management of the relationship building and communications processes, with articulated objectives and anticipated outcomes within designated periods of time
  - regular monitoring and adjusting of these efforts.

## ***5. Working with combinations of strategies***

Not only was an overarching KM strategy not always effective within the organizations and literature reviewed, it was also rarely comprehensive in addressing the related issues of building relationships for influence, bringing in expertise outside of the organizations and strengthening communications for broader knowledge dissemination. A more realistic practice may be the deployment of three or four strategies that are related, but are not dependent on the others for their success.

- Internal communications strategies: Strengthening the tools for internal communications
- Influencing strategies: how to identify and maintain the relationships the organization needs to have with experts (to reinforce the quality of the organization's knowledge) and with those in positions to make change (bridging research and action).
- Communications strategies: how to flow the knowledge of the organization out to broader audiences, to build awareness of issues and receptivity to changes necessary in order to address issues.
- Administrative strategies for supporting the infrastructure for KM: Information technology, human resources (staff time available, tasks and training), and so forth.

## ***6. Defined roles and responsibilities***

No matter what strategies are deployed, at what level of activity, there are a number of important roles and responsibilities that an organization needs to define.

- KM needs a champion at the senior management level of an organization and that championship needs to be sustained for the long term.
- Equally important, KM also needs champions at the mid-management levels. These are the individuals who will connect knowledge needs and flows with the operations of the organization.
- The role of the external expert and the stakeholder, and how their knowledge will interface with that of the organization, should also be defined.
- Just as different strategies may need to be developed, so too different roles need to be recognized within those strategies. "Tipping point

management" is the process involved in recognizing and fostering specific individuals who play important roles in starting "idea epidemics" within and beyond an organization. Mavens are the research experts; connectors are those with connections to decision-makers; salespeople are those with the ability to craft and communicate messages.<sup>15</sup> Too often, organizations that see themselves as "knowledge based", and foster their research experts, overlook the equally important roles for connectors and salespeople.

- Specific roles and responsibilities for young professionals should also be articulated, as they often serve as both the connectors across an organization, and the beneficiaries of strengthened knowledge flows.

## ***7. Progress based on experimentation***

Piloting is a common practice in KM, and it is consistent with the trend towards experimentation rather than full scale analysis, strategy development and roll out across an organization. Both CIDA and UNDP started with pilots of their knowledge sharing initiatives: CIDA piloted an entire program of internal networks with staffing and budgets. UNDP, on the other, built on existing experiments with one or two SURFs operating out of country offices. Bellanet's work with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research knowledge management initiative is based on a similar principle: they are starting with two pilots, and developing them intensively over 18 months.

It is important to create room for experimentation, particularly with new technologies. IUCN needs to explore how it can institute a culture of in-house trial and error, testing and experimentation, in addition to the "large scale" strategy development that characterizes initiatives like the Species Information Service. Other organizations are making real progress in KM through experiments with blogs and online communities, with WIKI (open editing) technologies, even using Google-style algorithms to rank community members according to their level of participation and connectedness to other members of a community<sup>16</sup>. IUCN needs to find the creative space for its communications and technology teams to do the same. Rapid piloting, and then scaling up, can be as effective as planning large scale from the beginning.

## ***8. Planning for sustainability of knowledge mobilization processes***

Information networks and knowledge sharing portals have had checkered careers as mechanisms for supporting knowledge flows: there are probably as many failures of these as successes. Inevitably they come up against the challenges of long term sustainability: how to keep the information current; how to upgrade systems when necessary; the need for user testing for continuous improvement of quality and functionality. Often these systems are set up with the best of intentions, but lack long term strategies for maintenance and development; and in particular, lack the willingness or resources to restructure and upgrade portals as new understanding of user interactions and new technologies become

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<sup>15</sup> Excerpt from Creech and Willard; adapted from Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Boston: Little Brown & Company, 2000.

<sup>16</sup> For example, TIG is piloting a method to organize their community members on the principle that who you know and who knows you are important as what you know: And the more people who know you, the higher your ranking in the virtual community.

available. An emerging good KM practice is undertaking long term planning for sustainability of knowledge mobilization processes.

## **C. Infrastructure for supporting a knowledge based organization**

### ***1. Human resources***

The human resources requirements for knowledge management at IUCN need to be explored. Among the organizations interviewed, CIDA and REC both observed the need for one person to be tasked with responsibility for the oversight of KM processes. The role of the KM manager should be a proactive one, constantly fostering networks, eliciting information from staff, playing the "connector" role across the organization.

What does not yet exist in intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations is the concept of the relationships manager. One of the key findings in the private sector literature on strategic alliances is the need for every business to have an "alliance manager". In the context of IUCN, this would be an individual responsible for monitoring and assisting with getting the most value out of the full range of collaborative relationships engaged in by the Union – networks, partnerships, alliances, and so forth. At present, there does not appear to be a discipline of "relationship management" that extends far beyond the role of membership services or Commission focal points, but this may well be worth exploring.

The role of young professionals has in general been overlooked in the knowledge management literature and practice. However, they make a number of important contributions, including bringing new research and ideas to the table, acting as connectors among departments and organizations, and facilitating the use of new technologies for knowledge sharing. This is explored further in Section E, under Strategic Move #2, Approach B: Focusing on Young Professionals.

### ***2. Information Technology***

KM should not be driven by technology<sup>17</sup>; nevertheless, the knowledge /communications/ relationships field is supported by information and communications technologies. IUCN needs to review its current ICT capacity. More and more demands are going to be made for better Intranet service, for significantly more web publishing (potentially replacing much of its current print publishing operations), for managing virtual communications among dispersed groups, including engaging the Commissions more consistently, not to mention management of meta systems like the Species Information Service and the Conservation Commons.

### ***3. Intranet***

Intranets are crucial supporting tools for KM. Organizations interviewed noted the need for regular interaction with the users of their Intranets, responding to their

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<sup>17</sup> Berkman, Eric. When Bad Things Happen to Good Ideas: Knowledge management is a solid concept that fell in with the wrong company. Software companies, to be precise. Darwin Magazine, April 2001.

needs. It was encouraging to note that both REC and TERI had the willingness of their IT teams and the support of their administration to replace old systems that no longer served the users optimally. Intranets need constant care and upgrading in order to support the increasingly complex information and knowledge sharing needs of staff.

IUCN's intranet is an important tool to support knowledge capture and knowledge sharing, but some questions have arisen about the current usability of the system. User testing should be carried out, and user assistance sought to help address issues of usability.

## ***4. Financing***

Financing knowledge management can be complex. Often, the discussions on financing revolve around the costs of technical infrastructure. In fact, the real costs are in staff time – in organizations where time is tracked to project accounts, management must determine how to finance the time for knowledge sharing across project and program lines. In managing project knowledge, managers must build the costs for managing relationships and communications into project budgets; but they must also consider how to maintain those relationships and continue to disseminate that knowledge well beyond the lifespan of a given project.

## **D. IUCN's current practices for managing knowledge**

The Knowledge Management Study is designed to frame discussions on knowledge management across the Union. The study is intended to provide insight into new approaches to harness IUCN's knowledge for greater influence and impact in the world. It is not an evaluation of specific IUCN's knowledge management projects, networks or activities. Rather, the study endeavours to reflect to IUCN what its own staff and Commissions believe are necessary steps, and to review these steps in the light of how other organizations approach KM.

Much work has already been done across IUCN to mobilize IUCN's knowledge. The E-IUCN / Green Web strategy has been instrumental in helping IUCN apply new technologies for the management and communications of what it knows. Hundreds of projects at the regional level and within the Commissions touch on the many dimensions of KM: building networks to effect change; establishing communities of practice to share knowledge; developing information management systems; producing and disseminating knowledge products. IUCN's six knowledge initiatives spearheaded by the global programme and several Commissions are serving to advance current KM practices.

The following section reflects on IUCN's current understanding and practice of knowledge management.

### ***1. Information management systems and services***

Organizations often begin with the building of internal databases of their intellectual assets: organizational data, reports, contacts and staff competencies. Likewise, IUCN has a well established intranet [its "knowledge network"] and

project information management system (PIMS). Both have served as essential tools for capturing and archiving operational knowledge of the Secretariat, and are valued across the Secretariat by staff. Strengthening these tools is addressing in Strategic Move #4, Creating an enabling ICT environment.

IUCN has developed or is developing enriched information retrieval systems like Ecolex and the Species Information Service. The importance of information systems to the work of IUCN needs to be reasserted. While much of the KM study focuses on issues of influence, communications and relationships, many staff and Commission focal points have advocated for continuing to invest in information systems and services as critical to the dissemination of IUCN's core knowledge bases – scientific, legal and practitioner knowledge.

As noted by the Environmental Law Programme,

The role of information in building knowledge [needs to be acknowledged]. A library is a source of information, not knowledge. But in order to build knowledge you need access to a library. However a library without order is of little if any value. A library assists in building knowledge by providing ordered access to information.

With the Species Information Service, the challenge is likewise one of information access and retrieval. Stuart Salter notes that many countries have environmental legislation and regulatory frameworks for assessments, but they are not being implemented or adequately enforced. In his view, the gap is a lack of information to monitor and act upon within the regulatory framework. SIS will help to fill this gap by putting the Red List -- peer reviewed information -- into a digital, spatial format that can be globally accessed. SIS builds on an established social network – the species specialist groups provide both legitimacy and sustainability for the service. The elegance of the concept is that SIS will also serve as a day to day support mechanism for the specialist groups: linking internal information management needs with external delivery to decision makers.

In observing other decision support systems developed by IUCN members and presented at Congress, it is important to note that decision support systems should be as much or more about the decision as about the support system. Incorporating such efforts into strategies for influencing decisions and changes is discussed under Strategic Move #1.

## ***2. The Six Knowledge Initiatives***

Ecolex and SIS are two of six “knowledge initiatives” being implemented by IUCN, so-called because central to every initiative is the desire to mobilize IUCN's knowledge through innovative uses of partnerships, networks and technology. The other four initiatives are the Water and Nature Initiative (WANI), the Conservation Commons, the Protected Areas Learning Network (PALNet) and the World Conservation Learning Network (WCLN).

In the course of the KM study, these have been promoted as knowledge management pilots, lessons from which could help in the development of KM strategies across the Union. Several of these have been conceived and under development since at least 2000: at their knowledge mobilization workshop in Amman, the CEC explored what was underway in the Commissions to organize species information [now the SIS], environmental law information [Ecolex], and

to provide a knowledge service to park staff [now PALNet]. CEC itself proposed a model for a virtual university as an organizing framework for KM [which has evolved into the WCLN]<sup>18</sup>. However, although these ideas have been on the table for several years, SIS, PALNet and WCLN are still in the beta stages of their work. No external users or IUCN members are yet directly or regularly benefiting from the knowledge to be delivered through these initiatives. The Conservation Commons, although it has evolved from the Biodiversity Conservation Information Service (BCIS) is also still at an experimental stage, building relationships and buy-in to new principles. The search engine that indexes and retrieves documents across the group of member websites has only just been launched.

There is also some confusion in the regions about how these six initiatives relate to each other, how they will help the regions and how they will complement regional information management systems and networks (for example, the Zambezi Wetlands Information Management System; the Decision Support System for Himul Hindukesh; the Central African network of schools of natural resources, and so forth). Without diminishing the hard work that has been invested in all of these initiatives, and the prototyping that has taken place, WANI and Ecolex are the only two that have moved significantly beyond the technical development and partnership building stages.

Consequently, it is perhaps premature to assess the contributions that these pilots can make to forming KM strategies and systems across the Union. Nevertheless, in the development of these initiatives, a number of important KM practices, as well as gaps in capacity, are already evident, and should be incorporated into the strategies proposed in Strategic Move #3.

## Good practices

- Use of the initiative to support internal IUCN communities

Both SIS and PALNet are being designed to support the needs of their respective Commissions for improved storage of data (SIS) and field lessons (PALNet). And the Conservation Commons in turn will support SIS and PALNet, by addressing principles for data sharing, as well as more technical challenges of system inter-operability and spatial data referencing. Ecolex is a core working tool for the Environmental Law Programme and the CEL. Under Strategic Move #3, the Strategy for Human Resources, it is also suggested that PALNet and WCLN be considered as mechanisms for strengthening learning within IUCN itself.

- Initiatives designed in consultation with users

All six initiatives have also, from the beginning, not only looked at IUCN's internal KM needs, but at how to involve major partners and external users in the design of initiative objectives, systems and processes. This is particularly evident in WANI, with its 60 partners working across a number of regions to develop new tools for catchment management, drawing from local knowledge and experience as well as the scientific and policy knowledge of partners.

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<sup>18</sup> CEC. Mobilising Knowledge for Biodiversity: Amman Congress 2000 Interactive Session Report, p5.



This is consistent with the current trend towards “knowledge mobilization”, as discussed in Section A: Knowledge mobilization addresses how external knowledge (outside of the organization) is sought out and combined with internal knowledge to create new knowledge that meets the needs of target users/clients.<sup>19</sup> Knowledge mobilization emphasizes purpose (meeting the needs of clients) and looks to how one brings in the knowledge of others. It recognizes that organizing one's own intellectual capital does not necessarily lead to innovation or change; implicit in the concept is the need for working relationships with others

- Attention to learning methodologies as part of knowledge management

Three of the initiatives – PALNet, WCLN and WANI – address in particular how to transfer knowledge through learning methodologies. PALNet and WCLN have targeted professional development of conservation practitioners as key to moving IUCN's knowledge and that of its partners into practice.

- Efforts to make the best use, and push the boundaries of, technology

All initiatives are deploying sophisticated applications of technology: WANI and WCLN's development of the FLOW online course; The Conservation Commons' experiment with implementing a search engine to index a group of member websites; Ecolex's more structured approach to the organization, keywording and retrieval of its content; SIS and PALNet both considering how to incorporate spatially referenced data, with particular attention to the challenge of incorporating the World Protected Areas Database into their systems.

- Champions

All six initiatives have strong advocates and champions at the mid-management level who are positioned to connect knowledge needs and flows with the operations of the organization. In particular, SIS, PALNet and Ecolex are serving to connect Commission and Secretariat interests through the provision of tools that are being developed jointly and will be of direct use to both, in support of the “One Programme” concept. It was less clear how WANI and CEM intersect, although WANI's work with CEC and WCLN has broken new ground for IUCN with the creation of the FLOW training course.

## **Gaps in capacity**

- Setting distinctive and measurable goals and objectives

The champions for these initiatives all have broad visions for their work, and goal statements at times appear to overlap, leading regional programmes to question what the distinctions and complementarities are. Distinctions between the Conservation Commons, SIS, and PALNet, and between PALNet and WCLN, became clearer during presentations at Congress, but more work should be done internally to ensure that throughout IUCN (Commissions and regions as well as HQ) there is a clear

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<sup>19</sup> [Adapted from: *Advances in Strategic Management Conference on Strategy Processes*, INSEAD, 2003: C. Annique Un and Alvaro Cuervo-Cazurra.

understanding of the goals and objectives for each initiative, in comparison to the others.

In particular, it was unclear from the interviews and documentation provided what the measures for success for each of these initiatives would be. Much of the documentation (both in print and online) remains at the level of "brochure ware" – offering much promise, with real innovation in the concepts, but with little in terms of what has in fact been accomplished, how that assessment has been validated, and where the knowledge "outputs" are.

- Rapid results approach

As noted at the beginning of this section, several of these initiatives (SIS, PALNet, and WCLN) have been in various stages of conceptualizing and development for a number of years. Some consideration should be given to the "rapid results" approach presented in Section A, KM Trends, injecting into the overall plan "a series of miniprojects—what [the authors] call *rapid-results initiatives*—...each designed to deliver its result quickly... a rapid results initiative is intentionally commissioned to produce a measurable result."<sup>20</sup> These results could then be communicated (online or in print), demonstrating progress both within IUCN and to stakeholders and beneficiaries of these initiatives.

- Management of key partners

SIS, PALNet and the Commons all share Conservation International as a major partner, but it is not clear whether the initiatives or senior management are aware of what each initiative is negotiating separately with CI in terms of financial and in kind support, data sharing and long term involvement. For example, at various points in time over the past year, both PALNet and SIS have had at least tentative discussions with CI about CI hosting the PALNet and SIS data systems. This should raise some concerns over a potential large scale loss of ownership, brand, and credit for the Union's innovations. As discussed under Strategic Move #3, IUCN would benefit from more systematic attention to the management of partnerships and alliances, in order both to ensure fair and consistent dealing with partners, and also to secure IUCN's interests.

- Long term maintenance and sustainability

As discussed in Section B, Success factors, information networks and knowledge sharing portals have had checkered careers as mechanisms for supporting knowledge flows. Inevitably they come up against the challenges of long term sustainability: how to keep the information current; how to upgrade systems when necessary; the need for user testing for continuous improvement of quality and functionality. Often these systems are set up with the best of intentions, but lack long term strategies for maintenance and development.

Because SIS is built on the ongoing data gathering and assessments of the Species Specialist Groups, it is well positioned for sustainability, at least in terms of keeping the information current. Ecolex has addressed this challenge by securing relationships with library and information

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<sup>20</sup> Matta, NF and Ashkenas, RN. "Why Good Projects Fail Anyway". Harvard Business Review, September 2003.

management schools to provide volunteer support to keep its databases current. Both have also secured major partners (ORACLE and CI, for SIS; FAO and UNEP, for Ecolex) that will help share the burden for long term technology support and user testing. Both have well established communities of users.

Long term planning for the sustainability of PALNet, WCLN and the Commons is not as evident. These three initiatives not only have technical challenges, they will also have to continuously cultivate their practitioner communities to use the systems they develop, and find ways to ensure that new content is being contributed.

- Technology support

Technology support for knowledge management, including these initiatives, is addressed in Strategic Move #4, Creating an Enabling ICT environment.

## Sketches of the Knowledge Initiatives

### The Species Information Service

“Through its volunteer membership of 7,000 species conservation experts, the Species Survival Commission holds the world's most complete body of information on the status and distribution of species threatened with extinction.

The data and information remains widely dispersed and often difficult to access. An extension of the Red List Programme, the web-enabled Species Information Service draws from this and complementary resources to provide an easily accessible global system for monitoring the status and trends of biodiversity to support scientific discovery, natural resource management and policy formulation... In turn these networks empower decision-makers, policy-makers, scientists, natural resource managers, educators and local communities to make use of their expert knowledge”.<sup>21</sup>

### Conservation Commons

The Commons, numbering 27 organizations at the time of writing, came together in response to IUCN's open invitation to the conservation community to examine how principles of Open Source and Open Content could serve to strengthen the sharing of data and information across organizations, by changing how intellectual property rights are viewed and managed. Other impediments to the sharing of knowledge are now being identified and solutions sought by the Commons, including the need for inter-operability of systems and databases; the need for spatially referenced data, and improved search and retrieval of documents held by members of the Commons.

“The Commons is ... a collaborative effort to improve open access to and unrestricted use of data, information and knowledge related to the conservation of biodiversity... It encourages organizations and individuals alike to place documents, data and other information resources related to conservation in the public domain. ... Second, the Conservation Commons is an approach designed to improve the management of data, information and knowledge related to conservation...”<sup>22</sup>

### Protected Areas Learning Network (PALNet)

PALNet's basic goal is to make available to practitioners and decision makers lessons learned from the field on managing protected areas in response to global change.

“PALNet is an interactive, web-based knowledge management tool aimed at enabling protected areas managers, policy-makers and other stakeholders to adapt their policies, strategies and practices to anticipate the threats to protected areas and at the same time capture new opportunities generated by these changes.

It has been developed to encourage protected areas managers to exchange experiences on specific areas of common interest, shift their scale of vision and activities to whole ecosystems and bioregions, and adapt their plans and investments to a context of accelerating change. A regional network of field learning sites and regional nodes provide the project with a solid field-oriented base and ensures “bottom-up” input into the knowledge-building process”.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> From Rich Tradition, Focused Future: KM brochure

<sup>22</sup> Excerpted from [www.conservationcommons.org/about.htm](http://www.conservationcommons.org/about.htm)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

### World Conservation Learning Network (WCLN)

Originally conceived as a mechanism for moving IUCN's applied research into tertiary level education and training programmes, the WCLN is evolving into a demand driven service, in which members seek first to understand the respective knowledge needs of their fellow partners in the network, and then work together to meet those needs.

"[WCLN is] a global partnership engaging universities, other institutions of training and higher education, and the conservation, environment and development community, in order to build the capacity of professionals to meet conservation and sustainable development goals. [The Network will act as]

- a platform for exchange – facilitating communities of practice and networking between institutions engaged in capacity development for environmental sustainability
- A broker between institutions of higher education and capacity development, and the environment and sustainable development sectors
- A centre of excellence in on-the-job professional development and distance learning for environmental sustainability"<sup>24</sup>.

### Ecolex

ECOLEX is a system for the storage and retrieval of national environmental legislation, judgments, treaties and literature. The Environmental Law Programme notes that:

"Ecolex is managed as a partnership between three organizations (FAO, IUCN and UNEP). The three organizations have determined what information is essential in order to assist building capacity. They have determined who should provide what, and how this information should be sourced, referenced, and searched. One can search for literature, law and treaties by agreed key word or area, and this is being expanded to court decisions (with the help of the Commission Judiciary Specialist Group). The partners are applying an in-depth knowledge of the issues and capacity building needs to provide ordered and credible information from the three information providers".

### The Water and Nature Initiative (WANI)

"WANI consists of a coherent set of innovative activities targeted at guiding future investments and actions in water resources management and nature conservation. More than 60 partners, including IUCN members, work together under IUCN leadership to provide knowledge and develop tools to encourage the mainstreaming of an ecosystem approach into catchment policies, planning and management.

WANI uses knowledge and learning to lay the foundation for good decision-making and delivery of results. Reflection on approaches and tools, and exchange between field sites are encouraged to help identify solutions that work. Results are shared with the widest possible audience through books and guidelines illuminating concepts, experiences and lessons, a Wetlands and Water Resources e-Atlas and a set of benchmarks for freshwater biodiversity."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Excerpted from [www.iucn.org/themes/cec/wcln](http://www.iucn.org/themes/cec/wcln)

<sup>25</sup> From Rich Tradition, Focused Future

### ***3. Organizational knowledge sharing***

Information management systems tend to be designed to support the information needs of individual users. An Intranet, for example, may be designed for individuals to enter data on behalf of themselves or on behalf of a group, and for people to retrieve information on an individual basis, as they need it. But organizational knowledge sharing is also about pooling knowledge in social ways, beyond supporting individual access.

Large or geographically distributed organizations will often develop internal “communities of practice” for colleagues to work collaboratively and to share knowledge among themselves. IUCN too has a number of formal and informal groups:

- The Commissions have their specialist and working groups which tend to be task oriented;
- Headquarters supports its Conservation Networking Group for exploring new ideas and project findings;
- Networks of specialists in areas such as forests and water have been set up throughout the secretariat, with focal points in each of the regional offices as well as at HQ;
- In addition, three internal networks have been established on the cross cutting issues of social policy, economics and environment, and gender, each led by a senior advisor. All have a mainstreaming agenda and a capacity building mission (although the gender advisor has observed that at least in her field, the focal points in the regional offices often don't work well [citing capacity limitations], and that there is little or no connection between these networks and Commission expertise);
- The Senior Gender advisor has built an international learning community on gender issues -- [www.genderandenvironment.org](http://www.genderandenvironment.org) -- “dedicated to research, documentation and exchanges of experiences that promote the mainstreaming of gender equity perspective in environmental management initiatives”.
- Young professionals within the Secretariat have established an ad hoc group to discuss their interests.

Nevertheless, there are significant challenges in flowing knowledge more freely throughout all components of the Union: between Regional and Country Offices and Headquarters, between Regions and Commissions, and between Secretariat and Members.

**Asia Regional Office:** We don't know what is happening in other regions.

**Regional Office, Central Africa:** the Commissions produce a flow of documents which we receive and put in our documentation centre... However, we don't have a systematic way of getting information from the Commissions when we need it.

**IUCN Europe:** [There] is a bottleneck; we know that there is a lot of knowledge out there [but] we need to get it to European Commission offices often with very short deadlines; we don't have tools to gather that information within the IUCN network, in order to filter it, process it, do a quality assessment.

Other organizations are moving beyond keeping knowledge sharing as an internal function. The latest trend is to bring the knowledge of experts outside of an organization into their internal operations. In the private sector, and in particular

the computer gaming world, there is an almost symbiotic relationship between the product developer and the product user. Opportunities are opening up for IUCN to interact more closely with key agencies in these kinds of knowledge exchanges. The CIDA - IUCN Framework Agreement provides the basis for IUCN to help inform CIDA's work; the advice of regional and country offices is often sought out by state and regional actors; the World Conservation Learning Network is developing a set of relationships for moving IUCN knowledge into academic environments. But there is a significant barrier to success with these efforts: if knowledge is not flowing easily throughout the union, how can IUCN serve these closer interactions with key agencies?

This issue is further discussed:

- Under Strategic Move #2, where roles are suggested for all components of the Union as part of strengthening the social network of the organization in order to improve knowledge flows
- Under Strategic Move #3, where a strategy for internal communications and learning is proposed.

#### ***4. Knowledge production and delivery***

Organizations are paying more attention to the marketing of their knowledge, targeting audiences more strategically and using a variety of print, electronic and mass media vehicles to communicate their messages. IUCN has recently developed a methodology to track where and how IUCN's knowledge products and services are being used. But although many IUCN products may be well targeted, by themselves those products may not lead to changes in the field or to the influence that IUCN seeks to have in the world.

**SSC:** Is the Red List by itself enough?

**South America Regional Office:** [re: managers of protected areas:] There is an assumption that knowledge will improve the quality of their work. We have to create conditions for them to improve their work.

What is particularly interesting in the snowball methodology used in the study of Commission knowledge products is that it reveals as much about the social networks of the Commissions as it does about the products themselves. As discussed in Section A, Trends:

Social capital is becoming recognized as important as intellectual capital. Social capital is built through interaction and leads to improved knowledge sharing ... Social network analysis is the mapping and measuring of how knowledge flows through these relationships. It is a new view of the old adage that "it's not what you know, it's who you know". As groups begin to explore how to bridge research, policy and action, it will become critical to understand how information flows through social networks and how to build social capital with decision makers to create those channels for knowledge.

The adoption of an Influencing Strategy approach, as discussed under Strategic Move #1, is key to building the relationships necessary for getting IUCN's knowledge products and services into use. Further discussion and a strategy for communications of products and services can also be found in Strategy Move #3.

The Knowledge Products and Services Study also raised concerns over quality assurances in the development of IUCN's products. The Study revealed that

products were accepted and released without peer review, leaving vulnerable IUCN's reputation as a credible knowledge source. The Study recommended that IUCN's formal review process be reinforced.

In the KM Study, interviews with regional and outposted offices indicated a lack of clarity on what quality assurance mechanisms were in place, experience with bottlenecks in the peer review process, and beliefs that strategies for approving content at IUCN are now dated. As an illustration of current frustrations, mention was made of a project on developing guidelines for Arctic oil and gas exploration. The project manager was unable to get a response to a request for peer review in order to formally publish the final product with IUCN's logo. The client accepted the product and, in the absence of action by IUCN, published the materials on its own website – that knowledge, although developed by IUCN, is now effectively "lost" to IUCN.

In Strategic Move #2, under the Role of the Secretariat, it is suggested that the Secretariat become more innovative in its quality assurance protocols. As IUCN does more and more work in partnership with others and as it responds more directly to client requests, the more traditional approach of vetting findings through in-house committees may no longer be sufficient.

## ***5. Working together in networks and partnerships***

**Asia Regional Office:** Most people confuse knowledge with product, and the sharing of knowledge as the dissemination of product. Knowledge, and knowledge sharing is about building relationships and about communications.

While research networks have been in existence for many years, network, alliance and partnership models have become increasingly popular for sharing and applying knowledge and generating new knowledge among members and partners. IUCN has a wealth of experience emerging from the regions in the development and management of networks and partnerships with other organizations – both partnerships that they manage in initiating work, like the partnerships that the Regional Office for Central Africa had to establish for the Waza Logone wetlands rehabilitation work, and networks catalyzed to carry work forward independently, like the Sahalian wetlands group brought together through the Regional Office for West Africa. The Commissions have over many years invested in building networks of experts. And efforts like TILCEPA (Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities, Equity and Protected Areas) are demonstrating how working groups within two Commissions can partner on a common front.

Nevertheless, the practice of networking and partnerships may be uneven across the Union.

- No principles or guidelines for managing partners and networks appear to exist.
- HQ, regional and outposted offices all raised a wide variety of questions related to partnership management: how should partners be selected; how should the knowledge developed jointly be managed; how does one capitalize on the relationship to increase influence; how to maintain consistent relations with partners like Conservation International who are involved in a number of major projects and initiatives; and so forth.
- The Bossey Report advises that the Commissions need to strengthen their networking capacity.



**South America Regional Office:** we need to do a lot more work on partnership and relationship management.

This issue is discussed further and a relationships management strategy proposed under Strategic Move #3.

## ***6. Recognizing the challenge of the “pluralism” of knowledge***

“Scientific and technical knowledge that is not embedded within knowledge of the larger social and cultural context will, at best have a limited impact and, at worst, will distort development paths.”<sup>26</sup>

Early in the Study, the Chief Scientist reflected on the need to look at other models of “knowing”. The underlying values and beliefs within different knowledge systems – whether these are faith-based, or rooted in indigenous and traditional understandings, or stem from local cultures -- can influence how information is gathered, enriched through dialogue and applied to conservation. Even within the western scientific tradition, CEESP members noted that there is no “one knowledge”: there are in fact many theories, many scientists – “The conservation field is based on interaction”. CEM likewise questioned whether there was only “one knowledge base”. CEL observed that in their work, the different legal traditions also need to be considered: common law, civil law, Islamic law, communist and customary laws. They too are seeking to understand how one integrates different knowledge systems and traditions into conservation work on the ground.

In its Knowledge-Empowerment-Governance Framework, IUCN has pledged to:

- *Recognise, respect and promote dialogue between different knowledge systems; and*
- *Promote the integration of traditional, local and scientific knowledge in the management and conservation of natural resources;*

But how does one do this? Does one need to make choices about what knowledge “counts”, as CEESP queried? How does one manage subtle – and not so subtle – disagreements? Can knowledge be collective, reflecting the different values and perceptions of all stakeholders? Can knowledge be co-managed, as part of efforts to co-manage resources at the local level?

There already exists in the academic literature a rich body of learning on how to connect traditional environmental knowledge with western science. Research in the far north leading to co-management arrangements that incorporate respect for different knowledge systems is well known<sup>27</sup>. Undoubtedly IUCN also has a great deal of practical experience within the regions on how values and cultures have been taken into consideration in its many projects. But these lessons may not have been documented; leaving the knowledge of how to integrate different ways of understanding a local resource in the hands of individual project

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26 Stein, J. *Opening Networks in Closing Systems: Knowledge Networks and Public Policy*. 2003. Prepared for The International Development Research Centre in the preparation of its Corporate Strategy and Program Framework 2005-2010.

<sup>27</sup> For example, see the work of Dr. Fikret Berkes; more generally, see “Traditional Knowledge in Socio-Ecological Systems”. Ed. Carl Folke. *Ecology and Society*. Vol 9 no. 3, 2004

managers and the stakeholders themselves. No guidelines appear to exist that could help IUCN managers of current or new projects to take the plurality of knowledge into consideration in their work.

It may be useful for the Secretariat to develop resources on the Intranet to help project managers to understand how to work with different knowledge systems, including:

- how to bring in all sources of knowledge held in the minds and hearts of stakeholders;
- how to recognize where conflicts in values and cultures may arise;
- how to manage the interaction among stakeholders so that all knowledge is enriched and shared
- how to create a sense of collective ownership of the knowledge.

Such resources could be synthesized from IUCN's own experience and from the academic literature. The WCLN has already expressed an interest in how to bring in indigenous knowledge into its learning systems; and CEESP has laid some useful groundwork with its extensive study into co-management of protected areas. Both CEC/WCLN and CEESP may be very interested in taking on the challenge of developing the tools for the Secretariat. See the Strategy for Internal Communications and Learning under Strategy Move #3, for further discussion of this as one of a number of possible "rapid results initiatives".

## E. Four Strategic Moves for IUCN in 2005-2010

IUCN needs an upgrade to the next generation of strategies and processes for mobilizing its knowledge, its relationships and its communications. This study suggests four strategic moves for the Union to undertake in 2005-2008. There will be a role in this upgrade for every component of the Union -- Commissions, Members and the Secretariat; IUCN's partners and donors; its administrative staff as well as programme staff; its experts and consultants, and the new generation of conservation professionals.

The knowledge management field is fluid and dynamic. Organizations are deploying a multitude of tools and approaches, adopting a variety of modes of collaboration both to improve the quality of their knowledge and get it into use more broadly. No single approach exists that has been developed by another agency that would meet all of IUCN's needs. Nor is the development of a single, overarching KM strategy necessarily the most practical and effective way for IUCN to proceed. As noted in the first part of the Study, IUCN has several knowledge-related challenges facing it:

1. *Limited influence and impact on policy and practice*
2. *Impediments to horizontal knowledge flows – limited interconnectivity across the parts of the Union*
3. *Impediments to vertical knowledge flows – knowledge remaining at the project level*
4. *Concerns about the quality of IUCN's knowledge products and services, and how to strengthen the knowledge base and expertise of staff*

Actions should be planned around several critical leverage points to address these challenges and make use of what IUCN has already learned about mobilizing its knowledge. Acting on several leverage points now rather than attempting to design an overarching, enterprise-wide strategy will have the following benefits:

- Simple things that need to be done and can be done now will not get overlooked as easily.
- Faster implementation with an emphasis on measurable results: This approach draws from the concept of *rapid-results initiatives* described in Section D. Each of these strategic moves can be started through a series of initiatives designed to deliver their results quickly and produce measurable results.
- Responsibility can be delegated to various managers and parts of the Union rather than relying solely on an individual or small team within HQ to advance a global strategy for KM. While KM needs a champion at the top, it also needs champions – and practitioners – in the middle, throughout global and regional programmes and the Commissions. A planned series of moves shifts the ownership and experience to the middle.

The following strategic moves are recommended for the next intersessional period:

1. Begin to reorient major projects/activities (existing and new) to focus on influence: identifying what needs to be changed, who is in a position to effect that change and building relationships with them from the beginning of the project.
2. Define and manage new roles for an expanded "DNA" of IUCN that now includes not only Commissions, Members and Secretariat, but partners, new networks, external consultants and donors; and should include roles for young professionals.
3. Develop a set of interconnected strategies for the following:
  - Relationships and partnerships management
  - Managing external communications
  - Strengthening internal communications and learning
  - Human Resources
4. Create the enabling ICT environment.

## Move #1: Move beyond producing knowledge to influencing change

**Program and Policy Group Executive Committee:** We are not influencing the world the way we should.

**CEC:** A greater understanding is needed of how change happens.

### *Issues identified at the beginning of the Study*

How can IUCN bridge the gaps between science, policy and practice? Questions of the lack of purposefulness of IUCN knowledge products, the supply model versus the demand model, all derive from the more fundamental challenge of how to identify what needs to be changed in the world. Organizations are beginning to learn that too often, they begin with what they want to know, and then do their research. Only when their research is done do they consider how this knowledge might be communicated to others. In order to mobilize knowledge to have influence in the world, organizations may need to change their starting point.

**Asia Regional Office:** The purpose of knowledge management is to influence, to change policy, to change behaviour: that link is often missing in IUCN.

### *Approach:*

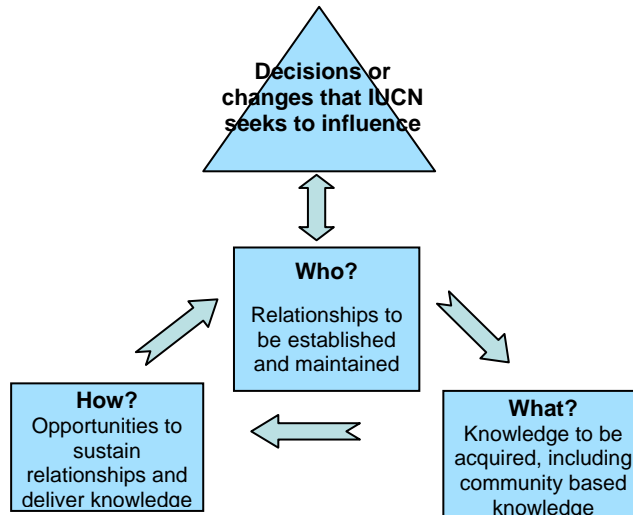
There needs to be a shift in approach to programme and project development: Having influence begins with determining what exactly it is you want to influence – what decisions do you want to influence; what specific changes do you want to see in the world. From there, you determine who you need to influence -- who is in a position to make or influence that decision or effect that change. Only then do you consider the knowledge question: what knowledge does that person need; what do you need to know in order to advise them, and how are you going to share that knowledge with them.<sup>28</sup>

**Environmental Law Programme:** There is a need to change the way that IUCN staff are going about their business.

IUCN should consider how it can more clearly and explicitly anchor major projects (existing and new) in changes desired; and to emphasize the importance of building relationships from the beginning of its work. Many of these elements are present in the new intersessional programme. And there is a rich understanding of this in many regional projects.

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<sup>28</sup> Based on IISD's Influencing Strategy. See also Appendix C.



**South America Regional Office:** it is important in South America to remember that some tools only work after face to face interaction. You need to get to know the person first... [and] you have to keep the personal relationship up in order to see whether they are using your knowledge to improve their work.

The outgoing Chair of the Commissions noted during the Programme Committee session at Congress that this approach reverses the value chain so often promoted at IUCN, of moving from data to knowledge to action: instead the influencing strategy identifies the actions needed, and then focuses on the knowledge and the data needed for those actions.

The question has been raised about the difference between advocacy and influence. During Congress, the Chair of the Programme Committee provided clarity on the distinctions during Congress:

Advocacy often takes one position and prescribes action – this approach is only one way to have influence. The prescriptive nature of advocacy can be problematic: governments become resistant to prescriptions from outside. In order to have influence, an organization may instead present a variety of options, on which governments can then overlay their own concerns and issues.

Particularly important is the engagement factor, in which an organization builds relationships with government actors rather than targeting them for the receipt of prescriptions. In this way, actors become directly involved in developing new approaches, and have a vested interest in their adoption.

An influencing strategy approach may help to address a number of perpetual concerns for IUCN:

1. Supply vs demand

The Influencing strategy approach is not necessarily a shift from IUCN's "supply" approach to becoming more "demand" oriented, although certainly there is room for IUCN to become more aware of the immediate needs of target decision makers. At the Amman Congress Interactive Session on knowledge management organized by the CEC, participants agreed that "IUCN could become more customer oriented, providing knowledge services more in tune with what our clients want and need".

With the Influencing Strategy approach, IUCN still sets the agenda, based on the values and perspectives of its members rather than the values of "clients". IUCN determines what it believes needs to be changed in the world, and then creates the demand for its knowledge through engaging key actors as the first step in influencing change.

2. Private sector interactions

There often appears to be an assumption that IUCN has a "mother lode" of knowledge that could somehow be repackaged for use by the private sector. [For example, this appears to be an underlying premise of the Business and Biodiversity project with the International Finance Corporation.] An influencing strategy approach would, from the start of project design, consider whether various private sector actors would have a role to play in the changes being sought, would identify by name those actors, and would as part of the project develop and deliver products in formats and in times when they would be most useful to those actors in the private sector.

3. Moving beyond government environment departments and environmental NGOs

IUCN has traditionally worked with government environment departments, in part because those are often the state members within IUCN. Developing influencing strategies may help IUCN country and regional offices to move beyond targeting government environment departments as recipients of IUCN's work, towards engaging bureaucrats in health, energy, finance and other departments too, who may also be influential in securing changes in policy and practice. It may also broaden IUCN's engagement with other actors working at the cross section of environment and development, including the Oxfams, Cares, and development and relief assistance agencies.

4. Opportunities for influence

It has been suggested by individuals at IUCN that IUCN has a very limited understanding of how recognize, prioritize and take advantage of opportunities to have influence. While it has done very well with utilizing the processes around the Convention on Biological Diversity, the sense is that many other opportunities are being missed, or that IUCN is not engaging in them as fully as it should. These would include, for example, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment; the Millennium Development Goals, the Commission on Sustainable Development, UNEP's GEO process; and at the national level in some countries, the drafting of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers [ensuring that environment and conservation issues are being addressed in PRSPs]. Again, by focusing from the start in project and programme design on what to influence, and who to influence, many of these processes may become much more visible and important to IUCN. And the interventions will be planned and executed more systematically.

5. Policy influence

The current study on IUCN's policy influence may demonstrate that IUCN has had some success with influencing national and international policies, although perhaps in very limited areas. An Influencing Strategy approach to IUCN's work will more systematically identify those policies that IUCN seeks to change, together with the framework for how to go about leveraging that change. This may alter the roles of those currently tasked with increasing IUCN's policy influence – the Brussels office, the multilateral office in D.C., the HQ policy unit and the Environmental Law Programme through its work on environmental governance – by focusing directly on:

- What policies [domestic; international] need to be changed,
- Who at IUCN will be responsible for developing and executing strategies to influence those changes,
- Who will be a source of the knowledge needed to influence those changes; and
- Who will be responsible for creating or seizing the opportunities to get that knowledge applied to policy change?

Some considerations for IUCN as it seeks to develop Influencing Strategies across its new Intersessional Programme:

1. The Influencing Strategy approach is a relatively new concept developed by IISD. Our observations to date are that it works best at the project planning/initiative level, where specific changes and decisions can be clearly identified, and where progress towards those changes can be monitored. This approach mobilizes knowledge more immediately and directly, in direct support of the actions desired. The more specific the change sought, the more possible it is to identify and name the individuals in positions to effect those changes. This approach is changing the culture of the organization, to talk less about our audiences as "business, government and civil society" and more about how to reach specific individuals within those sectors on any given project.
2. Developing Influencing Strategies will reveal gaps in institutional capacities, or how those capacities are currently deployed – particularly in the areas of building and managing relationships, and using varieties of communications tools as part of the influencing process. Implementation of the strategies outlined in Strategic Move #3 will be necessary to support the development and execution of project/initiative influencing strategies. And, as projects and initiatives are budgeted, managers will need to consider directing more resources towards managing relationships and communications rather than towards more traditional research tasks.
3. Training and testing: IISD, in collaboration with UNEP and the GEO process, is currently developing training materials on how to prepare influencing strategies<sup>29</sup>. These materials may be of some assistance to IUCN. A starting point for IUCN in the next three to six months may be to hold a workshop to draft influencing strategies for a select number of activities in the regions and for a select number of global programme activities, including one or two of the knowledge initiatives, one or two Commission activities [outside of the knowledge initiatives] and one or two other global programme areas, such as Forests.

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<sup>29</sup> See Appendix C for more information



4. There is an opportunity for Global Communications to take ownership of the Influencing Strategy, to develop it further:
  - Seeking out the experience of regional programmes on how they build relationships in order to have influence, and plan their work accordingly
  - Developing and implementing training in the preparation and implementation of Influencing Strategies
  - Guiding the development of a number of pilot strategies, monitoring their success and adapting both the pilot strategies and the approach as necessary.

### IISD's Influencing Strategy

**Step 1.** All of our work must be anchored by the decisions or changes in the world that we are seeking to effect, recognizing that there are many other external influences that may also lead to those decisions or changes. Our starting point in every project is a clear understanding of what the anchor for the project is – an articulation of the decision or change that needs to be made. The decision or change we are seeking must be grounded in reality but focused on positive action.

**Step 2.** Next, we need to identify those who are in positions to make the decision or effect the changes; those who can influence the decision makers directly (the people who lean in to whisper advice into the ears of the decision makers); those in civil society who can bring pressure to bear on decision makers; those who can support, reinforce and strengthen our recommendations, in particular the academic community and other research institutes; those in the media through whom we reach the public, who can also influence decision makers; and the donor community, who can finance and support our efforts. Central to determining who to reach is the concept of **relationship management**: maintaining our connections and our influence over time.

**Step 3.** Once we have articulated who will help with achieving the decision we seek, we need to analyze both what they need to know, and what we need to know, that will help them take or influence the decision. This ranges from the provision of information already in existence, to our own policy analysis, to original research, to collaborative research through our knowledge networks. We look at this as the **knowledge management** process – the identification, analysis and packaging of existing knowledge and the generation of new ideas, concepts and applications.

**Step 4.** Next we need to determine how to move that knowledge into the hands of those we want to influence. We have many tools available to do this: training and capacity development; the products we release, the conferences and workshops we hold, the partnerships we foster, and our amplifiers, including our electronic mailing lists and websites, which get replicated throughout much wider audiences than we may have targeted. At the heart of the tactics and strategies that we develop is our creative **management of opportunities**: both taking advantage of key windows to move our work into the hands of others, and creating opportunity directly.

**Step 5.** We know that in most our work, we cannot easily demonstrate causality – that our efforts have led directly to the decision we were seeking. But we can look at incremental changes – changes in attitudes, actions, and behaviours – that are a direct outcome of our work. Monitoring and assessment mechanisms must be in place so that we can identify and map these incremental changes that will lead towards the decisions or changes we are seeking.

**Step 6.** Finally, our work contributes to the larger environment of SD knowledge: both strengthening our internal understandings and supporting the broader community of SD researchers and practitioners.

## Move #2: Make better use of IUCN's DNA for strengthening relationships and sharing knowledge

### *Issues identified at the beginning of the Study*

The scientific credibility of the Commissions combined with the political credibility of the membership, the reach of the Secretariat programme offices and UN Observer status result in a respected, credible and capable alliance of key scientists, decision-makers and managers. The potential of this alliance to share expertise and experience and to provide strategic leadership in addressing conservation and development needs is unsurpassed in the conservation movement.<sup>30</sup>

However, in exploring knowledge flows with Regional and Commission programmes, it is becoming clear that the IUCN DNA is now much more than the triple helix of Commission, Members and Secretariat. IUCN now includes in its work partners who are not members; longer term institutional relationships with intergovernmental bodies who are not state members; experts who are not members of Commissions; donors who are seeking a more interactive relationship with IUCN; and the hundreds of young professionals who have flowed through IUCN as interns, volunteers, and limited term project staff. How can the Union manage the relationships that it now has in order to realize the value of the organization beyond the sum of the parts?

### ***Approach A: Clarify roles for the “triple helix”.***

**Species Survival Commission:** - What is the best way to mobilize knowledge in support of the Mission, as elaborated in the Programme? What is the role of the Member? Of a Commission, or a Commission member? of the Secretariat, at HQ, in the Regions?

Many of the conversations around knowledge management at IUCN come back to this fundamental question of roles of the three pillars of the organization.

## **Commissions**

As mandated by the Statutes, the role of the Commissions is to bring experts together “to develop and advance the institutional knowledge and experience and objectives of IUCN”.<sup>31</sup> A key lesson from the field of knowledge management and knowledge networks is that the knowledge of experts can be advanced through actual work on projects and through planned interaction with other experts in their field. **The Commissions should therefore be working networks, and every member should be expected to contribute in one form or another.**

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<sup>30</sup> Rich tradition, Focused Future: Brochure of the KM Study distributed at Congress, 2004

<sup>31</sup> IUCN Statutes Part VIII, section 73

This point alone is key to the role of the Commissions. All Commissions should review whether and how their members are contributing to their network. For example, the volunteerism study of SSC found that some SSC members were inactive because they were not asked to do anything – resulting in a loss of opportunity to share and advance their knowledge. There are implications here for:

- Reviewing the mandates of Commissions, moving towards more goal and objective oriented work plans in support of the “one programme” accord;
- Revitalizing the membership of Commissions by more actively and deliberately engaging members in those work plans; and
- Tightening up the membership of some Commissions by inviting only those individuals who will be assigned specific roles and tasks in Commission work.

The Knowledge Management Study further suggests:

1. That Commissions consider how to be more strategic in assessing where and how they can have influence, using the model of the Influencing Strategy to guide current and future project development.

Under the “One Programme” accord, the Commissions and the Secretariat should consider together how they can more clearly and explicitly anchor major projects (existing and new) in changes desired; and to emphasize the importance of building relationships from the beginning of their work.

2. That Commissions review and act on the recommendation of the 2004 External Review of IUCN Commissions on strengthening communications within and between Commissions. Weakness in internal communications will prevent members from contributing their knowledge, lead to many non-performing relationships on the books of every Commission.

Internal communications is only the beginning, however. Commissions should be looking for opportunities to work together. Providing the tools – email listservs that are open to participation across Commissions, short term projects and so forth can help strengthen activities between Commissions that will serve to advance IUCN's knowledge even further.

**Environmental Law Programme:** The larger challenges are to link the knowledge across Commissions, and more particularly linking knowledge from global programmes and Commissions to the field level...There are good examples in the Union but they are not frequent enough. The reason relates to practices at both local and global level – including the issue of mutual respect and supportiveness. We need strong and recognised global expertise that is relevant and can be adapted and applied locally. What we have been doing with environmental flows is a good example of what can be done in combining global and local expertise and experience.

3. Further, that work on communications include how to open such knowledge sharing systems to individual staff of the Secretariat, in the regions and at HQ, beyond the designated focal points.

**Regional Office Central Africa:** How can we work with the Commissions to find out what is important, what is a priority finding, what is most relevant for application on the ground?

The formal structure of Commissions intersecting with Secretariat through the Programme and Planning Group focal points may need to be rethought. Fundamentally, Commissions connect individuals with individuals. The concept of connecting a Commission Committee with a Secretariat committee may be undermining the strength of individual connections. Commission individuals should be connecting with all the experts throughout the Secretariat and throughout the membership. The conversations need to be opened up considerably – IUCN needs to make much more strategic use of moderated discussion groups to bring together individuals from all parts of the Union that are working on complementary initiatives across the Union.

Knowledge sharing needs to have purpose and to be facilitated. The Commissions and the Secretariat should consider setting up a number of internal, thematic, moderated email lists that cut across regional, Commission and project silos. For example, one such list could be focused on learning initiatives, which provides space for people to discuss complementarities between initiatives such as PALNet and WCLN. Another could be focused on data management ( data acquisition, data sharing protocols, and protection of public data) where common ground can be found between SIS, the Conservation Commons, the Law Centre and regional projects like the Decision Support System for Protected Area Management in Northern Asia--Himal Hindukush.

4. That all Commissions consider whether their current operating structures are best suited to “broaden knowledge and competence on matters related to their mandates”<sup>32</sup>. Network structures can and should change and evolve. Some models might be more suited to some Commissions than others; and some models might, if the risk is taken, bring new ideas and innovation to IUCN. For example:
  - A formal, structured network with specific, well defined tasks and deliverables. Members are not appointed unless they commit to specific tasks. Knowledge is developed primarily for use beyond the network. Attention must therefore be paid not only to the research itself, but to the greater purpose that the research is intended to inform.
  - A community of practice to support front line workers, with a primary focus on the sharing and building of capacity. Knowledge is developed primarily for use by the network participants.
  - An “Open Source” style of community, wide open to anyone who wishes to contribute their ideas: membership is self selected rather than by invitation and approval. A new member of an Open Source community has to prove their expertise not through their credentials (education, employment, publications) but through their regular and substantive contributions to the community. Knowledge is developed and shared by all participants, but it is also carefully screened by an inner circle, for key insights and expertise that could be deployed more directly in programme work.
  - A “network of networks” approach, in which a Commission may act as an umbrella for many smaller regional networks supporting work relevant to that Commission’s mandate. The Commission supports these smaller networks rather than attempt to take on new activities of its own.

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<sup>32</sup> IUCN Statutes Part VIII, section 75(d)

But, **the structure is dependent on the mandate, not the other way around**. If a Commission mandate is not clear or connected to the Union's Programme, then better or different knowledge sharing models won't help a Commission to provide the knowledge that the programme needs.

5. That, as suggested by the Bossey report, the Commissions should undertake to strengthen their networking capacity.

Commissions should consider holding workshops with their members that focus on strengthening their networking capacity. Such workshops would cover general principles of networking, consideration of the type of network structure they wish to adopt, operations and management of that community, facilitation of internal communications, processes for engagement of those they seek to influence, and measures for regular monitoring of both their collective work and the participation and contributions of individual Commission members.

In strengthening their networking capacity, Commissions and Secretariat may need to consider the current composition of Commission membership or, alternatively, the range of services that the Secretariat can provide to Commissions. At present, the model is that substantive experts are nominated to Commissions. But, as Malcolm Gladwell points out in the Tipping Point, it takes not only maveens to change the world, but salespeople to craft messages and connectors to open channels for ideas to flow. Should Commission membership also include "salespeople" and "connectors", or should the Secretariat provide these services? Should IUCN keep communications and the management of relationships bureau centric, or should the capacity also be built in Commissions, including broadening the criteria for bringing new members with these skills into Commissions? The latter approach may be preferable, but with the "salespeople" and "connectors" in Commissions well integrated with those in the Secretariat performing the same functions, and, in addition, with the Secretariat providing the standards, guidelines, and long term capacity building for these functions.

6. IUCN should consider developing an online response system, as suggested by IUCN Pakistan:

**IUCN Pakistan:** What is missing is a simple, Internet based tool -- a chat room, an internal system where staff can drop in questions, receive advice, suggestions, input.

**Regional Office, Central Africa:** the Commissions produce a flow of documents which we receive and put in our documentation centre... However, we don't have a systematic way of getting information from the Commissions when we need it.

UNDP's SURF/Global Hub system is a more structured version of this concept. It serves to ensure that country and regional requests for information and expertise are dealt with expeditiously, by routing requests first through regional networks and then up to the Headquarters level of experts. A comparable system at IUCN would route such requests through other regional offices and through Commissions.

7. That Commissions recognize the emergence of other roles across the Union which is extending the Union beyond the "triple helix".

In particular, the Commissions should recognize the role of experts who are not members of Commissions and new regional networks of experts fostered by regional offices outside of the traditional Commission structures. In the Study, Regional offices often made reference to the need for expertise that was not always met by the Commissions. The East Africa Regional Office brought in technical people expert on social issues, land tenure and so forth for the Rufiji Environmental Management project. CEESP members were rare in the region, and Headquarters didn't have the expertise. It should be explored whether and how such technical experts and consultants can be brought into Commissions.

Like other regional offices, the Regional Office for West Africa went beyond bringing in individual experts to establishing parallel networks, in response to low membership of some Commissions in their region. The role of these networks has been both to advise IUCN and to become a channel for influencing national policy. But again, some consideration needs to be given to how these new networks can strengthen or revitalize existing Commissions.

8. That Commissions work with the Secretariat on a deliberate, long term strategy to find and support the emerging young leaders in conservation and development. Young professionals can bring new ideas, new theories and cutting edge research into IUCN, including its Commissions. In turn, IUCN should look at how to transfer its knowledge by working with young professionals who will become the new field officers, resource managers, policy analysts and decision makers.

Whether these young professionals are invited to join Commissions, or whether they serve as strong communications links between Commissions and the Secretariat and IUCN Members needs further exploration.

## **Members**

Member organizations should serve both as a source of knowledge for the Union and as recipients of IUCN's knowledge that will help them in their own actions. In order to operationalize this role, a number of considerations need to be addressed:

- Limited familiarity within the Secretariat and Commissions of the knowledge and expertise of members, apart from those members directly involved in major initiatives.
- Lack of awareness on the part of members of the various knowledge needs of IUCN, and how they might contribute.
- Lack of capacity of many members to share their knowledge (including lack of resources, tools and practices for knowledge sharing).

**ORMA:** how are we using our networks of members on the ground?

The IUCN Membership group is currently working with IUCN Canada to identify the areas of expertise of members in order to make that expertise more available across the Union. Their starting point has been the development of a graphical interface that maps member expertise by issue and country.

In discussing their interactions with members, IUCN staff observed that often the contact person for members was based in the accounting department (responsible for payment of dues), or the head of the organization, rather than a

person designated within the organization to take ownership of the relationship with IUCN, who could engage more directly in Union matters.

In strengthening the role of IUCN members to advance IUCN's knowledge, some consideration should be given to the following:

1. HQ should review how it communicates with members. Members should be among the most receptive to IUCN's knowledge, but the promotion and delivery of IUCN knowledge products to members appears to be ad hoc. The IUCN magazine may no longer be sufficient, or serve the purpose it once did; members may need a variety of vehicles that provide more immediate and personal contact – and these vehicles should be promoted more directly to individual staff within member organizations. [And as a passing thought, most of these vehicles would be useful to communicate with individual members of Commissions]. For example:
  - A media listserv so that all members receive IUCN press releases
  - An RSS feed, similar to the WWF feed, so that members can monitor at their convenience new additions to IUCN websites
  - A members only area on the IUCN website [comparable to the WBCSD approach], where a query service could function – members and IUCN Secretariat staff seeking knowledge and advice from each other.
  - A more direct and personal communication from the Director General, similar to the highly popular personal editorial email circulated by the head of CIFOR.
2. CEESP goes so far as to recommend that expert staff within member organizations should automatically be appointed to Commissions. While this is an interesting concept, and might serve to cement relations between Members and Commissions, it should be done with the proviso that appointees must participate in dialogue and action with fellow Commission members.
3. IUCN should continue efforts initiated by the CEC to promote best practices in knowledge sharing and communications to members, in order to build member capacity in this area. As IUCN-Canada continues to learn how to share knowledge with one member, CIDA, that office may have a role to play in developing strategies for mobilizing member knowledge in support of the Union more effectively. And there may be a special role for key members to assist IUCN with KM in an advisory capacity: for example, Conservation International on data management; IISD on knowledge network management and evaluation; and perhaps the solicitation of new members such as the International Institute on Communications and Development to bring in expertise on development communications.
4. IUCN members may have a particularly important role to play as IUCN seeks to increase its impact on national and international policy:



The IUCN Programme defines a strategic set of policy targets to be achieved over the next Intersessional period. Members can potentially and some currently do play a powerful role in helping to achieve those targets. More systematic and focused efforts to determine where and how Members can add value and influence in the policy agenda are needed across the component parts of the Union.

In addition, more rigorous methods are needed to strengthen the policy-practice loop. The IUCN Secretariat needs to strengthen the involvement of those Members with policy experience, as well as work with other Members to assist them in understanding the policy context in which they work, and their potential for greater influence through influencing policies and agreements.

While the knowledge and experience basis of the IUCN membership is rich and diverse, it is dispersed throughout the Union. Its potential to influence change will not be maximized unless it can be collected, synthesized and utilized to change social and institutional behaviours, policies and legal frameworks at national, regional and global level.<sup>33</sup>

5. IUCN's Membership unit, in collaboration with regional and country offices, should be tasked with articulating more fully how members can contribute to and gain from IUCN's knowledge, and then develop the appropriate mechanisms to support that.

## The Secretariat

IUCN is a Conservation Union, rather than a Conservation organization. Consequently, an important role for the Secretariat is to manage the Union – build alliances, manage networks, and flow knowledge through the Union and beyond. The Secretariat requires expertise in the substance of conservation in order to identify what needs to be changed in the world and what knowledge must be mobilized to inform those changes; but it also must complement that technical knowledge with expertise in communications and the management of relationships.

**South America Regional Office:** We don't see the IUCN regional programme as implementers of field projects; instead, we play a convener role, we produce tools and knowledge that members could use themselves.

Some considerations for the Secretariat in further elaborating its role in mobilizing IUCN's knowledge:

1. At both the regional and global programme level, the Secretariat should envisage for itself a role as the Union clearinghouse to manage explicit, tacit and implicit knowledge<sup>34</sup> throughout the Union:
  - Explicit – ensuring the efficient capture and dissemination of the knowledge produced through the IUCN Programme. As a side note, I would strongly discourage efforts to act as a broader clearinghouse on conservation knowledge at this point in time, including developing databases or WIKI servers to capture the knowledge of Union members.

<sup>33</sup> Rich tradition, focused future

<sup>34</sup> For fuller definitions of explicit, tacit and implicit knowledge, see Appendix B.

Similar efforts, for example UNEP.net (originally intended to be a global index to environmental knowledge) or the World Bank's Development Gateway have either failed completely or failed to deliver on expectations. **The conservation community would be better served in the next two to three years by IUCN getting up online its own knowledge from global and regional programme work and the Commissions.**

[I exclude from this comment the SIS, which needs to look beyond IUCN's own species data sets, including, for example, how to interface with the World Protected Areas database, in order to build the service to support decision making.]

- Tacit – connecting its experts with those who need to learn from them, facilitated through shared processes. Managing this knowledge involves the traditional convening of workshops and conferences, but also includes understanding and deploying learning methodologies, good practice in supporting virtual collaboration, mentoring and so forth;
  - Implicit – recognizing that the underlying cultures and values within different knowledge systems can affect the sharing and enrichment of knowledge. The Secretariat should build the capacity of IUCN commissions, members and the secretariat itself to consider the “pluralism” of knowledge. It may be useful over time for the Secretariat to develop resources on the Intranet to help knowledge project managers to understand how to work with different knowledge systems.
2. Recognize and build on the complementarity of initiatives: Secretariat and Commission representatives often commented on the overlap of interests among IUCN's new knowledge systems and learning networks:

**PALNet:** [we] would like to see much more complementarity. [What is the] intersection with all these knowledge systems being set up?

The onus should be on the Secretariat (and PPG in particular) to help clarify, communicate and keep in sight the complementarities and distinctions among the knowledge initiatives, to minimize confusion when agendas appear to overlap.

Some effort should be invested in mapping activities completed or underway throughout the Programme that complement the six knowledge initiatives: for example, documenting all of the academic relationships that might complement in some way the WCLN, such as the network of schools of Natural Resources in Central Africa fostered by CEESP; the Academy of Environmental Law, the YALE-IUCN MOU, and so forth.

3. Be more innovative in quality assurance: The Knowledge Products and Services Study recommends that IUCN's formal review process be reinforced. In addition to the more traditional approach of sending reports to an internal review committee, the Knowledge Management Study suggests the exploration of new approaches for quality assurance that are based on broader discussion and interaction with users. Recent research on bridging research and policy<sup>35</sup> suggests that “legitimacy chains” can also serve to validate research findings and recommendations. The legitimacy chain bases the validation on who has contributed to the work: the partners, local

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<sup>35</sup> Bridging Research and Policy Project. Overseas Development Institute. Working Paper 173, 2002. [www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Projects/R0040a/Framework\\_Networks.html](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Projects/R0040a/Framework_Networks.html)

community involvement and consultation, and so forth. Not all knowledge products and services can or should be validated in the same way: for example, the field lessons to be posted on PALNet by PALNet participants may best be tested and endorsed by other participants and WCPA experts.

4. Setting standards and good practice in KM, and addressing gaps in capacity: in Strategic Move #3, a set of strategies is proposed that should be developed, implemented and monitored by the Secretariat. With all of these, the Secretariat should lay out what the guiding principles and standards should be, build a repository of good practice both external to IUCN and within IUCN, and provide training and support throughout the Union and Commissions to those who will be actively involved in implementing these strategies.
5. Providing the enabling ICT environment, as discussed in Strategic Move #4.

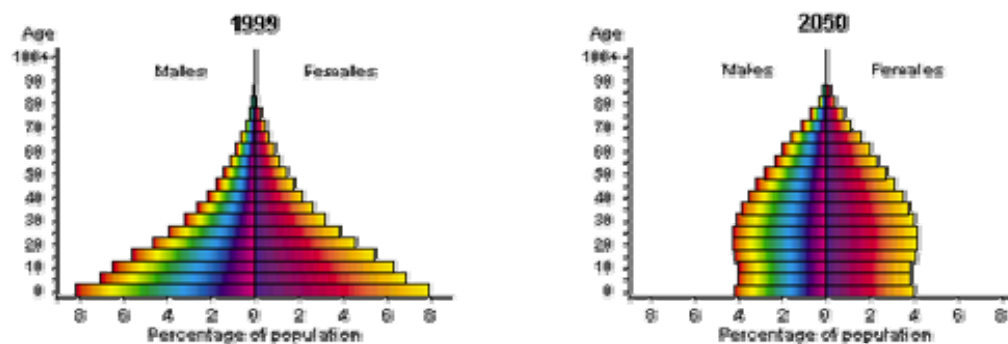
### ***Approach B: Focus on young professionals***

The role of youth is rarely, if ever, addressed in the KM literature, and it was rarely mentioned by the organizations interviewed outside of IUCN, with one notable exception – the youth organization, TakingITGlobal (TIG). And yet, young people should be a cornerstone of knowledge management initiatives.

### **Why is this so important?**

#### **1. The Demographic imperative<sup>36</sup>**

The vast majority of the world's people live in less developed countries. And the majority of those people are, and will continue to be, under 30 years of age at least through the year 2050<sup>37</sup>.



### **Least Developed Regions**

In many countries, youth are increasingly being called on to act as leaders today, particularly in countries ravaged by HIV/AIDS where there is now a missing generation. There simply aren't enough 30 and 40 year olds to do the work. For conservation and development efforts to continue in many countries, it's going to

<sup>36</sup> This section was developed primarily by Terri Willard, IISD. A copy of her presentation on Youth in an Intergenerational Society is in Appendix E.

<sup>37</sup> For example, 50% of the population of Papua New Guinea is under the age of 19.

require mobilizing the teenagers and "20 somethings" to protect the environment, run the businesses, manage the schools and clinics, and become prepared to govern their countries sooner rather than later.

The demographic trends have even deeper significance. Least developed regions are in a global baby boom. And just as the North American boomer generation has influenced culture and opinion and behaviour through their entire lives, so will this generation in developing countries. If the demographic projections are correct, there is a chance to significantly shift global culture towards sustainable development, by working with this generation while they are still young.

The greying of the population in developed countries also needs to be considered. In North America, it has been estimated that 50% of government natural resources managers will retire in the next five to ten years, creating a demand for new professionals to be fast tracked into vacant policy and management positions. There is an equivalent demographic shift within development assistance agencies now – at CIDA alone, 40% of the staff have been with CIDA for three years or less. These young professionals are making decisions now on major development projects and investments.

In both the north and the south, young people are moving rapidly into positions of influence and authority, without necessarily having the depth of knowledge, experience, and access to networks of experts to assist them. IUCN needs to address how it will engage, build capacity, mentor and connect young people today to carry IUCN's conservation and development agenda into the future.

## **2. Youth as actors in conservation and development<sup>38</sup>**

Increasingly, young people are developing their own hybrid institutions blending the management and funding strengths of small-scale for-profit enterprises with non-profit goals and outreach abilities. By focusing on their goals, these social enterprises are flexible in their ability to create partnerships in support of social and environmental change. Many youth organizations have embraced information and communications technologies as a possible source of income as they seek to educate and involve others in resolving critical social and environmental issues. These "social entrepreneurs" – often working at the grass roots level, below the radar screen of international environment and development agencies – should be more actively sought out and engaged by IUCN in its field work.

## **3. Youth as experts in their own right: the source of current research, fresh approaches and new energy, combined with information and communications technology skills**

One of the challenges raised by IUCN staff concerns the quality of its knowledge, and whether its work is building on the latest research and understanding in the conservation and sustainable development field. Many project and program managers have noted that they cannot stay on top of current thinking in their fields (no access to state of the art knowledge, information overload, no time, too much field work, etc). Young professionals enrolled in or recent graduates of tertiary education programs can bring the current research into IUCN, together with their own ideas, fresh perspectives and energy.

The current generation is generally recognized as the owners of information and communications technologies (ICTs). While knowledge management should not

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<sup>38</sup>Willard, Youth in an Intergenerational Society. Appendix E.

be driven by technology; nevertheless, the field is supported by effective application of ICTs – and young people hold the key to creative new uses of technology for sharing knowledge and building relationships.

It has also been observed that today's graduates often bring a more integrative, multi-disciplinary approach to their work. As IUCN seeks to bring new dimensions, such as social and economic policy issues, into its work, and to connect more effectively the work of Commissions and Secretariat, it should be kept in mind that today's young professionals have the capacity to see the connections in place of the silos – and the ICT skills to make the connections in new and creative ways.

#### **4. Bringing needed capacity to IUCN**

Secretariat staff have noted that IUCN doesn't have the analytical, synthesis capacity to develop the products that policy makers need. One suggestion was to "set up a small team of junior Jeff McNeelys, who would go out to projects, look at findings, and see what they add up to... Recent graduates with good ideas and analytical/writing skills can do the synthesis work that IUCN needs to deliver to those it seeks to influence" [IUCN Multilateral Office, USA].

#### **5. Young professionals are the principal users and beneficiaries of knowledge management initiatives**

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), based in India, recently undertook a review of their internal KM system. They noted that older users complied with contributing information to the system, but rarely used it to find anything. The user group most likely to seek out information and resources from the system was the younger staff. Young professionals seize on these efforts as the mechanisms to increase their knowledge and their networks. As a primary user group, they can help to design and adjust KM initiatives as those initiatives evolve. As a general rule, I would suggest that no KM initiative should be implemented without the involvement of young professionals in some capacity.

#### **6. Youth as managers of knowledge networks**

In discussions with CIDA, it became clear that almost exclusively, the internal knowledge network coordinators were relatively new or junior staff. Youth are often assigned these roles<sup>39</sup>, and in fact take them on gladly as opportunities to learn more about the organizations they work for, and to connect with the experts in the organizations. Youth become the "connectors" – the wires for internal and external knowledge flows. KM initiatives should take advantage of the ability of young people to apply new technologies to the sharing of knowledge and building of social capital, to create new communities of influence and to have real impact.

#### **7. Young professionals as a channel for IUCN's knowledge**

The young professionals debate within IUCN is often framed in the context of the need to recruit and to retain new staff in HQ and in the regions. The retention issue should be viewed in terms of how to create a life time relationship between the young professional and the Union rather than an employment relationship with the Secretariat. IUCN should look at working with young professionals as partners and champions who will move into positions with member organizations,

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<sup>39</sup> For a more detailed examination of the role of young professionals in knowledge networks, see Buckler, Cole et al, "Hidden Assets". IISD, 2000

with the private sector, with governments and international agencies, taking with them a commitment to IUCN's goals and access to a network of experts to draw on in future. In this way, IUCN will open new channels for transferring its knowledge by working with those who will become the new field officers, resource managers, policy analysts and decision makers. These relationships should be fostered to last a lifetime.

## **8. Planning for succession of leadership in IUCN**

There is a particularly intriguing issue worthy of further exploration for IUCN. The youth organization, TakingITGlobal, has observed a trend in their membership of 45,000 youth around the world towards a decreased sense of affiliation with any one institution. The work force has changed – youth tend not to join institutions for life, but rather for short contracts, moving from institution to further study to independent consulting to yet another short contract. There is no longer a model for continuous professional development of youth, building their expertise systematically under the supervision of senior professionals. Consequently, young people built their reputations – their “recognition” factor – through virtual communities. This has some implications in the long term for IUCN's expert networks: If youth have no permanent institutional affiliation, and build their reputations through channels not currently used by IUCN, how will IUCN be able to identify leaders and invite them to join Commissions and the Secretariat in the future? A young professionals strategy will need to consider new ways to identify, recruit and recognize emerging leaders.

## **What is IUCN doing now with respect to young professionals?**

There are already many activities under way:

- the World Parks Congress commitment to young professionals
- The Young Conservationist Award – an important outcome of Durban
- a resolution approved at the World Conservation Congress encouraging the establishment of a Young Professionals Program
- The Conservation Leaders initiative initiated by the Secretariat to improve the management of young professionals
- the Environmental Law Centre's growing experience with interns, students and research fellows
- the experience of regional offices with mechanisms such as Junior Professional Officer programmes of donors, research scholarships, volunteers

Nevertheless, a number of challenges have been noted by Secretariat staff and Commissions with respect to how IUCN (Commissions, Members and Secretariat) currently work with young professionals.

- Financing: the limited funds available to recruit young professionals for internships or multiyear projects
- Assignments and supervision: wide variability in work assigned to young staff members, ranging from solely administrative tasks to “sink or swim” project responsibilities
- Training: Limited introduction to IUCN and how it works, leading to steeper, and longer, learning curves and corresponding impact on productivity (and job satisfaction)

- Career development: Very limited and ad hoc approach to building capacity of young professionals to expand their knowledge, expertise and networks so that they can move onto more senior positions either within IUCN or beyond.
- Networks open only to "experts": The traditional view that Commissions are by definition networks of experts; young professionals are viewed as not yet having the research and project track records to qualify them for Commission membership.
- Restricted communication with Members: IUCN communication with members tends to remain at the level of senior staff of member organizations: interaction with young professionals within member organizations takes place only if the opportunity arises to work as a partner on an IUCN project.
- Retaining the relationship: In general, there is no culture of systematically keeping track of and communicating with young professionals who have worked with IUCN, however briefly, as students, volunteers, interns, junior professionals or short term project staff.

## **What should be considered in a strategy?**

A deliberate, long term strategy should be put in place to find and support the emerging young leaders in conservation and development. This strategy should include the following:

- Consideration of a new commitment to mainstream young professionals across all IUCN activities [Huguette Labelle]
- An analysis of where Young professionals are needed and should be included across the Union
  - Assessment of skills that Young professionals bring as analysts; synthesizers; connectors; communicators
  - Review of skills that they may need and wish to acquire: negotiating skills; how to facilitate collaboration; project management skills
  - Scoping of the roles that they can play – across the Secretariat; in Commissions; with Members; on Council; in international networks that IUCN is a member of.
- A mapping of where to find emerging leaders
  - Tertiary institutions; new young managers in governments, businesses, other agencies; social entrepreneurs; virtual communities; young professionals in IUCN member organizations
- Review of recruitment options
  - Internships, graduate students, volunteers, exchanges, limited term contracts, secondments of young managers already in governments and other institutions
- Resourcing mechanisms
  - Building internships and other positions into funding proposals; securing funding for a formally designated YP program; enhance research and scholarship opportunities; advancing relationships with tertiary institutions to find students (the Yale-IUCN model) and volunteers (as the Environmental Law Centre does)
- The Human Resources plan: training, supervision, career development support
  - Building the tools for induction into the work of the Union; training of supervisors in working with Young professionals more effectively; career development tools for Young professionals across the Union – in member organizations as well as the

- Secretariat (where are the jobs, how to get work, how to get into networks, etc.)
- IT tools and support for knowledge sharing
    - Being open and supportive of the new tools and communications approaches that Young professionals will advocate
  - Mentoring
    - As the Species Survival Commission, CEESP and others have noted, the role of mentors is critical in transferring the skills of a lifetime in exchange for the new ideas and energy of youth.
  - "Alumni" systems
    - Sustain the relationships with Young professionals into the future, through ongoing communications with former volunteers, interns, and staff; establish mechanisms to track their career progress.
  - More broadly,
    - Explore linkages with other sectors – how can young conservation leaders learn more about private sector drivers and challenges?
    - Explore how to educate and engage young people to make a difference
    - Explore how to work with young people as stakeholders in country level projects

### ***Approach C: Define and manage new roles for organizations and individuals in IUCN.***

The Key Results Areas need to be examined to determine what suppliers of knowledge – whether individual partner organizations, regional bodies, experts, new networks or donors -- are needed to achieve these. Rather than establish new Commissions, or expand the mandates of existing Commissions, strategic alliances with other organizations, individuals and networks may well be warranted.

These new relationships in IUCN need to be mapped out to see whether and how these organizations, individuals and networks are contributing new knowledge to IUCN; how they are supporting the delivery of IUCN's knowledge and contributing in general to IUCN's mandate. How can IUCN capitalize on these relationships far more effectively than it does now? What networks does IUCN need to engage with to support its work?

### **Partner organizations (who are not members)**

**East Africa Regional Office:** There is no way that we could achieve what we are achieving without partners ...there are organizations involved in conservation in the region who have influence, resources and so forth but they may or may not want to be members.

All of IUCN's regional offices interviewed commented on the crucial role of partner organizations to their work; but they also noted many challenges in managing those relationships, including the nuts and bolts of maintaining communications, managing expectations, monitoring the value added by the partnership to IUCN's work, and so forth.

A useful first step might be to map all of the existing partnerships across IUCN, reviewing the roles played by the partners and Secretariat or Commission. Who secures funding; who is responsible for communications; the life cycle of the



partnership – how did it begin and end, what were the ebbs and flows of work during the period of working with the partner; what is the ongoing relationship, if any?

Guidelines for the management of partners need to be developed: what does it mean to be a partner; how will knowledge be shared, how will ownership of work be acknowledged, what role will partners play in future programme and project development, and should they be as influential in programme planning as local members?

And there may be new categories of “partners” to consider. CEESP notes that with the Durban congress, for the 1<sup>st</sup> time, local communities, nomads, pastoralists and other stakeholders were declared to be new partners of IUCN and WCPA. This has significantly influenced the work planning for WCPA – but how are these partnerships to be recognized and mobilized? IUCN needs to map out all of these emerging relationships in order to flow its knowledge through these channels more effectively.

### **Regional intergovernmental bodies (who may include state members)**

Experiences should be shared on how Commissions and Secretariat are building relationships with intergovernmental bodies. For example, the Regional Office for MesoAmerica works very closely with the Central American Commission on Environment and Development, as the highest decision making mechanism in terms of policies on environment and resource management in the region. The Commission on Environmental Law has an MOU with CCAD. How can the two relationships – ROMA/CCAD and CEL/CCAD reinforce each other?

### **Experts who are not members of Commissions**

As the work that IUCN does becomes more complex and integrative, experts will be needed in areas outside of the current capacities of IUCN Commissions and the Secretariat. The East Africa Regional Office brought in technical people expert on social issues, land tenure and so forth for the Rufiji Environmental Management project. CEESP members were rare in the region, and Headquarters didn't have the expertise. It should be explored whether and how such technical experts and consultants can be brought into Commissions, or into some other kind of relationship with the Union –both to ensure that their knowledge is available to others across the Union for future work, and to sustain the relationship so that IUCN's knowledge can be shared with them, and in turn with their other clients.

### **New networks of experts**

Like other regional offices, the Regional Office for West Africa went beyond bringing in individual experts to establishing parallel networks, in response to low membership of some Commissions in their region. The role of these networks has been both to advise IUCN and to become a channel for influencing national policy.

Even Commissions have set up new networks as channels for knowledge sharing. For example, CEESP has fostered a network of practitioners on Co-management of Natural Resources in Central Africa, and a network of schools of Natural Resources in Central Africa. With the latter, CEESP suggests that it has

successfully influenced changes in the curricula to include coverage of co-management.

The Commissions themselves have recognized that there are networks out there not currently engaged with IUCN that could help IUCN achieve its Key Results [comment from Commission for Environmental Law]. For example, the Senior Advisor on Economics and Environment suggests that it may be strategic to link up with existing centres of excellence as a source of input on economics.

## **Donors**

There is growing interest from bilateral assistance agencies like SDC and CIDA in being advised and informed more directly by IUCN. CIDA and IUCN Canada are still at a very early stage in learning how to do this. The most significant lesson from the IUCN – CIDA experiment to date is that it takes time to change the nature of a relationship. IUCN and CIDA have had a long established and valued association. But the Framework Agreement changes the fundamental premise of that relationship, from one of donor-recipient, to one of a partnership in supporting sustainable development, where the sharing of financial resources needs to be reinforced by the sharing of knowledge. Work needs to be done to establish connections more broadly between CIDA staff and IUCN staff, building trust, and identifying what knowledge would be useful to CIDA staff, when and in what formats.

Based on this experience, the IUCN Canada office has developed significant capacity in KM, particularly in understanding how knowledge flows between IUCN and a donor, that can and should be drawn upon by other parts of IUCN, whether at the project or at the programme level. Ideas are emerging from this work that need a forum or channel for debate and implementation within the Union. For example, the Director of IUCN Canada recently asked how IUCN might expand its word and area searches on the public website to include CIDA key result areas as a way of contributing to building up their knowledge. But at present, there is no easy process in place that allows this idea to be taken further.

One valuable observation from the East Africa Regional Office is that relationships should be established between individual donor staff and IUCN staff; so that information can flow "from person to person rather than intermediary to intermediary".

As IUCN works to define the role of donors in knowledge sharing more explicitly, it should also consider how donors should be engaged in the dissemination of IUCN's knowledge that they have invested in. The relationship should not be limited to IUCN providing advice to assist the donor, but using the donor as another channel to flow its knowledge more broadly.

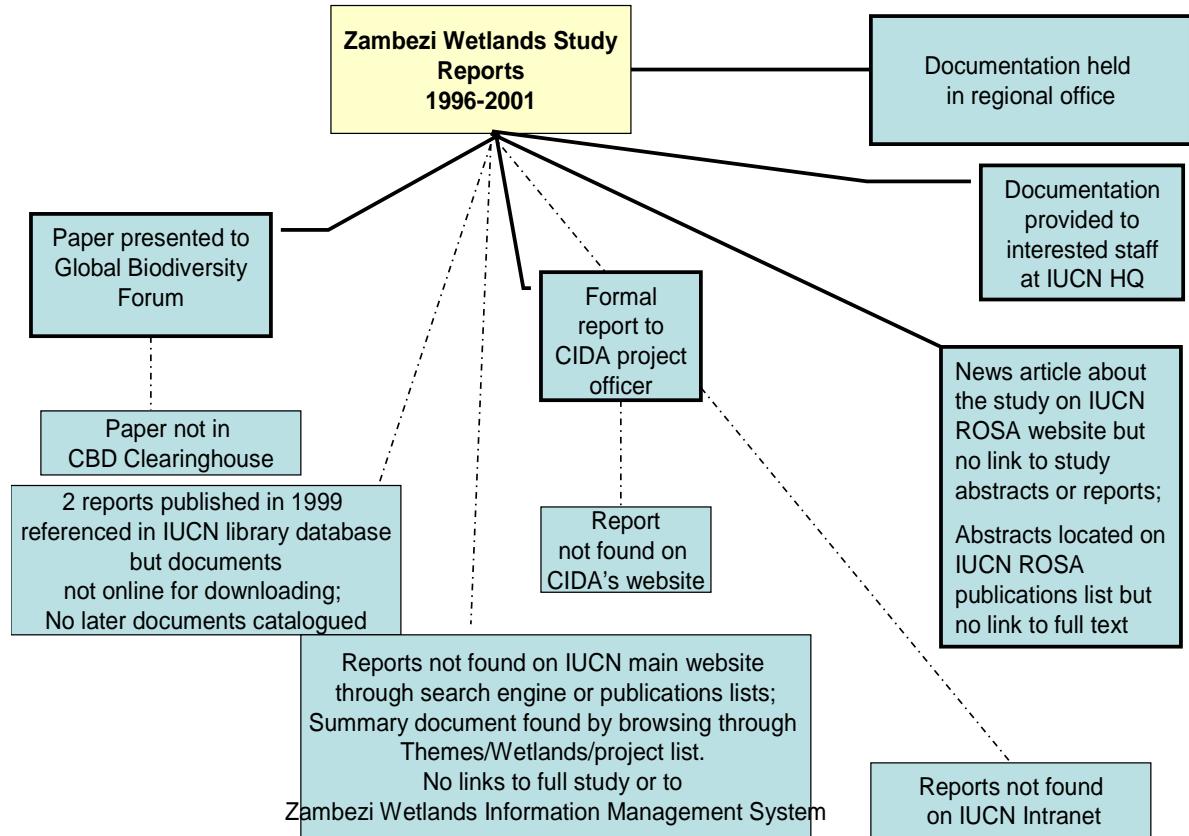
### **Move #3: Implement several interconnected strategies to strengthen both external and internal aspects of managing IUCN's knowledge.**

#### ***Issues identified at the beginning of the Study:***

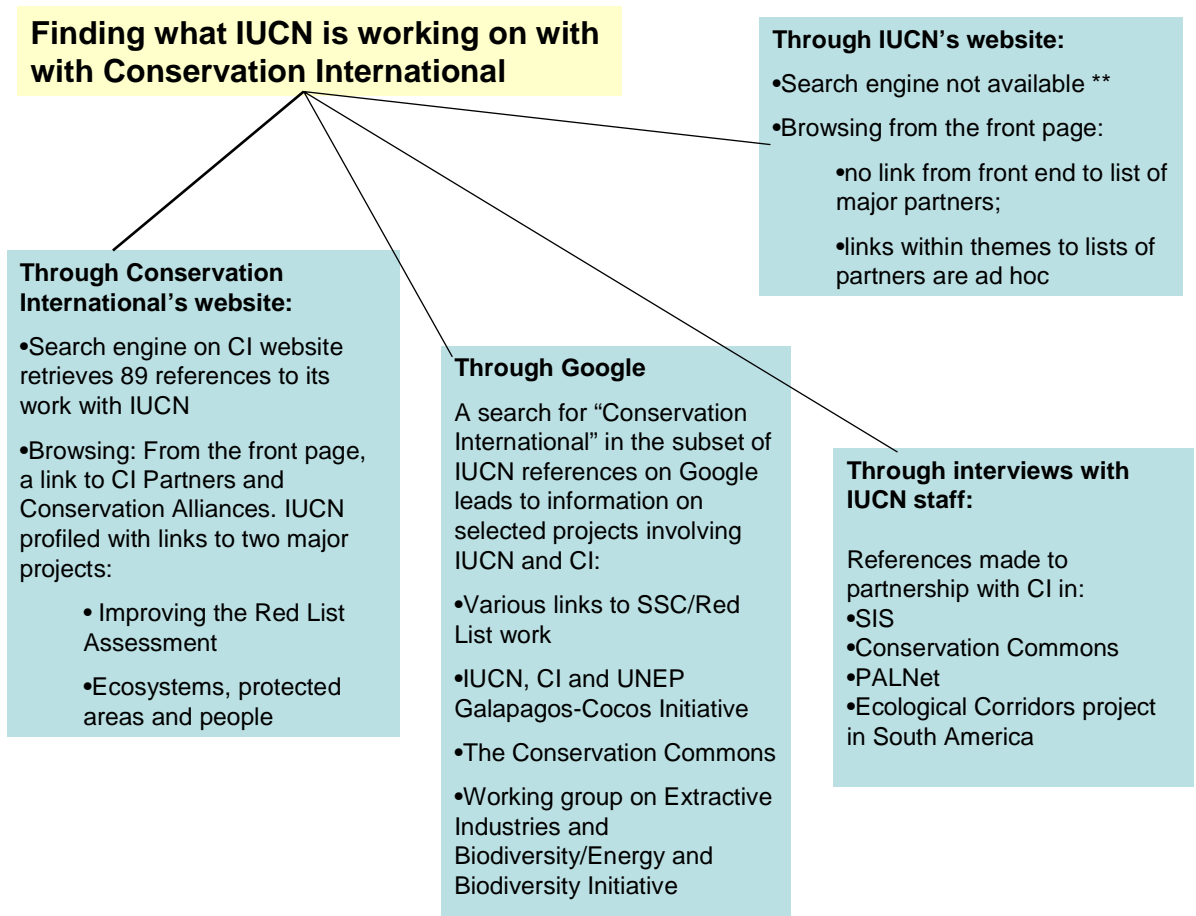
1. The knowledge produced by different parts of IUCN often remains at the level of the individual unit and therefore does not have the organizational learning impact that it should have. Equally problematic is the retention of knowledge in a system increasingly driven by project funding, especially in the regions. When funding ends, the project staff move on and take their knowledge with them.
2. There are insufficient mechanisms both to systematically capture this knowledge as a corporate asset, and to synthesize it for use at higher levels, or across a body of work, or across regions.
3. Regional offices are being asked for advice from state members but face challenges in responding quickly, with relevant information synthesized from across the Union.
4. Many project and program managers believe that they cannot stay on top of current thinking in their fields. Furthermore, the IUCN program is evolving into areas in which it is perceived to have limited substantive capacity. How can the knowledge base of IUCN and the expertise of its staff be strengthened? What other sources of knowledge and expertise might IUCN draw upon to achieve its Key Results?

The following two examples illustrate some of the fragmentation and limited accessibility of IUCN's documented knowledge, and the difficulty of finding out who IUCN is working with, and what they are contributing to IUCN's knowledge.

## Finding IUCN's documented knowledge



## Finding IUCN's relationships



*\*\* At the time of drafting, the IUCN search engine was not operational. As a side comment, this demonstrates the importance of having a well designed, browsable front end that users can work with in the absence of a search engine.*

### **Approach:**

IUCN should develop and deploy several strategies that are related, but are not dependent on the others for their success. As noted under Strategic Move #2, it should be the role of the Secretariat to set standards and good practice in these strategies, and address gaps in capacity. With all four strategies, the Secretariat should lay out what the guiding principles and standards should be, build a repository of good practice, including IUCN's own successes, and provide training and support throughout the Union and Commissions to those who will be actively involved in implementing these strategies.

## Strategy for the management of IUCN's relationships, networks, partnerships

Purpose: To move the building and management of relationships, networks and partnerships to the same level of importance across the Union as the management of programme and communications.

During Congress, in considering the study of social policy capacity, the Programme Committee noted IUCN's need to build and strengthen alliances with members, commissions and partners. This can't be done unless IUCN begins to build its partnership management capacity.

**IUCN Headquarters:** [There is a call to be] more strategic about capacity building in partnerships ...is the partnership the right one in order to effect change?

**Regional Office, MesoAmerica:** How do we address knowledge developed in partnership?

**IUCN USA:** We tend to talk to the people we are comfortable with, such as NGOs and governments, and in particular we tend to talk to the environment people. We need to develop partnerships with the development organizations: the CARES and Oxfams.

The processes for managing partnerships are similar in many ways to human resource management:

- identification of a gap in capacity (a skill, a source of knowledge),
- identification of a selection of potential partners who could provide those skills or knowledge (either individually, or through groups of partners working in a network with IUCN),
- the process of "recruitment" – inviting them to work with IUCN,
- introducing them to IUCN (induction to the operating culture and processes of IUCN),
- agreeing on a terms of reference or work plan for the duration of the relationship,
- review and renewal.

Key considerations:

### 1. The assignment of responsibility for this strategy

The role of partnership or alliance manager, while growing in importance in the private sector, is not common in the NGO community. However, given the growing complexity of IUCN's relationships, responsibility needs to be designated to a manager who will undertake to:

- set the principles and guidelines for working in partnerships and networks,
- oversee the documentation (MOUs, contracts, etc.) for all relationships,
- ensure consistency when two or more projects involve the same partner,
- help to identify partnerships with organizations who can fill gaps in IUCN's knowledge base, and
- build the capacity of staff to work in partnerships and networks, including how to foster and sustain the social nature of the relationship (building social capital), keeping the partnerships and networks on track, assistance with performance measures and conflict resolution.

2. IUCN should develop a set of partnership and network principles and guidelines on how to work with other organizations, including: how to choose the right partner, roles and responsibilities of partners, quality and frequency of interaction, and so forth.
3. Of particular importance are guidelines on how to manage the knowledge developed in partnership with other organizations: how is it shared among the partners, who is responsible for broader communications, the nuts and bolts of who publishes it, in what formats, will the published knowledge be retained online in perpetuity, and so forth.
4. A simple system for tracking and managing partnerships should be considered, that would include which projects the partner has been or is currently involved in, who the project officer is who is working with that partner, documentation on the partnership.

*A side note on managing the "social capital" created through IUCN's major events*

Conferences and events have traditionally been strategically important to IUCN, both in terms of hosting major events (such as Congress and World Parks) and in terms of participating in highly visible ways in the events of others (such as the creation of IUCN's Environment House at the WSSD). One of the organizations interviewed for this study made particular reference to their ongoing struggle with capitalizing on the knowledge and relationships fostered through conferences and other events. They asked the question that will resonate with IUCN: how does one capture the energy and knowledge coming out of events? How does one build on successful interventions at events? Some attention might be warranted to designing processes for planning events that include how knowledge will be captured, utilized, and shared and how new relationships will be fostered and sustained, beyond the conclusion of the event, given the central importance of events to IUCN.

## **Strategy for the management of IUCN Communications**

Purpose: To flow the knowledge of the organization to target and broader audiences.

As noted under Strategic Move #1, there is an opportunity for Global Communications to take ownership of the Influencing Strategy and develop it further:

- Seeking out the experience of regional programmes on how they build relationships in order to have influence, and plan their work accordingly
- Developing and implementing training in the preparation and implementation of Influencing Strategies
- Guiding the development of a number of pilot strategies, monitoring their success and adapting both the pilot strategies and the approach as necessary.

The role of Global Communications at IUCN is particularly important in addressing fundamental KM challenges of "capturing" and disseminating IUCN's published knowledge. Global Communications should take ownership of the task to ensure that all the knowledge products developed by IUCN global and regional staff and

partners are available across the Union and to external audiences -- whether IUCN's own self-published materials, or reports emerging from regional programme work, or joint publications released by partner organizations, or work published in journal articles, conference proceedings, and so forth, or getting more value out of project technical reports and consulting reports. Global Communications should assist with training and project planning to ensure that global and regional staff are familiar with communications tools and opportunities in order to create an appropriate range of knowledge products from their work. Global Communications then weaves it all together on IUCN's public website, and becomes the Union's story teller.

Key considerations:

1. Clarification of the roles of all those involved in communications across IUCN: For example,
  - Global Communications: Guidelines, standards, capacity building in communications in regional programmes and Commissions; and communications for global programme
  - Regional Communications staff: Direct involvement in project planning to ensure that projects have communications plans well developed and budgeted for from the beginning. Consideration needs to be given also to the fact that communications activities are more dispersed in regional/country offices, with some officers working on other activities as well as serving the communications function.
  - CEC: to be aligned with the communications programme by providing the best of its knowledge in effective communications practices, supporting capacity building, and continuing to expand its online resources on communications for use by IUCN.
2. Capacity also needs to be built with programme staff across the union to better understand the range of options available for communications, and how to plan and budget for communications from the beginning of proposal and project development. The Asia regional office has commented that "senior managers see it [communications] as a technical issue rather than an essential component of policy influence." From the beginning of projects, project managers need to work with communications managers to develop work plans that include a wide range of appropriate communications intervention points and deliverables.

This type of capacity building should be an ongoing endeavour, given the natural turnover in staff at both the regional and global programme.
3. This capacity building should also be undertaken with Commissions. Often, it would appear that Commissions have little interaction with the Secretariat on the communications of products until the product is already published. Opportunities for alternative approaches to the type of product and distribution may well be missed.
4. **Global Communications should institute a policy now that all current and future IUCN products should be available for download in full text on IUCN's website.**

This is not to suggest in any way the elimination of print products. However, such a policy will ensure much greater accessibility to IUCN's work, especially that emanating from the regions. The emphasis may shift subsequently to more limited print runs and print on demand services through regional offices.



5. Standards and guidelines for electronic publishing need to be put in place. In particular, the process for posting IUCN products online needs to be standardized. At present, lists of IUCN publications are scattered throughout the main website and related directories for regional offices and Commissions, sometimes with full text documents attached; sometimes in full html, and sometimes with only an abstract provided. The library to date has performed a valuable service in cataloguing IUCN reports and publications that it receives; but a new approach to facilitate capturing all of IUCN's work needs to be considered. For example:
  - It may be possible for the library cataloguing system to be networked so that all offices can add their reports and publications directly to the catalogue, with links to the relevant project and attachments of the full text of the product. Some compromises with respect to standard library cataloguing practices may need to be made, in favour of ensuring that the full texts of all IUCN documents are made more immediately available.
  - A subset of the library catalogue, that includes only IUCN products, should be made available for searching on the website, so that users are able to search directly for what IUCN has produced.
  - A "rapid results initiative" should be considered to capture quickly all of IUCN's current work in the library database.
  - Once all of IUCN's materials that are currently available in electronic format are "captured", and systems in place for systematic collection of this material in future, then consideration should be given to digitizing IUCN's products that are no longer available in electronic format. This, however, is secondary to the immediate need to ensure that all products now and in future are systematically captured and retrievable through IUCN's main website.
6. It has been suggested that Global Communications make available a small fund to support the distribution of publications issued by Commissions or regional programs. A better approach would be:
  - a. To ensure that communications costs (publishing and distribution) are planned and budgeted for from the beginning of a project
  - b. To focus on electronic delivery first, with cost recovery mechanisms in place for print on demand requests.
7. People with skills for writing synthesis pieces need to be brought into the Union.

IUCN USA: We don't develop the right tools to be used by the people we want to influence.

Some suggestions for how to do this include:

- Every major project recruits a writer as part of the design of the project.
- IUCN creates a small team of recent graduates with analysis and synthesis skills, who are positioned to gather information on demand from regional and outposted offices. Based on the experience of the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, it is possible to find those recent graduates who have the research, analysis and writing skills to prepare the type of briefs that IUCN offices would find useful.

## Strategy for strengthening internal communications and learning

Purpose: To organize and support dialogue and learning among IUCN staff and Commission experts.

CEC's Amman workshop on knowledge management noted the need to understand what motivates people to want or use information and to share information; and in particular, noted that "executive support is essential to generate a culture of sharing and to change organizational structures in support of knowledge management".

Current changes in IUCN's management structure, including the creation of the positions of Director of Global Operations and Special Advisor on Knowledge Management are an essential first step to develop and implement a strategy for strengthening internal communications and learning. However, there are two significant challenges to establishing a culture of knowledge sharing across the Union:

- The project management cycle drives staff across all offices to focus their energies on fund raising and executing funded projects and leaves little resources for sharing lessons learned from those projects.
- The breadth of the enterprise across Commissions and regions leads to knowledge being shared among those who know each other, leaving others "out of the loop".

**South America Regional Office:** at present, IUCN knowledge sharing depends too much on personal relationships; sometimes our regional office gets information, sometimes it doesn't.

The strategy for internal communications and learning should therefore have at least three objectives:

- To create an environment that will encourage and support staff and commission members to interact with each other on an individual and group basis. The most important resources needed will be:
  - Time – providing space in budgets for staff time to engage in what will initially appear to be an additionality to their work load; and
  - Tools – the electronic tools and services that can support individual and team collaboration.
- To begin to build that environment through a number of "rapid response initiatives" that will:
  - address some immediate communications issues and deliver real, measurable results
  - test tools and procedures for internal communications and
  - demonstrate the value of facilitating internal communications.
- To explore both structured and more informal approaches for sharing lessons learned from project work.

A number of the success factors in strengthening knowledge practices, noted in Section B, should be kept in mind in developing this strategy:

- Internal KM practices must be tied directly to operations. Reviews of both CIDA and the World Bank noted this very significant disconnect between

knowledge sharing initiatives and the actual day to day operations of the organizations.

- Knowledge sharing works best when it is closest to the level of implementation and impact. One has to build the capacity to gather and communicate knowledge at the project/activity/field level before one can begin to aggregate up to corporate systems. The Chief Knowledge Officer of InfoDev noted that "knowledge flows are situation specific, and while infrastructure, systems and protocols are important, they must be designed and supported with specific purposes in mind."
- Rapid piloting, and then scaling up, can be as effective as planning large scale from the beginning.

#### Key considerations

1. Ownership of the strategy:

The Special Advisor is well positioned to monitor and support the strategies and approaches proposed in the KM study. However, the internal communications and learning strategy is one that the Advisor should take a direct hand in developing and implementing, perhaps with a small team that could include the Knowledge Management specialist currently working in the IUCN Canada office on the IUCN-CIDA agreement, the Senior Gender Advisor, contributing her experience with managing a large international learning community on gender issues, and the depth of expertise in the Pakistan country office on managing electronic communications.

2. Basic modality for internal knowledge sharing initiatives:

The most common approach is to organize staff/other participants into semi-structured communities of practice, working groups or thematic knowledge networks, supported by internal email listservs and websites for exchanging information on their area of interest. How focused these groups are varies widely from organization to organization, and even within organizations. These internal networks can ebb and flow, as CIDA has observed. But as noted in the success factors, the more focused a group is on operations and problem solving, the more effective the internal communications becomes. Management may occasionally provide funds for an initial face to face meeting so that a group can both develop its focus/work plan, and build relationships among the participants, particularly if they have had little or no opportunity to interact in the past. A coordinator is either provided by management or chosen from within the group; the role of the coordinator is to facilitate interaction – keeping the conversations going towards achieving the objectives of the group. In many cases (CIDA and UNDP, for example), the coordinator also plays an important research role, seeking out new information that may be of use to the group's particular mandate. It is also worth noting again that often these coordinators are young professionals within the organization.

3. Plan and execute several "rapid results initiatives"<sup>40</sup>:

As summarized in Section A (KM trends), rapid results initiatives are in fact a series of mini projects that are injected into overall plans, but that in and of themselves lead to measurable results. They are different from "pilot projects" in that they exist within a larger framework of goals and objectives, but are expected to deliver specific results in a very short time frame.

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<sup>40</sup> See discussion in Section B, Trends, #7.

There are a number of specific internal communications issues flagged during the KM Study that could be addressed through a rapid results approach. For example:

- Clarify the intersection and complementarity of all the projects and initiatives involving formal and informal learning, and in particular, relationships with the academic sector. Document all of the academic relationships that might complement in some way the WCLN, such as the network of schools of Natural Resources in Central Africa fostered by CEESP; the Academy of Environmental Law, the YALE-IUCN MOU, PALNet and so forth. Create an online working group of Commission members and Secretariat staff to clarify roles and responsibilities, specific projects and tasks, and ways to track and report on effectiveness of these learning initiatives.
- Similarly, clarify the intersection and complementarity of all the projects and initiatives involving data management (data acquisition, data sharing protocols, and protection of public data) where common ground can be found between SIS, the Conservation Commons, the Law Centre and regional projects like the Zambezi Wetlands Information Management System and the Decision Support System for Protected Area Management in Northern Asia--Himal Hindukush.
- Establish protocols for knowledge sharing with donors, based on IUCN-Canada's experience with CIDA. Issues to be reviewed might include how to set measurable objectives for knowledge sharing with donors, how to build and sustain relationships with individuals inside donor agencies, how to organize, index and synthesize the content of IUCN's knowledge products using the language and interests of the donor community, and so forth.

Other possibilities might include:

- Rapid startup of the Forest KM efforts, as a microcosm of Union-wide KM strategies, including the development of:
  - Influencing strategies for major forest projects
  - Definition of roles ("Triple Helix", young professionals, other experts, partners, networks and donors) in the context of forest interests;
  - Strategy for external communications
  - Strategy for internal communications that brings together individuals (Secretariat and Commissions) involved in forest issues in regular, focused, online discussions
- Build a set of guidelines and supporting materials on how to work with different knowledge systems in projects, including:
  - how to bring in all sources of knowledge held in the minds and hearts of stakeholders;
  - how to recognize where conflicts in values and cultures may arise;
  - how to manage the interaction among stakeholders so that all knowledge is enriched and shared
  - how to create a sense of collective ownership of the knowledge.

Some basic guidelines to be followed for the initial rapid results initiatives or other pilot knowledge sharing exercises:

- Participation from all interested members of relevant Commissions must be actively encouraged to ensure more direct interaction of Commission/Secretariat staff.
- Modest funding will be needed for at least one startup meeting of key participants in any given rapid response initiative, to set goals, work plans, timelines and results to be measured; but equally important, to build the relationships that can then be sustained by email and phone discussion.
- A platform to support the interaction of groups will be needed – this may be as simple as a private website where participants in an initiative can post documents, and an email listserv with an archive on the private website.
- The potential tension between time charged to projects and time spent on knowledge sharing will need to be addressed.
  - i. In the early stages of running rapid results initiatives, it may be beneficial to establish a separate internal account to cover staff time spent on the initiatives. This will raise the visibility of these efforts across the Union (similar to the 3IC model) and send a signal that senior management is committed to strengthening internal communications.
  - ii. However, in due course, internal communications will need to be recognized as instrumental to project /program delivery; management will need to determine how to charge these efforts to project work or base program accounts.

4. Access to tools for internal knowledge sharing:

Sometimes all it takes to get conversations going is easy access to a good tool to support group interaction. It is not immediately obvious that all Secretariat staff and Commissions have experience with simple group tools such as managing an email discussion list or electronic conferences, or even have easy access to the software tools to run lists or conferences. At the very least, IUCN's Intranet should be expanded to include a new section on listservs/e-conferences, with instructions on how to request the IT group to establish a listserv, and guidelines on how to moderate a list/e-conference.

New electronic collaboration tools such as Sharepoint or Groove will be needed to drive knowledge sharing into the hands of program/project staff. There is much to be gained by giving staff the tools for managing and sharing lists of contacts on a project, for joint authoring of reports, for running email discussion lists, for maintaining team or individual web logs [blogs] for sharing thoughts, interesting articles, or project findings.

5. Releasing substantive knowledge "trapped" in project reports

A number of the suggestions made in Strategic Move #4, for strengthening both IUCN's Intranet and the public web site will help to improve access to project reports. Procedures should be clarified and documented for moving project information and products from Commissions to Headquarters, regional and country offices, and vice versa. Linking the review of lessons learned from projects to annual performance evaluations, as suggested under the HR Strategy, may also encourage systematic assessment and sharing of individual knowledge. Nevertheless, there is still a gap in the sharing of lessons learned from projects on a more informal basis. Two approaches are worth consideration:

- Establish a bulletin board or similar service on the Intranet for posting of stories about project challenges and how they were met; new ideas

that emerged out of project work that warrant further exploration; and so forth.

- Further enhance the Project Information Management System to support the sharing of lessons on good project management
    - i. Include best practice guidelines on project development and delivery
    - ii. Include lessons from project evaluations requested by donors. Such project evaluation documents should also be included in the System.
    - iii. Program the system to automatically generate email notices to all staff when projects are initiated or completed, and when interim or final reports are posted to the System. These "alerts" remind staff of the knowledge captured within PIMS that they can draw upon. This may encourage staff to use PIMS not only to register their own project work, but to follow up on what others are working on and what they have learned. With a growth in the use of PIMS as a tool for knowledge archiving, staff may be more willing to provide additional information, such as key lessons learned from the project, summaries of new substantive knowledge gained, and new partnerships established.
6. With the success of several rapid results initiatives, the implementation of good groupware tools and the opening of the Intranet and PIMS to more casual sharing of ideas and lessons, IUCN may be in a good position to begin developing an online response system, as suggested by IUCN Pakistan:

**IUCN Pakistan:** What is missing is a simple, Internet based tool eg a chat room, an internal system where staff can drop in questions, receive advice, suggestions, input.

However, this should only be pursued once some experience has been gained with structuring internal communications around specific issues, and in doing so, bridging communications between individual members of Commissions and individual staff across the Union.

## Strategy for Human Resources Development

Purpose: To broaden the role of human resources development (HRD) to include working with program teams to identify gaps in knowledge and skill sets and to champion innovative ways to fill those gaps.

During Congress, in considering the study of social policy capacity, the Programme Committee noted the important role of HRD to identify gaps in expertise, and either provide opportunities for training or undertake appropriate recruitment, induction into IUCN, and review performance on terms of reference and work plans.

Human Resources should be more than a technical service, to manage recruitment, contracting and performance evaluation only after programs have decided what they need. A knowledge based economy is about creating new ideas, providing not just products but services, and finding solutions. Employees should be viewed as inputs and investments rather than as "costs" in a traditional production based economy. Therefore, HRD in our environment is about capacity building, learning and development, and ensuring we gather appropriate learnings and feed them back into the cycle.

The emphasis needs to be on creating a culture where new ideas can be generated, and captured and tracked by the organization and then turn these ideas into actual services/products. Finally, monitoring/evaluation (lessons learned) are needed to feedback into the loop.

The challenge with knowledge workers is to connect the goals of the organization to the specific interest of the staff member - people work with organizations where they can make a connection with their own philosophy and values - and see the organization as the vehicle in which to their personal ideologies and goals can be achieved.

Successful "people management" depends on whether the parties involved trust each other and treat each other fairly. No HR strategy can succeed unless the organization has an overarching philosophy that assures its employees that they are working for a caring, nurturing trustworthy organization. Their attraction to the institution and its work is sometimes out of their personal conviction, and the need to make a difference. While this sounds a little soft and fuzzy, if it is indeed true then the goal for HR is to link these motivations to the business side of the organization, by identifying clear and concise policies and operating procedures, communication, and consultation at appropriate times.<sup>41</sup>

Key considerations:

1. The assignment of responsibility for the development of this strategy: Developing this strategy may be assisted by hosting a larger debate across the Secretariat to articulate a new vision for Human Resources Development in a Knowledge Organization. With the recruitment of a new Director for Operations, it may be timely to consider having such a debate.
2. Bring online learning opportunities into IUCN, to support IUCN staff in their ongoing professional development.
  - Look to the knowledge initiatives as ways to deliver professional development to IUCN staff. PALNet and WCLN can have benefits internally to IUCN as well as to individuals outside of IUCN. IUCN staff themselves should be considered as beneficiaries of these learning environments.
  - Build a roster of online, distance education programs in areas of IUCN's substantive work and develop policies to support staff enrollment in such programs for professional development.
  - Use simple tools that combine audio and video instruction with PowerPoint to develop in-house induction and training on IUCN policies and procedures; and more broadly, on cross cutting issues such as gender.

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<sup>41</sup> Comments from J. Gair, Manager, Human Resources, IISD.

3. Consider using annual performance evaluations as the point where the new knowledge of individual staff is recognized and systematically recorded. One of the barriers to knowledge sharing in many organizations is that staff feel they don't have time to write up what they are learning – their knowledge is not being processed or published or made explicit. Preparing for a performance evaluation can include preparing summaries of work the staff member has done, lessons learned, and so forth. It is also an opportunity to ensure that reports, articles, conference presentations and other work of the staff member are “captured” – and valued -- by the organization. As part of the exercise, the supervisor and staff person can together document new expertise, research and project findings and record that centrally.
4. This process should be repeated when staff complete their contracts with IUCN. Closure interviews with staff are an important opportunity to address knowledge retention when people move on
5. With program staff, actively seek out academic liaisons, including secondments, or an academic in residence program, not just for HQ but for regional offices. The Yale-IUCN MOU may be a model for bringing new knowledge into IUCN through innovative relationships with academics, and should be monitored to see whether it accomplishes this goal. IUCN's HR staff should be part of these discussions.
6. Build a young professionals programme that will bring in new ideas and exposure to the latest research to both Secretariat and Commissions. Include in this programme opportunities for young writers and analysts who can begin to address IUCN's need for drafting materials appropriate for policy audiences.
7. Finally, create alumni systems. In order to address the “knowledge retention” factor, IUCN should become much more strategic about retaining contact with former staff, former interns and volunteers, and experts who have worked with Commissions and the Secretariat. This is a win-win: IUCN will continue to have access to the knowledge gained by these people; and these people will continue to promote IUCN and flow its knowledge into their new organizations and networks.



## Move #4: Create an Enabling ICT Environment

### *Issues identified at the beginning of the Study:*

During this study, IUCN Secretariat staff and Commission representatives often mentioned concerns with technological and operational bottlenecks that they felt limited their effectiveness. Addressing seemingly small problems can often open the way for major transformations.<sup>42</sup>

### *Approach:*

Many of the concerns lie in IUCN's current use of information and communications technologies (ICTs). Knowledge management should not be driven by technology; nevertheless, this field is supported by ICTs. IUCN needs to review its current ICT capacity. More and more demands are going to be made for better Intranet service, for significantly more web publishing, for managing virtual communications among dispersed groups, including engaging the Commissioners more consistently, not to mention supporting knowledge systems like the Species Information Service, PALNet and the Conservation Commons.

### **Strengthen the IT Backbone**

Sustaining an enterprise wide backbone is going to require additional staffing resources. IUCN needs to move from virus crisis management at HQ, regional and country offices to longer planning cycles for IT system upgrades, security and redundancy, to support applications development and to support a culture of regular face to face end user training and service across the Secretariat.

IUCN has already made an important management decision, to move the IT group from the Global Communications team to Operations. This is a critical shift in the corporate culture in its recognition that IT is, like accounting or human resources, a necessary infrastructure that supports the organization. As this restructuring takes place, a number of issues should be reviewed:

1. What is the model for the backbone? At present, IUCN manages a hybrid system, where HQ and some regional and country offices post documents and keep database systems on the central server, but other offices maintain their own systems. While there is a central server, there is no system wide procedure for synchronizing files between PCs and the server; and in fact staff are expected to do manual backups of their own work rather than having an automated service. This leaves IUCN's intellectual property assets across the Secretariat extremely vulnerable to damage or loss. The functions of an Intranet, a Local Area Network for HQ and a Wide Area Network that encompasses all the regional/country offices do not appear to be clearly delineated and provided for. Broadband infrastructure

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<sup>42</sup> Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*

strategies and server warehouses<sup>43</sup> should be considered in the development of a robust IT backbone to serve the needs of the Union, and the Secretariat in particular, over the next decade. Key requirements should be:

- the ability to reliably and securely store and retrieve all of the work product of the Secretariat and Commissions;
- support for the connectivity of the Secretariat, including planning for mobile devices (Blackberry) and live services (live meeting, capacity for instant messaging across the Secretariat, etc.);
- support for business processes (HR, Finance, Project Management – including virtual team collaboration);
- security of the system from hackers and viruses (for example, in addition to fire walling the system to prevent ingress of viruses, protection should be secured to prevent replication and egress of viruses that enter the system from inside the firewall through diskettes, memory keys and other means);
- support for the web servers for the Union's electronic reach; and
- support for applications development, including knowing when to stop chasing possibilities [as noted by the former Chair of the Commissions]. At present, there is no long term strategy for applications development, whether it is the Intranet or systems like SIS. Planning for applications must become more systematic, with multi-year projections for increased server requirements, staff resources, and so forth.

On this last point, there has been no systematic investment in GIS or remote sensing, although SIS and PALNet will have need for spatially referenced data, and there are undoubtedly needs for this in the regions. Strengthening GIS capacity across the Union could be initiated by bringing together all the pockets of expertise across the Union to review and discuss current experiments with spatial representation of data, and possible new applications; leading to a more thorough assessment of GIS technology requirements across the Secretariat.

2. The financial model for the backbone also needs to be reviewed, with respect to regional and country office utilization and Commission utilization of IT infrastructure and services. An allocated or shared cost approach, together with related cost considerations such as asset management, equipment amortization, redundancy and upgrade planning, software license control, need more consideration.
3. An IT policy manual should be developed, that presents the Union policies on software suites to be supported by the IT unit, and in particular use of unlicensed software on Union equipment; backup policies; file retention; privacy issues, etc.
4. What is the role for the IT team across the Secretariat? Capacity for IT support exists in some regional and country offices as well as HQ. An assessment of the levels of technical support available and needed in regional and country offices should be carried out; technical staff in other offices should be included in the long term planning for the backbone. Regular technical training and certification upgrades for the IT staff in HQ and throughout the Secretariat must be addressed.

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<sup>43</sup> Commercial server services, also commercial server services, also called DC (Datacenters) or NOC (Network Operation Centers)

5. Building a culture of end user training and support. At present, technology innovations are brought into IUCN, but the IUCN staff are not made aware of their availability or how to put them to use. For example, the IT team has installed an RSS server; but there is no RSS feed offered on IUCN's main site because no one has really thought about how it might be used to promote IUCN's knowledge, and staff do not have RSS readers as part of their standard desktop suite of programs. The IT team should be positioned to push technology out proactively rather than relying on programme staff to request the tools. The team is highly valued for their endless ability to solve crisis situations and to deal with individual requests for help in a timely way; but what is lacking is a more systematic approach to ongoing end user training and support.

Many of these issues will resonate with the current IT team at HQ; but they have been constrained in taking on the functions of long range planning, capacity assessments, training and so on because they are stretched to the limit of their current staffing resources.

Strengthening the IT backbone will require one to two additional staff at HQ.

1. Long term strategy, policy and planning:

This can be addressed in one of two ways: Recruit a full time computer or communications systems engineer, reporting to the Director of Global Operations who can both develop the plan but also work with the team on all aspects of technical implementation; or bring in an IT consulting firm to do a full systems review and set in place a long term strategy that could then be implemented by the current team.

2. End user support

At least one new person should be added to the IT team, in a more junior position, who can systematize training and help desk functions, assist with Intranet and other application development, link the technical people working in regional/country offices and provide badly needed support for regular system upgrades, security and other services.

## **Revise and upgrade IUCN's Intranet (the "Knowledge Network") and the Project Information Management System (a subset of the Intranet)**

"Making something good into something better is often harder than transforming a bad site into something good"<sup>44</sup>.

The following comments should be read in the context that IUCN has started down the right road with the Intranet. The Intranet should be the heart of the organization, pumping information back and forth across the Union. IUCN, and the Intranet developer in particular, have made a considerable investment in designing an innovative system that has a wonderful egalitarian ethic underlying it, in which everyone appears equal and everyone's input, in the way of document folders and newsy announcements has a place. Some Intranets are tightly

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<sup>44</sup> Cheryl Downes, [http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/98/36/index3a\\_page2.html](http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/98/36/index3a_page2.html).

controlled by management, with central gatekeepers on content; IUCN has allowed the content to be managed by all.

But, while many value the Knowledge Network, many also find it difficult to use. Like all systems, the Knowledge Network is due for an upgrade.

Key points arising during this study:

- Use of the Intranet by Country Offices: The purpose of the Intranet is not entirely clear to all. With staff turnover, particularly in the regions and outposted offices, the original vision and training for using the Intranet has been lost to a certain extent. For example, IUCN Vietnam uses Mekong Info instead of [rather than in addition to] the Knowledge Network: they are seeking substantive information for their work and connections with experts in their region; the Knowledge Network does not serve this need [nor should it necessarily]; but the real value of the Intranet – supplying business process tools [how to find IUCN staff, how to look for project information and so forth] – has not been adequately communicated to new staff.
- Use of the Intranet by IUCN members of Commissions: it is not entirely clear that Commission members realize they can have access to the Intranet, nor how they should use it to support their work.
- Use of the Intranet by Members: Member organizations [Association for Progressive Communication; World Business Council for Sustainable Development; and so forth] usually have a Members area – a place where Members can have an inner circle for debate, early access to association information, etc. Neither the public IUCN website nor the Intranet provides this service for Members.
- As plans for upgrading the Intranet and the public website proceed, some consideration should be given to the intersection of the needs of Commissions, Members and Secretariat for inside information, business process tools and interaction. A vision for the Intranet should be considered that provides separate workspace for Members, for Commissions, and for the Secretariat, with different levels of security, but with some shared elements such as contact lists, informal news items, topical bulletin boards and the Project Information Management System.
- The Intranet supports the individual rather than the team: It plays an extremely important role in supporting individual user needs for internal documents, project information, contacts and so forth. However, tools for collaboration now need to be incorporated, so that teams can establish and monitor their influencing strategies, build their communications lists, share timelines, manage joint authorship of documents, and so forth.
- The Knowledge Network was originally conceived as a mechanism to connect information on people with information on work – a “many to many” programming architecture. This desire to connect everything to everything, while interesting from a conceptual viewpoint, and intriguing from a programming challenge, has led to large gaps of information that one would traditionally expect to find within a single click on an Intranet, but on IUCN's Intranet is either difficult to find or non-existent. For example:
  - The corporate governance documents: in this case, the Statutes and bylaws of the Union.

- A diagram of the management structure of the organization: who reports to whom.
  - Downloadable lists: A contact list of everyone in each Commission, in each programme, and the key contact for each member organization; a project list of every active project in the PIMS. Many country offices still have issues of reliable access and line speeds: this type of information needs to be easier to get at to print out or store offline rather than requiring live searches all the time.
  - Proposal development and tendering: access to staff CVs, abstracts of project experience, templates of corporate information, audited financial statements, etc, needed for rapid development and submission of proposals and tenders.
  - "How to" information – how to get projects developed and approved; how to find information on foundations and donors, IUCN travel guidelines (access to policies, per diem rates, travel advisories, medical travel information); how to plan for evaluations – information on the tools that project managers need on a daily basis to help them do their work more efficiently.
  - Quick links to information posted on the public website
- Navigation: Most people interviewed in this study, while they valued the Intranet and appreciated the efforts put into its development, felt that the language for navigation ["extended links", etc.] was not self evident or user friendly; and that there were features of the system [such as copying events into personal Outlook calendars] that they simply weren't aware of or had no particular need for.

Formal user testing should be conducted, both to identify what is not on the Intranet that should be, and to work on how the system could be made more user friendly.

It is recommended that IUCN contract a specialist in usability testing, who can organize the evaluation and set directions for redesign. Implementation of design and programming enhancements can either be contracted out or managed through IUCN's in-house capacity; but what IUCN doesn't have is the evaluation expertise for this medium. There appears to be either no, or very limited, history within HQ on user testing of electronic media; therefore it is not recommended that IUCN attempt a self directed, in-house user evaluation.

Thanks to the hard work and championship of the in-house developer, the Intranet is becoming a critical communications vehicle for the Union; but additional insight from external experts and from users is needed to upgrade it. Companies such as the Nielsen Norman group, <http://www.nngroup.com/services/#usability>, or DialogDesign <http://www.dialogdesign.dk/inenglish.html> undertake this type of work.

On the Project Information Management System (PIMS): PIMS has been set up to provide those who have access to the Intranet with access to all of IUCN's project documentation, including ideas under development, status of proposals, active and completed projects, together with the attached proposals and project reports. PIMS is valued by all users, but requires some fine tuning:

- Users in regional offices with slower line speeds have encountered problems with submitting information – connections often go down in the midst of a lengthy submission to the system, leading to frustration and non-compliance. The level of detail required in PIMS

- and/or the online submission process needs to be reviewed and streamlined.
- The language for navigation and the field descriptors are not self-evident to all users, again leading to frustration and non-compliance. For example, in quick testing of PIMS at the IUCN Canada office, the users understood some of the project classifications – O, for concept or idea; A, for proposal in circulation with the secretariat; B, for submitted to a donor; C, for donors contract in place and a financial code assigned. But after that, users were confused about the coding for projects either completed or withdrawn. There is an underlying impression that the system is somewhat more detailed and complicated than it needs to be.
  - There appears to be no plan for dealing with anachronistic information – projects that haven't moved beyond ideas, or haven't had Secretariat approval, and so forth.
  - Documentation that should accompany project information (proposals; project reports) does not always appear to be provided. More formal testing is needed to determine whether in fact the full text of all proposals, interim and final project reports and evaluations to donors and management are attached as part of the project record in PIMS. PIMS should in fact be the central archive, the corporate memory, of all of this information.

Upgrading PIMS can be approached in two ways: It can be included as part of the overall usability testing for the Intranet. Alternatively, as part of the testing for the Intranet, the system developer should receive some training in usability testing, which he can then apply to user testing for PIMS. This would begin to build within the Secretariat the expertise and culture for user evaluations of information systems – something that can subsequently be applied to other systems such as Ecolex, SIS, and regional information systems.

Finally, a personal observation from the author of the Study: The IUCN Knowledge Network is not a knowledge network. As IUCN strengthens its knowledge management practices it needs to become clearer in its use of terminology. A knowledge network is a group of individuals or institutions, working together. A knowledge network is not a database system for the archiving of events, documents, project and contact information. Perpetuating the view that the Intranet is a knowledge network will leave IUCN mired in several myths that could stall its KM efforts:

- a. Knowledge management technologies deliver the right information to the right person at the right time
- b. Information technologies can store human intelligence and experience
- c. Information technologies can distribute human intelligence<sup>45</sup>.

The "Knowledge Network" should be renamed what it is: the IUCN Intranet. This does not in any way diminish the value of the Intranet to the organization. But it will go a long way to clarifying expectations of what the Intranet is expected to support. It will also allow attention to be more easily shifted towards other aspects of knowledge networking that IUCN needs to focus on.

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<sup>45</sup> Corporate E-Learning: Technology in the Workplace. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~srmccaus/71ekm3.htm>

## Develop a new edition of IUCN's public web site

While significant advances have been made in getting content up on IUCN's public site over the course of the last year, there are some major issues to be addressed. The Website currently emphasizes a "corporate" view of IUCN, explaining its structure, key results areas, events, and so forth. Even within that, important corporate materials are missing that are standard on most other sites:

- Annual report(s)
- Donor recognition
- Partnership information
- Easy access to subscribe to regular information products like magazines, newsletters, press releases

A lot of effort has been put into the thematic sections of the site, but it is still difficult to find out what IUCN knows. Many of the subsections describe goals, objectives, plans and good intentions, but fall short on delivering the full text of project results, reports and other knowledge products. It is sometimes difficult to tell whether a project is still under development [like PALNet] or whether there are published findings and tools. As discussed under Strategic Move #3, the Communications Strategy, Global Communications should institute a policy now that all current and future IUCN products should be available for download in full text from IUCN's website. And standards and guidelines for electronic publishing need to be put in place. In particular, the process for posting IUCN products online needs to be standardized. Reinforcing the concept of the online digital library is essential, but to manage the workload and ensure compliance, responsibility for posting documents to that library must be distributed throughout all offices.

It is also difficult to track from the website what projects IUCN is currently active in. PIMS is not accessible through the public website, nor should the public have full access to ideas and proposals under development, budgets and so forth. But consideration should be given to whether a subset of PIMS, the titles and abstracts of funded work in progress, should be made available so that others – in particular the academic community – can access it more readily. IUCN is all about research and action; but the website does not yet reflect the depth of its research or the breadth of its action on the ground.

The central website should also act as a map to all of the new websites being created through IUCN's knowledge initiatives and partnerships (like [www.conservationcommons.org](http://www.conservationcommons.org), to name only one). Websites hosted by IUCN or in which IUCN has a major stake should be listed on the front page of the site.

At the time of writing, the search engine was not functioning; in the process of searching for documents it was clear that the browsability of the site is limited: substantive information may be found under themes; but it may also be found under the subsites for regional offices. Better cross navigation within the thematic sections, and between themes and regional sections should be considered.

Finally, anachronistic information needs to be removed – in earlier searches on the site, the search engine would still retrieve information on the activities of staff no longer employed at IUCN, as if they were still on staff and working on those projects.

## IUCN's current capacities and new commitments

Throughout the Union there are significant pockets of expertise that should be drawn upon over the next four years.

- **To support influence, building and sustaining relationships and managing networks and partnerships:** There is rich experience within the region and country offices on how they identify what needs to be changed and how they develop partnerships and networks to address the challenges in their backyards. This knowledge needs to be mined as part of developing IUCN's strategies and tools. It will serve to inform how IUCN can strengthen its efforts to influence policy and how it can strengthen the networks of experts within the Commissions.
- **To strengthen communications:** IUCN has access to real energy and expertise needed to bring innovation to its communications practices. The Global Communications team at Headquarters, regional communications staff, the Commission for Education and Communications, and the communications professionals in member organizations need to become much more integrated across the Union, to present a stronger, common pool of professional guidance to program/project work.
- **To provide planning and technical support for knowledge sharing:**

IUCN Canada is exploring in depth how to focus on a single institutional relationship (CIDA) in order to influence individuals within that institution: their lessons learned on trust, timing, finding areas of common passion will be important for the Union.

It should be noted that CIDA is making an investment in the core competencies of IUCN, and in particular in the knowledge management of those competencies. Their support for knowledge management in effect underpins the rest of CIDA's funding to IUCN. As IUCN moves forward in establishing strategies and tools for knowledge management, the IUCN-Canada office should be fully involved, in order to demonstrate to CIDA how improved knowledge management is helping IUCN to deliver its core competencies more effectively.

IUCN Pakistan brings many years of lessons on developing information technology applications and providing capacity building in using technologies.

The information technology group at Headquarters likewise has much to offer in creating the enabling environment for Secretariat staff to exchange information beyond the current centralized posting of notices and archiving of reports.



### **New Commitment to a Special Advisor on Knowledge Management**

If IUCN is to continue to be a major force guiding thinking and action on conservation issues around the world with credibility and integrity, it has to amplify the use and influence of its knowledge... In recent years, as part of IUCN's commitment to embark on this path, many lessons have been learnt and inputs obtained from internal and external stakeholders. To catalyse the transition from the old to the new, IUCN has now appointed for a period of two years a Special Advisor on Knowledge Management to facilitate – in collaboration with all IUCN components - the development of a shared vision and the implementation of a coherent plan towards a fully networked Union with highly effective knowledge management systems<sup>46</sup>.

## **Closing note**

### **Species Survival Commission:**

If we don't manage our own information we will be lost in the next ten years.

To recap, the Knowledge Management Study was designed to:

- Raise awareness and understanding about state-of-the-art / cutting-edge knowledge management practices
- Assess where IUCN is at the moment in terms of its ambitions to be a knowledge-based organization
- Develop practical options for debate to move forward in becoming a knowledge-based organization

The next steps for IUCN should be focused on implementation. This study has presented some critical leverage points; moving forward on these moves and strategies will advance IUCN as a leader in conservation and sustainable development. Resources will be required, in particular to create an enabling ICT environment and to build capacity for managing relationships, partnerships and networks. Some time will need to be invested in rapid results initiatives to demonstrate real and immediate progress within the next year. However, much of what has been proposed in this study requires instead changes in how IUCN develops and implements its work, to focus on influence, on roles and relationships, on communications, and on strengthening the internal dialogue, interaction and sharing within the organization. These are changes in culture and practice across the Union rather than incremental and intensive investments.

**All of the proposed strategic moves involve opportunities for innovation. As IUCN considers the findings of this study, it should keep in mind that innovation involves risk and experimentation, acceptance of failure and adaptation, with continued progress towards the goal: a just world that values and conserves nature.**

### **TILCEPA [CEESP and WCPA]:**

Knowledge is a means to an end; to action and results—better policies, better implementation.

<sup>46</sup> From Rich Tradition, Focused Future.

## ***Acknowledgments***

The Knowledge Management Study was supported through the 3IC Fund of IUCN. It has been guided by a Steering Committee at IUCN Headquarters, in consultation with Commission Chairs, Commission focal points, Directors and staff of regional offices and Headquarters.

The professional literature of IBM, Accenture and Queen's University Centre for the Knowledge Based Enterprise, among others, was consulted as part of this review. Also included in the full Study are observations from an investigation into the knowledge management practices of other organizations such as the World Bank, UNDP, CIDA, the Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), IDRC, Bellanet, the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), TakingITGlobal, InfoDev and the Global Knowledge Partnership.

IISD staff who contributed to the study include Aly Ramji, Project intern, Rod Araneda, Systems Manager, Janice Gair, Human Resources Director, Terri Willard, Project Manager, and Mark Halle, Director of IISD's European Office.

I would like to thank in particular Corli Pretorius for guiding the Study through IUCN's internal processes, and for her valued collaboration in developing the Strategic Moves; Cecile Thiery for her administrative support; Chucri Sayegh for his contributions on the technical issues and processes of knowledge management; David Brackett for the clarity of his insight into where and how to focus the Study; and, finally, Achim Steiner, for championing the Study from the beginning to the end.