

IUCN UK Executive Committee



Minutes of the 59th ExCo Meeting held on July 3rd 2009

The Library, The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Edinburgh Zoo
10:00-15:30hrs

Present: Chris Mahon (Chair), Mark Wright (WWF), Stuart Brooks (Scottish Countryside Link), Mike Pienkowski (UKOTF), Joanna Robertson (UK Country Agencies), Sally Cunningham (Defra/UK Government), Richard Edwards (Wildscreen),

Guests: Clifton Bain (IUCN UK Peatland Project), Mike Dudley (Forestry Commission)

Apologies: James Robinson (RSPB), Trevor Salmon (Defra), Bryan Carroll (Bristol Zoo Gardens), Harriet Nimmo (CEC), Sue Stolton (WCPA), Nigel Dudley (WCPA)

Secretariat: Neil Burns, Sarah Robinson

1. Chair's Welcome and introductions

CM opened the meeting and invited each ExCo member to introduce themselves to the new secretariat team.

2. Apologies for absence

CM noted that apologies had been received from James Robinson, Trevor Salmon, Bryan Carroll, Harriet Nimmo (Richard Edwards attended on her behalf), Sue Stolton and Nigel Dudley.

3. Minutes of ExCo 58

SC to follow up on action 58.6.1 and provide the International Event Calendar for inclusion on the website by the secretariat.

Action 59.3.1

JR noted that she may have time to research some of the early archive material when retired as it is believed that some of the initial documents and records may have been lost.

Action 59.3.2 Secretariat to provide JR with details of the archives recently moved from JNCC to RZSS

JR asked that the minutes reflect that she represents the Country Agencies and not just CCW.

4. Chair's Introduction

CM reported that the new secretariat was bedding down well and had been working in conjunction with him to develop the work programme and finalise the strategy which it is hoped the Executive will endorse at this meeting. He reported that he saw the past six months as a period of profile raising and opportunity assessing, and the next six as an opportunity to focus on the development of the funding and communications strategies. He stressed that these foundations were essential if the committee is to move forward with its strategy implementation in the coming years.

He also reminded the group that while they must continue to operate on a tiny budget, there were many opportunities, not least in the emerging European Context, where the IUCN UK can add value to the work of IUCN members.

Strategic Objective 1- Organisational Effectiveness

5.1- Secretariat Report

The Secretariat reported that there had been a considerable amount of work involved in the hand over from JNCC. This has involved the migration of the website as well as the transfer of files and financial systems. It was reported that the Secretariat are still working to put in place their own systems but that they are making good progress. Major work includes the setting up of an up to date and cohesive membership database (in conjunction with IUCN Gland) and new financial recording systems which will form the basis of the committee budget.

CM thanked the secretariat on behalf of the Committee for their work and progress so far. He also wished to express particular thanks to RZSS for paying the fees in relation to the website migration, which totalled in excess of £2,000.

5.2- IUCN UK Strategy and Work Programme

CM presented the new strategy and work programme to the committee for discussion and adoption. The group agreed to adopt the strategy with only minor amendments and suggested reformatting the work plan to enable gaps analysis and assist in the budgeting process. SC suggested adding the funding for biodiversity in the work programme.

Action 59.5.3 Secretariat to reformat the work programme and send on to ExCo for comment.

Action 59.5.4 Secretariat to upload the strategy document on the website and disseminate as appropriate via email/e-news

5.3-ICOMOS Landscape WG and IUCN UK future engagement

CM confirmed that IUCN UK are obliged to provide a secretariat function to the LWG committee. SR, who along with NB attended the last meeting in London, raised

questions regarding the practicality of such an arrangement given the cost and resources involved. JR suggested the Chair approach Catherine Bickmore about the possibility of her assuming these responsibilities. It was also requested that the job titles and organisations of those sitting on the LWG be included in the minute provided to ExCo members.

Further comments suggested looking to maximise the IUCN committee's efforts. The committee failed to input into the World Heritage Site list as they were not consulted. Adrian Phillips will be approached about providing more formal feedback.

JR - Defra are the UK lead on implementing landscape convention and she will find out more about how each of the 4 UK countries are taking this forward.

Action 59.5.5- CM to approach CB in relation to minute talking responsibilities.

Action 59.5.6 CM to approach Adrian Phillips about feeding back on the ICOMOS Landscape working group.

Action 59.5.7 JR to feed back information on the implementation of landscape convention

5.4-Sibthorp Trust Update

CM and SR reported that discussions were continuing with Prof. Roger Crofts of the IUCN UK SibThorp Trust in relation to the IUCN UK secretariat assuming responsibility for the administration of the Trust. There is still much that needs to be resolved before the secretariat will accept administrative responsibility, including suitable financial recompense for what could be a substantial increase in workload. CM confirmed to the group that as a result of these discussions he will be appointed a Trustee of the Trust. Paper 59.5.4 provides additional information and context to these discussions.

Action 59.5.8 IUCN UK Committee to develop a formal working relationship with the Sibthorp Trust through the development of a Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement.

5.5-Financial Report And 5.6 Draft Budget

Stuart Brooks updated the group in relation to the committee's financial situation. He stressed that there was a need for more regular financial reporting to the committee and that the development of a budget should be tackled as a matter of priority. It was noted that the committee has just over £2k in the bank and that it was important that moves were made to secure income in the near future. The secretariat confirmed that subscription invoices had been sent to members. SB also asked for greater clarification over which funds sitting in our account were restricted to organisations or projects outwith the control of the committee. See Papers 59.5.5 and 59.5.6 for further details.

The accounts were accepted.

Action 59.5.9 Link the budget to the work programme.

Action 59.5.9 Draft budget to be completed in time for ExCo 60 (30/09/09)

5.7-Dates and venues for future meetings

The secretariat outlined their desire that meeting details be set in advance for the year. The committee agreed in principle to this and details concerning the next meeting were agreed. Paper 59.5.7 provides the scheduled dates through to the last meeting in the 2010 financial year. The financial year runs from April 1st 2010 to 31st March 2011

Action 59.5.10 ExCo to suggest member organisations that would be willing and able to host an ExCo meeting to the Secretariat.

Strategy Objective 2- Membership matters

6.1-Membership Report

The secretariat reported that they were working in conjunction with IUCN Gland to ensure that they update and share the same membership information, especially in relation to contact details. RE suggested that IUCN Gland might have the wrong contact details for Wildscreen, the secretariat will consider this during the membership information update with IUCN Gland.

IUCN lists 47 UK based members, 11 international NGO's, 33 NGO's, 1 state and 2 Affiliate. Of this number 32 are also members of members if the IUCN UK.

Young People's Trust has withdrawn its membership after reviewing its resources. Rainforest Concern have applied to become IUCN members and should be approached about joining the UK National Committee.

6.2-IUCN UK membership on Google Earth

Several IUCN UK members have successfully established their details on the IUCN Google Earth layer provided by IUCN HQ in Gland. The secretariat acknowledged that there had been some issues surrounding the process but reported that IUCN HQ were reasonably pleased with results so far. It is hoped that the scheme will help expand membership profiles and open up new communication possibilities.

6.3-MyIUCN Update

SR updated the group about proposals to implement the new myiucn membership database.

Action 59.6.11 SR to provide more specific detail as and when it arrives from Gland.

6.4-Kinnarps

CM reported that all IUCN National Committees had been contacted by Dr Hans Friedrich bringing to their attention the Swedish furniture supplier Kinnarps, recently appointed as IUCN's preferred partner for the new IUCN Conservation centre. Kinnarps seeks to supply services to each National Committee and CM sought opinion from the group. General consensus was to maintain contact but it was felt little value would be gained from any formal relationship.

Strategy Objective 3-Practical contribution to global and European Strategies

7.1- IUCN UK Peatland Project

CB introduced himself to the group and gave an overview of the Peatland Project. This initiative will be self funded and focus on raising the profile of peatland environments and looking for ways to integrate them into existing or developing conservation strategies.

The project will include the recruitment of a researcher as well as a focus on a range of outputs including events, seminars and publications. There will be no direct land management involved as the project seeks to change attitudes and raise awareness with key policy makers. He asked the group if the project will suit the IUCN UK objective.

MW said he was excited by the vision offered in the paper but disappointed by the actual mechanism available and questioned whether the project had enough “bite” to achieve this vision. CB reiterated that the focus is on changing attitudes and driving forward policy changes.

JR asked if the project would deliver any economic value. CB responded that delivering economic value would be a crucial objective of the initiative and confirmed that external expertise will be commissioned if necessary on the economic front.

MP added that the project appeared analogous to other overseas projects and could be expanded into other areas. He also offered to bring the project to the attention of a wider range of NGOs. The group agreed in principle to this but SB cautioned against expanding the basis of the project too quickly.

CB confirmed that the proposal would be complete in approximately one month's time. The group confirmed that it is happy with the basis of the proposal and will sign off once completed. SB also agreed to circulate the minutes of the Peatland Project Steering Group to members of the ExCo.

JR reported that there was no response from the UK agencies regarding action 58.7.1 She suggested adding an agency representative to the Peatland Project steering group as currently only NGO's were represented and that the project should give consideration to how Defra work can be supported to avoid duplication and add value.

ExCo were reassured that they would be consulted on IUCN UK branding issues to maintain a degree of consistency over where and how the branding is seen.

Dealing with the press was raised; CB suggested providing position statements on controversial issues for ExCo to agree core messages for. Formal wording will be used for press releases; CM asked that IUCN UK was used in all cases, not IUCN.

SC asked that press releases were run past experts if Country Agencies were not represented on the project's steering committee and suggested that the meeting of the Heads of Science could be a good forum for canvassing opinion.

Any minutes from Peatland Project meetings will be distributed to ExCo through the Secretariat.

Action 59.7.12 CB to provide the Secretariat with materials for the IUCN UK web site.

Feedback from Meetings

7.2-JNCC MEA meeting in London

CM reported that he had recently attended the JNCC MEA conference in London. The conference was focused upon devising a themed approach to issues in the MEAs as well as a co-ordinated response from all UK based agencies and organisations towards the various conservation Conventions.

JNCC also produced some very helpful briefing documents which provide basic and up to date information on a number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) which serve as useful reference documents as well as providing a sound basis for further investigation.

7.3-Czech Presidency Wilderness and Large Area Conference

CM reported on his attendance at the above conference in Prague. The purpose of the conference was to bring together delegates involved in developing policy around wilderness Protection and large natural area restoration. The conference developed a "message from Prague" which will hopefully provide a way forward to wider implementation. Details...

CM chaired a plenary session at the conference which proved to be a useful profile raising opportunity.

SB didn't feel that the emphasis on restoration at the conference came through in the paper.

Points of information:

- Dr Steve Carver (University of Leeds) is setting up a Wildland Research Institute at Leeds.
- WILDScreen and SB will be attending the 9th World Wilderness Congress: Symposium on Science and Stewardship to Protect and Sustain Wilderness Values (6-13 November 2009, Mérida, Mexico).

7.4-HOLCIM International Advisory Panel

CM reported that it had been a useful exercise to attend but perhaps not enough benefit was gained given the funds expended. It is therefore important to critically assess the need to attend events at the request of IUCN international.

7.5-Science and World Heritage Site. ICOMOS UK Workshop

CM represented IUCN UK at this event in London which provided greater understanding of the need for representation of scientific sites amongst those nominated for World Heritage Status. A presentation on Darwin's Landscape Laboratory was received as a candidate site.

7.6-Global Forest Partnership-Joint Workshop with Forestry Commission

MD reported to the group the new focus on developing a global forestry partnership. To this end, two events are planned to raise the profile of the initiative and garner political support. The first will be “high level” event held in the autumn, hosted by the Secretary of State, focusing on policy and seeking to secure political backing. The second will consist of a workshop which will focus more on the practical implementation of the vision. He expressed hope that IUCN UK will agree to co-host the workshop.

SB noted that the IUCN UK commission network could prove a very useful resource in recruiting potential interested parties to the project. They may be able to suggest individuals in the UK that would be valuable delegates at the workshop. The Admin assistant on the Ecosystem Management Programme Patricia Hawes could be a good starting point (patricia.hawes@iucn.org).

JR suggested contacting Professor Gareth Edwards-Jones, University of Wales Bangor if UK experts were being sought.

Action 59.7.14 MD to circulate a more detailed proposal for the consideration of the ExCo.

Action 59.7.15 ExCo to recommend individuals to attend and give approval to co-branding the workshop should they see fit.

7.7-IUCN Commissions-verbal feedback report from Commission Members

CEC

RE on behalf of HN reported on the joint meeting of the two IUCN Commissions, WCPA and CEC, in Quito. It was felt that IUCN international by sending only juniors to the conference did not treat the meeting as seriously as the participants expected – this caused the biggest topic of debate. There was also talk about using a ‘new style’ of communication to convey information about protected areas and new mechanisms are needed.

WCPA

ExCo expressed an interest in WCPA UK members holding a meeting in the autumn to input into the POWPA discussions and other relevant issues.

Action 59.7.15 ExCo to contact Sue Stolton (sue@equilibriumresearch.com) expressing interest in attending, offering a venue and/or thoughts on content.

7.8-Reports from Gland and Regional Pan European Office

CM reported that a review of the functions of the Regional Office for Europe in Brussels was taking place and a report on findings will be produced soon. He had taken part in a telephone interview with a consultant to contribute to the report.

Action 59.7.16 Secretariat to send a link to the report when it is published.

7.9-Overseas Territories Report on Cayman Islands Conference-Mike Pienkowski

The Minister, Huw Irranca-Davies, was a welcome addition to the conference, two noted points were; the government departments coordinated approach to the UKOT's and the Darwin Initiative Funding specifically available to OT's. The UKOTCF website has the further news on the conference.

UKOTCF is happy to assist in Darwin Initiative funding applications.

Turks and Caicos issue was raised, MP will keep IUCN UK informed.

7.10-Countdown 2010 Partner's Assembly, Brussels

CM represented the IUCN UK Committee at this event which worked through some ideas around the future of the Countdown 2010 initiative and what the communication message should be for 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity.

7.11-Memorandum of Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the IUCN

Agreed that this should be welcomed and thought that it sits at the Pan European level, however should there be an opportunity to engage IUCN UK will.

Strategy Objective 4- Raising Profile and Improving Communication

8.1-IUCN UK e-newsletter

CM reported that he was working on creating an e-newsletter to replace the current Communication from the Chair. He presented an initial draft which included updates from recent events and meetings as well as photographs and pictures. The group agreed it was a more dynamic communication tool than the current method and hopes it would inspire greater interest in member organisations. CM will act as editor but will accept content from other contributors to provide the most relevant and up to date information.

The newsletter will initially be sent quarterly to all IUCN UK members, Commission members and any other interested parties.

Action 59.8.17 Secretariat will look at software for the distribution of the newsletter, Wildscreen may be able to make some suggestions.

8.2-Website Update

SR reported that the website migration was now complete and that RZSS were in control of all web content. The group were informed that five members of RZSS had attended a training course in running the website. Updating the website is now a priority for the secretariat, the content will be reviewed.

A members only area was raised and using the RZSS intranet until this is available was suggested.

8.3-Publicity and Promotional Activity

SR reported that the Secretariat had been working on creating various basic promotional materials. These include new business cards for the Secretariat as well as headed paper and comp slips for official correspondence. NB also reported that the Secretariat were creating a pair of promotional banners, a mock up of which was presented to the group. CM commented that if the group were happy with the results of these banners then more will be created, possibly a series that can be used to promote specific events or key messages, and could include the IUCN UK Peatland Project in this.

Action 59.8.18 Secretariat to produce options of banners to ExCo, Wildscreen can be contacted for photos.

8.4-Communication Strategy

CM reported this was work in progress which he hoped to take forward with HN later in July.

9 Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the meeting's agenda

9.1-"Funding for Biodiversity" report-Sally Cunningham

SC reported to the group on the IUCN UK 2008 Funding for Biodiversity report. The report was an attempt to record and assess UK Government funding of biodiversity projects. Due to various factors, it is recognised that there are substantial discrepancies within the report and that DEFRA, in conjunction with Paul Morling, are working to amend the report in time for wider dissemination in 2010.

10 Any Other Business

Chris Martin (RSPB) sent a request for contributions to a surprise book of messages and photographs from friends and colleagues of Alastair Gemmel for his retirement gift. ExCo were asked to contribute.

IUCN UK had been approached by a PhD student requesting access to the IUCN UK network of contacts. The group decided that there was limited support they could offer and voiced concerns that granting the request could open up the network to a large number of unsolicited approaches and requests. It was decided that the PhD candidate would be better to approach the UK BAP community for contacts.

11 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the ExCo will take place on 30th September 2009. Location is likely to be Wales and venue to be confirmed.

CM then thanked everybody present for their attendance and contribution before declaring the meeting closed.