

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Key features

Type of organisation: Inter-governmental organisation of open membership

Charter/Constitution:
Fontainebleau constitutive act signed by 18 States (1948)

Membership

- Nature: Governmental (States and Government Agencies); Non-Governmental (National and International NGOs); Indigenous Peoples Organizations (newest category since Sept 2016)
- Number: 1395. (Governmental – 219; Non-Governmental – 1113; Indigenous Peoples Organizations – 15; Affiliates – 48)

Year of establishment: 1948

Headquarters: Gland, Switzerland

Country offices: 59 Regional and Country offices

Secretariat staff: 897 (Aug 2017)

Total budget: CHF 150m annually (2017)

Type of activity: Knowledge generation, standard setting, policy dialogue, convene and inform decision makers, project implementation

Sectors of activity: Environmental and Sustainable Development Sector

Website: www.iucn.org

Members

IUCN is a membership organisation, uniquely composed of States and government agencies (*Category A Members*), non-governmental organisations (*Category B Members*) and Indigenous Peoples Organizations (*Category C Members*). Whether they are in Category A or B and C, IUCN Members have the same rights to speak, elect the IUCN Council and they jointly decide on IUCN's general policy and decisions. A fourth category of member organisations – the Affiliates (*Category D*) – enables formal affiliation with IUCN but with limited rights.

IUCN counts over 1,300 Members from over 170 countries. The full list can be found online at: www.iucn.org/about/union/members/who-are-our-members

Relationship with non-Members

Due to IUCN's unique and vast Membership, around half of its work is carried out with Members. The broad nature of IUCN's work means that it also engages with other local and international partners in the execution of projects aimed at developing and implementing policies, laws and best practices for conservation and development.

Observers

Members of IUCN's Commissions, Honorary Members and Patrons of IUCN may attend the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) as observers. Additionally, non-Member States and international organisations with which IUCN has a formal working relationship and members of formally-established working groups may attend the WCC as observers upon invitation.

Composition of IUCN's commissions

In addition to the Member organisations, IUCN has an extensive network of over 10,000 volunteer scientists and experts organised in six thematic commissions on education and communication (CEC), environmental, economic and social policy (CEESP), environmental law (WCEL), ecosystem management (CEM), species survival (SSC) and protected areas (WCPA). These commissions generate knowledge, which informs IUCN's decision making process and actions on the ground.

Mandate

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

IUCN's mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

IRC processes taking place within IUCN



Categories of legal and policy instruments

	Is it taking place within the IO?	Approximate number
Treaties for ratification by States (excluding the funding one)		
Legally binding decisions		
Recommendations	√ Resolutions and Recommendations	1305
Political declarations	√	~10
Model treaties or law	√	~10
Production of technical standards	√	over 10
Non-binding guidance/best practices document	√	over 500

Interactions with other international organisations active in the field

Mechanisms of interaction	Approximate number of IOs involved	Examples
Develop joint instruments		
MoU or other agreements	√	
Participate in co-ordinating institution	√	e.g. CBD, CITES, CMS, ESCAP, FAO, GEF, IPBES, IAEG, Ramsar Convention, Regional Development Banks, UNCCD, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, WEF, World Bank;
Joint meetings that provide forum for co-ordination	√	
Observe relevant actions of other bodies	√	
Exchange information	√	

History

IUCN was founded in October 1948 as the International Union for the Protection of Nature (or IUPN) following an international conference in Fontainebleau, France. The organisation changed its name to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in 1956 with the acronym IUCN (or UICN in French and Spanish). Since its founding, its Members have convened every two to four years to debate and agree major policy issues, thereby shaping the international conservation agenda. IUCN has been involved in the establishment of a number of conventions over the years as well as in developing much of the international legislations that today governs the relationships among governments in the field of conservation. In 1972, IUCN was involved in the preparations of the Stockholm Conference which led to three new international conventions: the World Heritage Convention in 1972; CITES in 1974 and the Ramsar Convention in 1975. In 1980, IUCN, UNEP and WWF published the World Conservation Strategy, a seminal document that stressed the interdependence of conservation and development, and first coined the term "sustainable development". These documents have been the foundation of conservation efforts since and together with the Global Diversity Strategy (published in 1992 by UNEP, IUCN, and WRI) lay the foundations for the Convention on Biological Diversity, a global treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity developed by UNEP with support from IUCN.

Source: Data provided by the IUCN to the OECD as part of a data collection exercise, October 2017.