

IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation

Annual activity report 2001

1. Introduction

The IUCN Centre began working on 1 October 2001 and this short activity report reports on activities undertaken by IUCN during 2001. The intention is not to exhaustively describe what has been done, but rather to introduce activities underway on the different themes of work for the office, and inform the Consejería de Medio Ambiente and the Ministerio de Medio Ambiente on progress made.

2. Office staffing and establishment

Much of the year was taken up in appointing staff and establishing a functional office in the PTA in Malaga. IUCN began a search for suitable candidates in 2000 but by February of 2001 had not yet identified a Director who met all the requirements of the position.. A second round of interviews was undertaken in April 2001, and by the end of June a final decision had been taken by the new Director General, Achim Steiner.

The Director, Jamie Skinner, officially took up his functions full time on 1 October 2001, joining Andres Alcantara who began earlier that year. At the end of 2001 the position of Andres Alcantara will change from “Adminisdrador principal” to “Senior programme officer – Species and Protected Areas”. Three more staff have been appointed during 2001– Isaac Jimenez (Finance and Administration, beginning in 1 March 2002), Karima el Kasmi (Executive Assistant, from 1 Jan 2002) and Mirian Puga (Executive Assistant part time, Nov 2001). Further staff announcements will also be made, and staff are appointed following public advertisement and normal IUCN staff recruitment procedures.

The IUCN offices have been generously provided by the Parque Tecnológico de Andalucia and furnished by the Region of Andalucia. Nevertheless, IUCN has had no previous legal existence in Spain, and establishing a new functional office of IUCN has required harmonising IUCN internal rules with the Spanish context while also ensuring all staff understand and can benefit from, the wider functions and rules of the Union and Secretariat.

In 2001, much of the energy of the staff from Oct – Dec 2001 was engaged in :

- ? clarifying the legal status of the office;
- ? installing an effective communications system (telephone, computers, internet etc);
- ? setting up banking facilities;
- ? appointing additional staff;
- ? purchasing furniture and office equipment
- ? setting up financial control systems and accounting;

- ? ensuring that the systems in place in Malaga were in conformity with those of headquarters.

The steering group established under the core office funding agreement (Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Madrid, and Consejeria de Medio Ambiente, Andalucia and IUCN) has met twice at high level, once in September 2001 in Madrid, and once in December 2001 in Malaga (Annexes 1 and 2). The next meeting will be in September 2002 in Gland, Switzerland.

3. Programme development

Consultations with members, IUCN Secretariat staff, IUCN national committees and partners

A draft medium term Mediterranean strategy has been completed according to the Amman inter-sessional programme, aligning the members' discussions in Malaga in 1997 with the new orientations of IUCN agreed in Amman. This draft strategy was discussed with IUCN Secretariat staff¹ during October and with Chairpersons of IUCN National Committees in the region, in November (Annex 3) before being submitted to the Centre's two main current donors (Consejeria de Medio Ambiente, Andalucia and Spanish Ministry of Environment) in December. It was circulated to all members at the end of 2001 (Annex 4).

During this period, the Director met with IUCN members in Spain, Tunis, France, Turkey, Morocco, Monaco and Italy, as well as partners such as WWF Mediterranean programme and MedForum² and the Barcelona Convention to inform development of the strategy. This was also an opportunity to engage with regional actors on the future programme of partnerships for the office.

The Mediterranean programme is a horizontal thematic programme that has no membership functions but seeks to deliver initiatives of regional relevance, especially promoting North-South linkages within the region. The programme has already built collaborative links with the IUCN Global Forest, Marine, and Water and wetlands programmes and with WCPA (Parks for Life and Mediterranean marine working group), and discussions are underway with the Species Survival Commission.

Extensive coordination is also ongoing with the IUCN Wescana and IUCN European offices with whom information exchanges and collaborative approaches are well established.

¹ The Director General constituted a Mediterranean Task Force in Gland to assist the Centre in developing its programme

² Listed in Amman resolutions as key partners

Progress on key themes

The Malaga meeting of members in 1997 defined five main themes, and for each one, the Malaga office intends to go through a process of programme definition, in consultation with members and partners, to generate synergies and complementarity. For the first three themes, programme development will be launched in the early part of 2002.

- a. Islands**
- b. Biodiversity conservation**
- c. Sustainable use of natural resources (eg. forests and fisheries)**

For two other themes, proposal are already under development in 2001 :

d. Water

The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributed in early 2001 a programme development grant to IUCN Gland that allowed a consultant to draft an assessment of environmental considerations in water management in the Mediterranean and to present proposals for IUCN's role and contribution in the region. A first draft was available before the end of the year and will be modified for discussion at an expert workshop in Malaga in April 2002. Programme proposals will then be developed in concertation with WESCANA and specific requests made to donors for follow-up in 2002 and beyond.

e. Desertification

The French Government has indicated its willingness to support a similar process to that for water, and a project proposal has been drafted, following contacts with the French National Scientific Committee on Desertification. This will allow links to be made with other IUCN processes, for example the Commission on Ecosystem Management and the Arid Lands Task Force of Council and to focus on the specific Mediterranean annex of the Convention (Annex 4). A decision is expected in May 2002.

4. Financial report

(to be completed by Isaac)

Annexes

1. Minutes of Comisión de seguimiento Sept 2001
2. Minutes of Comisión de seguimiento Dec 2001
3. Minutes of meeting of chairmen of National Committees (Nov 2001)
4. Strategy for the Mediterranean programme for 2002-2004.