



IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation

Progress report Oct 2001 to March 2002

1. Introduction

The IUCN Centre began working on 1 October 2001 and this short activity report intends to bring IUCN members and partners in the region up to date with activities carried out so far. The intention is not to exhaustively describe what has been done, but rather to introduce processes underway on the different themes of work for the office, and provide opportunities for members to respond, comment or join a particular theme that may be of interest.

2. 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 and Chairpersons of IUCN National Committees in the region², in November before being submitted to the Centre's two main current donors (Consejería de Medio Ambiente, Andalucía and Spanish Ministry of Environment) in December.³ It was circulated to all members in February and is now available also in French and Spanish.

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

² Minutes of meeting are available from the Centre

³ This document is available in English, French and Spanish and was circulated to members in February 2002

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 MedForum⁴ and the Barcelona Convention to inform development of the strategy.

The Director has attended meetings of the Barcelona Convention in Monaco, the Mediterranean Commission on sustainable development in Antalya, the Silva Mediterranea at FAO in Rome, and made presentations in Andalucia, Barcelona and Alicante (Symposium on Mediterranean biodiversity). These meetings have all provided important opportunities for networking, and partnership development, especially with the Barcelona/Mediterranean Action Plan - one of IUCN's key partners in the region.

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.

a. Islands

An overview report on this issue, including proposals for IUCN's regional role, has been requested from a consultant and will be circulated by the end of April for comment. A small regional expert workshop will be explored to discuss the conclusions and recommendations.

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b. Biodiversity conservation

Andres Alcantara leads programme development and management as the Senior programme officer for Protected areas and species. The focus of the next 18 months will be on Durban World Parks Congress in 2003 and using this as an opportunity to review Mediterranean Protected Area networks, the challenges to effective management, and to make a contribution to Durban on themes of relevance to the region. By using Durban as a focus, benefits will also be generated for the region.

Four of the seven workshop themes for Durban have been identified during consultations held at the recent symposium on Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas in Roses, Catalunya in March 2002, and current plans are to hold a small (25 – 30 people) expert workshop on each theme in 2002 and then to promote a major Mediterranean Congress on Protected Areas in February 2003 from which proposals for Durban will emerge. The possibility of continuing the exercise by holding a further regional conference after the Durban Congress will also be explored. Relevant information has been sent to members as a separate package.

⁴ Listed in Amman resolutions as key partners

Partnerships have been developed with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and a small financial contribution has been made to Parks for Life to help coordinate with WCPA Europe. The Region of Andalusia and the Province of Barcelona have already agreed to support workshops (Connectivity – Sept 2002, and Governance – Nov 2002 respectively), and discussions are well advanced to hold the 2003 Mediterranean congress in Murcia. Further partnerships elsewhere are under development for two more workshop themes concerning “Capacity building” and “Gaps in the system”.

Initial enquiries have been made concerning Red Lists of endangered species at Mediterranean level, however it is clear that existing initiatives under IUCN Species Survival Commission cover part of this need. Further work on this issue will be explored once the World Parks Congress work is underway.

IUCN Malaga is also the logistical focal point for the 17th Global Biodiversity Forum that will take place before COP 8 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Valencia, Nov 2002), in collaboration with the technical team at IUCN HQ.

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c. Sustainable use of natural resources (eg. forests and fisheries)

On forest issues, a proposal has been made to the European Commission, in collaboration with the IUCN global forest programme, WWF and the Association of Mediterranean Foresters. An expert workshop will be held to link Mediterranean forestry landscape restoration in European countries with global initiatives and obligations (such as Convention on Biological diversity, UN Forest Forum, Convention on Climate Change and Convention on Desertification). A decision is expected in June 2002.

For fisheries, initial contacts have been made with the IUCN Global Marine Programme, the FAO scientific committee on Mediterranean fisheries and a consultant has been contracted to outline IUCN’s role, programme and partnerships in marine issues.

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d. Water

The Italian Ministry of Foreign affairs contributed in 2001 a programme development grant that allowed a consultant to draft an assessment of environmental considerations in water management in the Mediterranean, and to hold an expert workshop in Malaga in April 2002 to discuss proposals for IUCN’s role and contribution in the region. The workshop was attended by 22 invited participants from 10 Mediterranean countries, and regional networks (eg MedWet, Network of River basin organisations, Centre for Environment and development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), Global water partnership etc).

Programme proposals will be developed in concertation with WESCANA and specific requests made to donors for follow-up in 2002.

The Mediterranean region has joined the IUCN “Water and Nature Initiative” (WANI) to work on water, wetlands and climate change for which a grant of approximately \$160,000 has been received from the Global Water Partnership Secretariat (Netherlands) to support an initial programme with other Mediterranean networks and partners (eg GWP-Mediterranean partners, such as MedWet, CEDARE, CIHEAM etc).

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e. Desertification

The French Government has indicated its willingness to support a similar process to that for water, and a project proposal has been made, 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). Decision expected in May 2002.

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f. Amman resolutions – transboundary protected areas

A study to identify areas of transboundary significance for biodiversity has been put in place through the Wescana Biodiversity centre in Lebanon. Working through national committees and members, the Centre will identify transboundary areas to complement the work already undertaken by WCPA in Europe.

3. Programme management

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.

4. Office staffing and administration

The Director, Jamie Skinner, officially took up his functions full time on 1 October 2001, joining Andres Alcantara who began earlier that year. Since then three more staff have been appointed – Isaac Jimenez (Finance and Administration, 1 March 2002), Karima El Kasmi (Executive Assistant, 1 Jan 2002) and Mirian Puga (Executive Assistant part time, Nov 2001). Two more staff positions are currently

being advertised, one for a marine officer, and a second for a communications officer. 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 Andalucía and furnished by the Region of Andalucía. 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. Staff have all benefited from training in Gland to allow the office to be more effective within the Union. The arrival of Isaac Jimenez in March 2002 has meant the team can devote more time to technical and programme issues.

The steering group established under the core office funding agreement (Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Madrid, and Consejería de Medio Ambiente, Andalucía and IUCN) has met twice at high level, and will meet again formally in September 2002.

Documentation currently available concerning the IUCN Mediterranean programme :

1. Towards a Strategic Plan for the IUCN Mediterranean Programme (January 2002).
2. Vers un plan stratégique pour le programme méditerranéen de l’UICN (février 2002).
3. Hacia un Plan Estratégico para el Programa Mediterráneo de la UICN (febrero 2002).
4. Minutes of Chairmen of Mediterranean National Committees meeting, November 2001.
5. Water, wetlands and climate change – project proposal
6. Integrated management of river basins in the Mediterranean region: sustainable water for nature and food – overview report
7. Proposals for IUCN’s role in mainstreaming environmental considerations in river basin management in the Mediterranean region – programme proposal
8. IUCN and Mediterranean Islands: opportunities
9. Areas Protegidas en el Mediterraneo – hacia la gestion integrada del territorio (propuesta de programma hasta Durban 2003).

Documentation under preparation :

- ? IUCN’s role in desertification-related issues in the Mediterranean region (project proposal and report)
- ? IUCN’s regional role in the conservation of marine biodiversity and fisheries in the Mediterranean.