THE IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS 2020
MOTIONS PROCESS

3. Online Discussion

1) INTRODUCTION

This document forms the third part of a series of guidance notes prepared by the IUCN Secretariat on the motions process. It presents the process for the online discussion of motions in a succinct way and explains the electronic system step-by-step, providing detailed information on how to use the different functionalities and features.

The online discussion of motions takes place on the Congress Portal from 11 December 2019 until 11 March 2020.

The online discussion is divided into two distinct segments (or “readings”). As the second reading will focus on a revised text of the motion (after the first reading’s changes are incorporated), it is important that Members not only participate in the final weeks of the discussions.

Figure 1: Overview of the motions process
2) THE ONLINE DISCUSSION OF MOTIONS IN A NUTSHELL

All motions will be discussed online, prior to the Congress, during a period of 13 weeks, enabling all IUCN Members to participate in the process democratically, effectively and transparently. An electronic system for the online discussion will be live from 11 December 2019 until 11 March 2020 (13:00 GMT/UTC) accessible via the Congress portal. Members of all categories which are in good standing can voice their support for motions, express concerns, debate pros and cons and submit amendments using this system, just as they would during the Members’ Assembly. Members will also be invited to express their intention to support the implementation of motions, should they be adopted, either financially or in-kind.

Commission members, representatives of recognised National and Regional Committees and members of the Secretariat may also take part in the online discussion of motions in a technical advisory and support capacity in described in Figure 2 (Rule 62bis). The category of each participant is shown for each comment.

Figure 2: Roles in the online discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IUCN Constituent</th>
<th>Role in Online Discussion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Members vote on motions, and thus they need to feel comfortable with the text of motions. They can comment on any part of the motion, propose edits, support implementation, and endorse (like) edits proposed by other participants with which they agree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives of National Committees</td>
<td>May take part in the online discussion of motions in an advisory and support capacity only. They can make general comments to provide technical advice and support the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission members</td>
<td>Councillors, who have been assigned as focal points for Council-sponsored motions, can be called to comment on specific parts of these motions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat staff</td>
<td>The steer the discussions fairly and transparently, producing a text that enjoys broad support. They make announcements, comment, propose edits, and publish revisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The electronic discussion will be facilitated by a number of qualified individuals identified by the Motions Working Group – with one Facilitator assigned to the discussion of each motion. They will help to ensure the transparent nature of the process and contribute to achieving a level of convergence on contentious issues sufficient for the motions to be considered ready for the MWG to submit them to an electronic vote, with or without amendments.

The online discussion of each motion will be organised in two “readings” (or periods of discussion), as per Figure 3 below.
The first reading (11 December 2019 – 15 January 2020) will focus on the version of the motion as published in December 2019. At this stage, Members can voice their general comments about the motion, propose specific edits to its text, as well as comment on its proposed resourcing and implementation strategy. In week six (15-22 January 2020), the Facilitator will go through the comments and proposed edits received during the first reading and seek to incorporate them into a revision, which will then be the focus of the second reading. All comments and proposed edits should then focus on the new text. Reopening issues where consensus was reached during the first reading is strongly discouraged.

The second reading will also run for five weeks (22 January – 26 February 2020). After the second reading, the Facilitator incorporates the additional comments and changes proposed to arrive at a text with which Members participating in the discussion feel comfortable. The Facilitator will then publish a final revision of the text and forward it to the Motions Working Group, summarizing the main elements and status of the discussion (26 February – 4 March 2020). The Motions Working Group will take the final decision about the way forward, either:

1) Submitting the motion to an electronic vote as amended during the online discussion or together with proposed amendments; or

2) Referring the motion to the Members’ Assembly for further debate and in-person voting.

Figure 3: Online discussion schedule 11 December 2019 – 11 March 2020

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First reading period</td>
<td>Facilitator revision</td>
<td>Second reading period</td>
<td>Facilitator revision</td>
<td>Final edits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5 weeks)</td>
<td>(1 week)</td>
<td>(5 weeks)</td>
<td>(1 week)</td>
<td>(1 week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No comments</td>
<td>No comments</td>
<td>No comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The primary way for Members to voice their opinion on a motion or to propose text changes is by submitting written comments directly via the online system. The Facilitator will ensure that any discussion that may take place outside the online discussion platform (e.g. agreed Skype calls with a subset of Members) is reported back to the online discussion in a timely manner to ensure transparency.
To summarize, after each reading finishes, Facilitators will have one week to work on the resulting text. This means that by 22 January 2020 and 4 March 2020, the text resulting from each respective reading of the online discussion, including alternate proposals as amendments in case there was no consensus, will be published in the system by each Facilitator. Note that during those revision weeks, comments will be temporarily disabled.

There will be one additional week (4-11 March 2020) for Members to go through the final published versions of motions in their original language, which should have incorporated the changes proposed during the online discussion. This additional time allows for Members to flag errors or mistakes in the text as published by the Facilitator before it is prepared for the next step.

In order to strive towards consensus on the text of a motion, Facilitators can suggest (using the commenting tool in the system) at any time during the online discussion to have consultations with representatives of Member organisations through Skype or any other means). These “informal consultations” will not be carried out using the online motions system but Facilitators will always keep Members informed when these take place through a comment in the system.

Note that in order for Members to have enough time to consult their position internally (in particular for State Members) and in order to prepare for the electronic vote and the explanation of the vote if appropriate, significant additional time has been allocated between the time of the closing of the online discussion of motions and the e-vote compared to 2016. This additional time also allows for the Motions Working Group and the Secretariat to prepare motions for the electronic vote.

3) STEP-BY-STEP AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I access the online discussion of motions?

You can access the online discussion by logging in to the Congress website, clicking on the “Exercise your rights” tab and then the “View/join the online discussion of motions” button. Then you can click on the title of any motion to access the discussion for that specific motion.

In order to ensure equitable participation for all IUCN Members, any staff of a Member may intervene its behalf. The person should log in with their own IUCN account.
The online discussion display

001 - Title

This is the preamble.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France, 11-19 June 2020:
1. This is an operative paragraph.

- Explanatory memorandum

- Co-sponsors

Motions as initially submitted
- Taking action to reduce light pollution
The online discussion display begins with the motion number and title, after which there is a box with navigation shortcuts. These include:

1. The working language (most likely the original submission language)
2. The name of the latest version and a link to compare it to previous versions
3. Shortcuts to the other language versions of this motion (note that these will not be updated based on your edits until after the discussion)
4. A link to translate the entire page with Google
5. A link to subscribe or unsubscribe to the motion (see below)
6. A link to jump down to the comments section

Thereafter the text of the motion is displayed, including the preamble and operative paragraphs. Below that is the explanatory memorandum (if submitted) as well as the list of co-sponsors. Finally, there is a link (or links) to the original motion submission form(s). This has been included to allow participants to see the implementation measures – including the budget – proposed by the proponent, and to support or comment on them.

Below the motion is the comments section.

It includes the list of comments in reverse chronological order, starting with any Announcement posted by the Facilitator. The comments provide information about the constituent, the time and date of the comment, the type of comment, which section it pertains to, and how many “likes” it has.
How do I subscribe to a motion?

You might be interested in following the discussions of all motions, but it is also possible to subscribe to those in which you are most interested. To do so, you can either click on the “Subscribe to this motion” link in the grey box below the title of the motion, or using the links located next to the list of titles from the main motions dashboard. By subscribing to a motion you will receive automated email notifications each time a new comment is posted on that motion. Note that you can unsubscribe at any time by clicking on the same button.

Which elements of a motion can be discussed?

The elements of a motion that may be discussed or negotiated are the title, the motion in general, the preamble, the operative paragraphs, and the annex (if relevant). The explanatory memorandum may not be discussed or negotiated as this simply contains additional information the sponsors deemed important to share at the moment of submitting the motion.

While not subject to negotiation per se, Members are encouraged to review and discuss the implementation information, including the indicative budget, which was provided by proponents at submission. In case Members believe that the resources cited will be insufficient, or would like to pledge a contribution towards implementation, financial or in-kind, they should state so during the discussion using the “support implementation” comment feature.

What is the working language of the discussion of a motion?

The working language of a motion is defined by the Facilitator at the beginning of the discussion and most likely will be the language in which the motion was submitted. Any revision of the motion during the online discussion will be published in the working language only. Comments may be posted in any one of IUCN’s three official languages (English, French and Spanish).

How to translate the motion and all comments into your preferred language?

You can use the “Translate with Google” button that is integrated in the grey box at the top of the motions page, to change the text of the motion and all comments into your preferred language. Please note, that only the motion in its working language is the “official motion”. No translations generated through Google translate are considered “official”.

(see below). There are also buttons to add a comment, or to filter the comments based on the information provided by the discussants.
How do I know if I am looking at the latest version of the motion?

In order to know if you are looking at the latest version of the motion, please navigate to the grey box at the top of the motions page. In this grey box, you will find all the essential information on the motion. Make sure you are on the page of the motion in the language that is specified as the working language. If you are viewing in a different language, click on the respective language to the left in the grey box.

Once you are on the page showing the motion in the working language, check in the grey box what the latest version in this language is. If you are not on the latest version, there will be a link offering you to view the latest version.

How do I add a comment?

The core of the online discussion is the comments section. To post a comment, please click the green “Add a comment” button at the top or bottom of the comments section. This will direct you to a new page that shows the text of the motion at the top with a comment field below it.

In the “Your comment” section, please select the “IUCN Member or other Constituent” you are making this comment on behalf of from the dropdown menu (this only shows the constituents you are connected too).

Next, you need to specify what type of comment you are making, for example, is it a general comment, a proposal of a specific edit to the text, or a statement of implementation support?

In the Section field, please specify to which section of the motion your comment relates: “the title”, “the motion in general”, “a specific preambular paragraph”, a “specific operative paragraph”, or “the annex”. Please select the one most relevant to your comment. If you are commenting on a specific paragraph (preambular or operative) you will be prompted to specify the paragraph number. This is quite straightforward for the operative section as the paragraphs are numbered. However, if you are choosing a specific preambular paragraph, please scroll up the page and count the number of paragraphs.
Once you have classified your comment, you can enter it in the text field (max. 1,200 characters including spaces). This information will enable participants to filter comments, by type of comment and specific section of the motion.
How do I propose specific edits to the text of the motion? (Members only)

In order to propose a specific edit to the text, please proceed as above, but choose “proposed edits” in the “Comment type” section. You will then also be asked to provide further information on which section your edit relates to. Please be as accurate as possible when making your selection of the section and paragraph, as this information will enable the Facilitator and other discussants to filter the comments by specific sections of the motion.

To indicate your specific edits in the text field, copy-paste the relevant paragraph and indicate any additions to the text in **bold** and any deletions using *strike through*. This will make it easier for the other participants and the Facilitator to understand exactly what you are proposing.

What is envisioned by the “support implementation” comment field? (Members only)

In order to increase the impact of motions, when they become Resolutions and Recommendations, **Members are encouraged to discuss resourcing and implementation measures during the online discussion.** This builds on the information provided by proponents during the submission phase. Members can pledge resources, suggest coordination measures or opportunities for synergies with other ongoing or upcoming initiatives, or highlight challenges for future discussions.

Where can I find all comments?

All comments posted can be found at the bottom of the motions page in the Motion comments section. You can either scroll down below the motion text, or you can click on the “View comments” link in the grey box at the top of the page.

Can I respond directly to a comment made?

It is not possible to respond directly to a comment made from the overview of all comments. If you support the comment, you can “like” it, using the link at the bottom lefthand corner of the comment. The system will respond with a *thumbs up* icon, which you can click again to “un-like” in case you have made a mistake.
If you disagree with any comment, note the specification of the comment mentioned in the top line of the comment (e.g. Proposed edits > A specific Operative Paragraph > 2° paragraph). To add your own comment, click on the “Add a comment” button at the top of the comments section. Follow the same guiding question format as the comment to which you would like to respond (i.e. choose “Proposed amendment” -> “A specific Operative Paragraph” -> “2° paragraph”) and add your comment. When filtering comments, the system will then show all the comments to this paragraph together and it will be easy to see that your comment is disagreeing with a previous one.

How do I compare different versions of the motion?

There is a compare feature, which allows you to compare two versions of the motion to see the changes made by the Facilitator after the different readings. This can be found in the grey box at the top of the page. Clicking the “Compare with other versions” link allows you to choose the version you want to compare with.

How do I filter comments?

As explained above, everyone posting a comment needs to answer a series of guiding questions to classify their comment. This classification enables all participants and the Facilitator to screen comments to get an overview of the status of the discussion.

In order to filter comments, navigate to the top of the comments section. When clicking on the green “Filter comments” button, you will be redirected to the page that allows you to filter comments. You are able to filter the comments made by a specific constituent, the Facilitator, or comments made to a specific section of the motion, such as to the title or to a specific operative paragraph. You may also decide to only show comments that propose specific edits to the text.

Future guidance notes

The next guidance note focusing on the electronic vote will be made available in early 2020.

For any questions related to the motions process please contact motions@iucn.org.