



Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)

Mandate 2021–2024

Adopted by IUCN Members by electronic vote on 10 February 2021.

Under the Union’s “One Programme Charter”¹, the Commission on Ecosystem Management’s (CEM) network of volunteer conservation scientists, experts, and managers, will contribute to the Union’s work through an array of thematic groups, specialist groups and task forces. Collectively, these volunteer specialists will provide the scientific and authoritative advice to IUCN’s Programme as it relates to the management, restoration, and sustainable use of the world’s ecosystems. All Commission contributions shall be in the context of the Ecosystem Approach as adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

With the adoption of the IUCN Programme 2021–2024, the Commission will work closely with IUCN’s regional and global programmes at project, country, regional and global levels.

Promoting synergies and collaborations with other Commissions and partners will be a strong component of the CEM strategy.

1. Mission

To develop and share expert guidance on ecosystem-based approaches to management and sustainable use of natural and modified ecosystems to achieve biodiversity conservation, address climate change impacts, contribute to human well-being and promote sustainable development.

2. Vision

Productive and resilient ecosystems worldwide that contribute to human well-being, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

3. Goal

Ecosystem-based approaches to management of socio-ecological systems and natural resource management mainstreamed worldwide.

4. Objective

To promote the adoption and provide guidance for ecosystem-based approaches to the management of landscapes and seascapes and enhance the resilience of or transform ecosystems as deemed necessary to address global changes.

¹ Endorsed by the IUCN Council (76th Meeting, May 2011) and adopted by the Members at the 2012 World Conservation Congress (Decision 19).

5. Focus

In pursuit of our goal and objective, the Commission in collaboration with relevant Secretariat programmes, other Commissions, and partners, will work aligned with the IUCN Programme 2021–2024, through the following:

- **Knowledge products** that respond to needs related to assessment of risk, management, restoration, and sustainable use of ecosystems will be developed and shared as a contribution to the development of Nature-based Solutions.
- **Advice, guidance and tools will be provided to indigenous peoples and local communities** to empower their management, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems to meet local needs and foster their well-being.
- **Science-based authoritative advice and guidance** will be made available to policy makers and implementing authorities from local to global levels that pertain to the governance, management, restoration, and sustainable use of ecosystems.

6. Priorities to deliver the IUCN Programme 2021–2024

The Commission on Ecosystem Management's plans for the next intersessional period are framed around six main priority areas that are aligned with, and will contribute to, the IUCN Programme 2021–2024. Around these main areas, the Commission includes specific relevant themes that have worked previously and where the Commission has expert knowledge. The six main priority areas for 2021–2024 are:

- a. Ecosystem Risk Assessment – The Red List of Ecosystems** will continue to serve as the Commission's flagship commitment to ecosystem risk assessment and documentation of the status of the world's ecosystems. Specifically, the Commission will:
 - Continue to support national and regional ecosystem assessments.
 - Continue to develop a Global Typology of Ecosystems to facilitate communications and understanding of the status of ecosystems and support the global Red List of Ecosystems.
 - Assess the efficacy of an array of possible subsidiary benefits from the assessments, including:
 - Links between human health and well-being and the status of ecosystems.
 - Reporting on 2030 CBD Targets and Sustainable Development Goals; the objectives of the Paris Agreement, and other relevant international related agreements.
 - Links between natural capital accounting and ecosystem risk assessments.
- b. Ecosystem Restoration –** The Commission will support efforts to restore ecosystems, particularly in relation to achieving the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, as well as restoration goals advanced through the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, including the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, other UN conventions, and the Bonn Challenge. Emphasis will be on:
 - Promoting international standards for the practice of ecological restoration.
 - Facilitating communication, capacity building and knowledge sharing through webinars, workshops, and discussion fora.
 - Providing guidance and technical support to policy makers and ecosystem managers regarding the design, implementation and monitoring of restoration projects, programmes, and policies.

- c. Nature-based Solutions (NbS)** – The Commission will continue promoting the development and implementation of Nature-based Solutions to address global, societal challenges. Specifically:
- Advice and assist the application in the development of a standard approach to NbS that can be globally.
 - Facilitate the development of guidelines that support the application of standards, protocols, and other parameters of NbS worldwide.
 - Compile, manage, and share lessons learned from the application of NbS at the local, national, and international levels.
- d. Cultural Practices and Ecosystem Management** – The Commission will continue to ensure that values and roles of culture and cultural practices support biodiversity conservation, nature’s contributions to people, ecosystem management and transformative change. As a priority the Commission will provide expert knowledge and guidance by:
- Showing good practices for incorporating, maintaining and enhancing cultural diversity in relation to ecosystem management.
 - Assessing how different cultures contribute to climate change, and how their cultural knowledge and practices are impacted by it; and ways to incorporate cultural practices into Nature-based Solutions.
 - Working to understand the cultural underpinnings of transformative change, and how previous transformations have been helped or hindered by cultural beliefs and practices in contribution to the post-2020 biodiversity agenda.
- e. Ecosystem Governance** – Equitable governance of the world’s ecosystems is essential if we are to meet the challenges of the UN Decades for Ecosystem Restoration and for Ocean Science and Sustainable Development, the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the CBD post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Commission will:
- Develop principles for ecosystem governance that enhance resilience and transformational change of social ecological systems.
 - Develop good practices through case studies that can provide advice and guidance to policy makers and implementing bodies on how to achieve equitable governance of socio-ecological systems.
 - Develop guidance to be provided to ecosystem managers about governance requirements that sustainably use nature’s contributions that are necessary to meet human needs.
- f. Socio-ecological Resilience and Transformation** – Land-use conversion, pollution, and many other aspects of human activity are permanently degrading the ecosystems upon which people depend for clean air, clean water, food, and industry. Climate change is also making the transformation of entire systems more common. Sustaining and restoring nature’s diverse contributions to people requires the adoption of systems-based approaches to planning and management that better account for the complex linkages between ecology and society, and better enable us to reform, adapt, and transform. For these reasons, the Commission will develop technical and applied research, case studies, and other tools that:
- Increase familiarity with the application of the social-ecological systems concepts of resilience, adaptation, and transformation to practice.

- Integrate systems concepts and practice with the Commission's other five priorities, and advise management and policymaking generally.
- Improve the ability of IUCN to build system resilience, adapt to the impacts of climate change and other human-induced impacts on nature and society, and navigate the transformation of entire social-ecological systems.

7. Structure and organisation of the Commission

a. Chair, Deputy Chair and Steering Committee

The Commission is led by the Chair, who is elected by IUCN Members at the World Conservation Congress. The Chair is supported by a Deputy Chair and Steering Committee, appointed by the Council on recommendation of the Chair. The Steering Committee provides leadership and guides the development and implementation of CEM's work through the operational structure of technical groups, regional coordination, and task forces for the implementation of this mandate. CEM holds two Steering Committee meetings per year, and where possible does so in conjunction with a related workshop or conference.

b. Membership

CEM's membership is composed of volunteers who are experts in ecosystem management. Membership is representative in professional, geographic and gender terms. Recruitment of young professionals is a priority. Members contribute to the Commission's work plan through thematic groups, specialist groups and task forces. They are organised by regions determined by the Steering Committee.

c. Relation with IUCN Secretariat

CEM will work with all Secretariat programmes whose activities are relevant to the Commission's mandate. Overall, the Secretariat and the Commission shall operate jointly; the Chair of CEM and the Director of the Nature-based Solutions Group shall work together to ensure the integration of work plans and coordination with other programmes of the Union and other Commissions in delivering the IUCN Programme 2021–2024.