

Evaluation Abstract

Title, author and date of the evaluation report:

Review of the IUCN Canada Office, prepared by Patrick Dugan, July 1996

Name of organizational unit:

IUCN Canada Office

Mandate of the organizational unit:

1. Contribute to the mission of IUCN by serving as a fundraiser and ambassador of IUCN in liaison with the principal development agencies in Canada as well as other organizations and potential partners;
2. Strengthen the IUCN membership in Canada to promote the Union's mission, Programme and networks;
3. Represent the programmatic interests and advocate the positions of IUCN to Canadian based constituencies;
4. Manage and support IUCN operations in Canada effectively and efficiently;
5. Provide programmatic, technical and administrative support to the Emerging Ecosystems Unit and other IUCN based ecosystem programmes;
6. Serve as an effective and efficient provider of technical and administrative support to IUCN global and regional programmes involving Canadian financial support and expertise.

IUCN area of specialisation: Organizational

Geographical area: Canada

Length of existence of organisational unit: Established in 1993

Overall budget of organizational unit: Not specified

Donor(s): N/A

Objectives of the evaluation: To determine the future direction of the Office in time for the World Conservation Congress in October 1996.

Type of evaluation: Strategic Review/Organizational Evaluation

Period covered by the evaluation: 1993 - 1996

Commissioned by: IUCN Director General

Audience: IUCN Director General, IUCN Senior Management, Director of IUCN Canada Office, IUCN Canada Office staff

Evaluation team: Internal

Methodology used: The review involved a wide range of meetings with IUCN members, partners, and staff.

Questions of the evaluation:

1. Meet with members, partners, and staff and seek their assessment of the past, current and potential future role of the IUCN Canada Office;

2. Assess progress in implementing the original agreement between IUCN and the Société du centre de conférences internationales de Montréal (SCCIM) and in meeting partners' expectations;
3. Assess the potential for IUCN Canada to play an international role in key areas of concern;
4. Assess how successful the Office has been in harnessing the strengths of the Canadian conservation community and channeling these towards areas of priority concern;
5. Examine linkages between the Canada Office and the IUCN Canadian Committee;
6. Review overall management history and current status of the Canada Office and assess performance, including potential to perform global functions managed from Gland;
7. Review management issues and constraints and measures to address them;
8. Assess the track-record and potential of the Canada Office in securing funding for initiatives;
9. Assess the overall potential of the IUCN Canada Office, its financial viability and technical management requirements for the future, and present options for action.

Findings:

Role of the Office: There is strong consensus that IUCN can make a significant contribution to conservation at three geographical levels:

1. *Canada* (expand the Canadian constituency and develop links with and involvement of the IUCN Commissions in Canada);
2. *The North American region* (collaborate with the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) on toxic substances, biodiversity, biodiversity information, coastal areas, based marine pollution, environmental impact assessment, environmental law, and information management);
3. *Internationally* (boreal and temperate forests, engaging the private sector, fisheries, water, arctic, environmental assessment, biodiversity, capacity-building for Francophone countries).

Constraints: Lack of a clear and well-understood mandate; weak leadership; invisibility (i.e. no significant profile of the Office at the level of Federal or Provincial Governments, or in the wider academic community); inadequate attention by the IUCN Headquarters; limited funding base; difficulties in recruiting for senior technical and managerial posts; excessive expectations; and the World Conservation Congress (WCC) as having drawn attention away from the Office at a time when it had to be nurtured.

Specific actions to address the above concerns are suggested in the review report.

Recommendations:

The review offers five scenarios for the future of the IUCN Canada Office, discussing their respective advantages and disadvantages. The options identified are as follows:

1. Close the Office;
2. Improve the status quo (continue the current structure and staffing, while using the lessons of the past three year to tighten up the mandate and focus, and strengthen support from Headquarters);
3. Reduce the mandate of the Office (convert the office into a project management office);
4. Invest in the Office (redefine and clarify its mandate, secure leadership, and support from Headquarters);
5. Concentrate IUCN's Secretariat in North America in one regional office (possibly Washington).

On the basis of the analysis and options presented, the following steps are recommended:

- Retain the Office in Montreal and invest in its effective functioning (Option 4);
- Recruit the Office Director from the open market and use IUCN's unrestricted funds to pay for the salary and operational costs;
- Seek to renew agreements with the Federal Government and the Government of Quebec for secondments of technical staff;
- Seek to renew the agreement with SCCIM for office facilities;
- Develop a focused technical programme that addresses strategic international priorities of IUCN;

- Build upon the World Conservation Congress to launch the programme of the Office for the next three years, to seek partnerships with members and potential supporters, and to recruit a new Director.

Lessons Learned: Not specified

Language of the evaluation: English

Available from: IUCN Global Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative, Gland, Switzerland; IUCN Canada Office