Management Response - IUCN Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Analysis (May 2021)

August 2021

Background

This analysis was commissioned by IUCN, with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). This was in response to several external reviews which identified the further development of the organisation's MEL system as a key priority.

The scope of the Analysis was to evaluate the overall performance of IUCN's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning systems and capacities, and to provide lessons learnt that would generate actionable and realistic recommendations for strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.

The results of the review are intended to provide advice to IUCN on the components for developing a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan to be used by all IUCN programme and portfolio managers during the IUCN Quadrennial Programme 2021–2024. The analysis assessed the status and implementation of IUCN's current Monitoring & Evaluation Policy (April 2015). Gaps and areas for further development of the implementation of IUCN's Monitoring & Evaluation Policy across the Secretariat were also identified. Monitoring and Evaluation best practices from across the IUCN Secretariat were investigated to identify current practices and solutions. New tools and improvements to existing ones were proposed and the elements for a Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan were provided.

IUCN's Management Response, presented here, addresses the ten recommendations put forward by the reviewers. The implementation of the management response may be conditional to IUCN's 2022 internal resource allocation and depend on institutional priorities at hand. A prioritization exercise will be conducted with internal stakeholders to ensure that the Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PPME) can deliver as much value as possible within the time and resources given. Once resources are secured, a value vs. complexity framework will be applied and will allow PPME to evaluate each initiative according to how much value the initiative will bring, and how difficult or complex it will be to implement.

PPME will lead the implementation and tracking of the actions to implement the recommendations below and will count on the support of several other units named here with shared responsibility for the actions and intended results. The heads of the units requested to take action (listed below) have been consulted and commented on this response and agreed on the planned actions. The Steering Committee for the MEL Analysis also commented on and approved this response.

Evaluation Management Response: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Analysis 2021

Project identification data			
Project title:	Strengthening IUCN's monitoring, evaluation and learning systems for better programme and project delivery		
Date started: Date closed:	December 8th 2020 May 31st 2021	Project n°:	P09724
Project manager:	Programme/office:		
Antoine Ouellet-Drouin	Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation (PPME)	IUCN	

Management Response Summary Data	
Name of review: IUCN MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING ANALYSIS – FINAL REPORT Date received: May 31st 2021	Unit/person responsible for managing/tracking follow-up: Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation (PPME)
Date Management Response approved: TBD Last updated: August 2021	Units/individuals requested to take action: Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation Global Finance Group Global Programme Operations Unit Regional Offices Programmatic Centres Information Technology Unit Human Resources Unit Global Communications Unit Strategic Partnership Unit Oversight Unit

Recommendation	Management response	Intended Result	Actions planned (including timeframe)	Completed Actions (progress update)	Responsibility
Recommendation 0: Roadmap Prepare a roadmap for MEL change based on principles for managing complex challenges.	AGREE IUCN interprets this recommendation as being the umbrella under which all the others fall into. The roadmap will therefore outline specifically how IUCN intends to respond to the recommendations below (or not, should the resources not be available based on an analysis of the value vs complexity of each component of the new MEL system).	MEL transformation is guided by a transparent, comprehensive and validated Project Charter. Informed decision during IUCN's 2022 planning and budgeting cycle on a new cost policy that provides increased and sustained financial support for IUCN's MEL function. Validation and documentation of business requirements with relevant stakeholders of the deliverables and timing, including related Project Portal release(s). Clarification and validation of change requests that implicate other corporate functions such as finance, IT, programme management and coordination, human resources, resource mobilization, etc.	PPME will consolidate the MEL, performance and assurance transformation in a MEL Transformation Brief or a Project Charter. This document will describe the vision, benefits, scope, blueprint (as-is and future states), deliverables, resources, risks, options for delivery, change management strategy, initiative structure and assurance and controls required. Business case validated and resources secured as part of IUCN's 2022 planning and budgeting exercise (December 2021) Identification, prioritization, and sequencing of new MEL system components (using a value vs complexity framework) completed within the given time and resources variables. Business analysis completed, documented and validated by internal stakeholders for the 2022 release. Project Charter finalised and validated by Q1 2022.		Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation
Recommendation 1: Planning systems (enabling factor) Co-create planning systems for each level of the Secretariat with relevant stakeholders.	AGREE From IUCN's perspective, this recommendation and the underpinning pain points are critical to performance management and assurance capacity across the organization and the portfolio. Improved planning will include improved portfolio pipeline management. PPME will drive the consolidation of IUCN's performance story (theories of change, intervention logic, portfolio results framework, minimum institutional standard on performance management, etc.) as required and will help IUCN strengthen its portfolio pipeline management capability to increase strategic alignment among all levels. It is important to note that, at the time of writing this management response, structural changes are being done to the organization. While these changes represent an opportunity to address some of the root causes underpinning this recommendation, IUCN expects a bit of delay in	Priority processes, practices and systems have been updated and have strengthened IUCN's capacity to manage its portfolio strategically at secretariat, thematic programme, regions and project levels. Clear line of sight among the different levels (project, country, region, thematic, global, etc.). . Capacity to steer and prioritize IUCN's portfolio pipeline according to its value proposition, programme areas, geographical area, members & partners, implementation modalities, sectors, etc.	Define and validate business requirements for financial and non-financial strategic planning of projects, including rules for managing the portfolio pipeline (e.g. prioritization mechanism and criteria used to build and manage the portfolio, results architecture required to show how each component of the portfolio contributes to the bigger picture, etc.) Review the Portfolio Results Framework to reflect the desired results architecture.		Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation Regional Offices Programmatic Centres Global Finance Group

	undertaking the business analysis and build of solutions. At this stage, it is expected that the work to address this recommendation will start in Q1 or Q2 2022.	Capacity to welcome a new strategy and programme with minimum effort and complexity (adaptability and flexibility built in the design of systems and tools).			
Recommendation 2: Governance, roles and responsibilities (enabling factor) Provide a clear governance scope to portfolio and programme management, including purpose of thematic areas, roles and responsibilities of portfolios and regional programmes as well as sufficient capacities for project support functions.	AGREE This recommendation refers to the IUCN-specific use of the terms portfolio and programme. IUCN will clarify definitions (Portfolio, programme, project, services, activities, etc.), performance management components (value proposition, means of delivery, results framework, performance measurement frameworks, etc.) and business requirements from an accountability, performance, assurance, and learning perspective. IUCN will also revisit the roles and responsibilities with regards to planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning between the first (Project Managers and Programme staff) and second line of defence (M&E function), as well as between programmatic centres and regional offices. In addition, PPME will work towards consolidating the M&E function across the distributed Secretariat staff with the purpose of building a stronger performance and assurance culture, harmonizing and standardizing practices, and strengthening overall capacity.	Portfolio management capacity including but not limited to traditional planning, monitoring and evaluation has been strengthened. 1st and 2nd lines of defense have clear roles and responsibilities and engage jointly in improving and managing IUCN's performance and assurance. Programmatic centres and regional offices have clear and complementary roles and responsibilities regarding portfolio development and management through strengthened MEL. Financial capabilities have evolved to support portfolio governance and management.	Portfolio Management Capacity: Reinforce at all levels the management of the processes, methods, technologies used by project and programme managers to analyse and manage current and proposed projects based on a clear set of characteristics. Examples of deliverables are: - Validate business requirements for pipeline, resource, financial and risk management, - Design and build solutions (process and systems), - Solutions roll-out, - Adjust project finance guidelines to cover costs of MEL requirements, etc.) - Business intelligence capacity Organizational Model & Human Resources Aspects Clarify roles and responsibilities of programmatic centres and regional offices with regards to defining and implementing IUCN's value proposition, theory(ies) of change and portfolio results framework, etc. Clarify roles, responsibilities, and required skills and competencies of 1st and 2nd lines of defense. Clarify the evaluation function role and position. Data management aspects Clarify support required from IT on data management processes infrastructure.		Regional Offices Programmatic Centres Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation Information Technology Unit Human Resources Unit Global Finance Group
Recommendation 3: Purpose of MEL system The purpose of the MEL System should be to provide standards and processes for improving the use of existing data. For quick wins, converging points of	AGREE *From IUCN's perspective, recommendation 3 and 4 both address organizational capability issues and therefore must be addressed jointly.*	IUCN has a clear description of the purpose and scope of its MEL system. IUCN has rolled-out institutional minimum standards (processes, data lifecycle, practices, methodologies and	Identification of key performance questions at each level of the organization (incl. end-user validation). Identification of requirements that provide assurance of adequate data		Regional Offices Programmatic Centres

data availability and information needs should be leveraged. **Recommendation 4: Scope of MEL system** Define the scope of the MEL System by collating MEL questions, data providers, data users, standard givers, and external audience. Accordingly, define MEL System components and compulsory parts. Attribute corresponding MEL responsibilities to PPME Unit and other support units at the Secretariat.	IUCN will revisit its performance and assurance data model to support relevant, efficient and effective conservation action and meet institutional standards. This implies identifying what information is required at each level to drive performance and assurance and increase overall accountability. To do so, IUCN will identify needs and roll-out a subset of performance and assurance mandatory data requirements supported by sound processes and methodologies. Portfolio and project portal capabilities will be improved to support this ambition. This effort will be done jointly with the main performance and assurance users (using a personas approach) – as described under recommendation 3 & 4. The identification and validation of ''what questions should the MEL system answer'' according to the level and end-user perspective will drive the business analysis. IUCN will also work on establishing data quality assurance process throughout the lifecycle of performance and assurance data stemming from the portfolio to ensure adequacy, usability and timeliness of the data for decision-making and accountability purposes.	data models) to ensure timely availability of MEL data to better support performance management and assurance.	quality, risk management and decision making based on MEL information. Identification of existing data (formal and informal) and gap analysis. Design of a revamped data model and effective roll-out to all projects. Build data quality assurance capabilities. Build an appropriate data model (across data sources), data marts and business intelligence capabilities.		Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation Information Technology Unit
Recommendation 5: Intervention logics Co-create thematic intervention logics with mandatory sets of objectives to which thematic groups of projects must contribute. Design projects along a commonly shared results-chain logic. **Recommendation 6: Performance indicators** Design impact/outcome/results indicators in accordance with thematic intervention logics, available data quality and pragmatism.	AGREE *From IUCN's perspective, recommendation 5 & 6 both address issues related to IUCN's value proposition and therefore must be addressed jointly.* <u>At the institutional level</u> PPME and programme-side MEL staff will accompany business owners in fine-tuning IUCN's value proposition and overarching theory of change, portfolio results framework and any underpinning results-based management and performance requirement. This will ensure alignment throughout performance management processes, practices, methodologies and information management systems. Programme and project management guidelines and standards will be updated accordingly and a data model designed to answer information needs of the various MEL users. <u>At the project level</u> MEL staff will support the roll-out of such performance requirements through existing processes and systems and capacity building of the 1st and 2nd line of defence.	IUCN has clear intervention logic and has described the desired level and nature of alignment of the portfolio to the overall theory of change and results framework. IUCN's pipeline management capabilities have been improved accordingly. IUCN has defined performance requirements (outcomes, outputs, indicators, etc.) to support development of intervention logics and rolled-out expectations and guidelines accordingly Guidelines and standards for development and use of intervention logics and indicators have been rolled-out and the project portal upgraded accordingly.	Theories of change and intervention logic designed and validated. Guidelines developed. Pipeline management process adapted. Programme reference frameworks designed and rolled-out with associated guidance. Indicator cookbook for common indicators designed. Links and references made to other IUCN tools for progress monitoring. Results framework adjusted. Project portal upgraded to welcome performance measurement framework - linked to existing data base and tools under improvement.		Regional Offices Programmatic Centres Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation
Meet information needs by communicating relevant information					
Recommendation 7: Communication In line with the IUCN Secretariat's strategy, elaborate a communication plan for internal and external	AGREE The improved capabilities for portfolio performance management and assurance will support IUCN's overall communication on its value proposition to both internal and external stakeholders. To support this, the communication	IUCN staff at all levels have access to relevant and appropriate intervention logic, performance and assurance information and are capable of	Communication approach for the sourcing and use of performance and policy messages for public and donor communication defined and rolled-out.		Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation Communications Unit

communication that focuses on performance, and policy messages.	needs of each persona group will be identified and considered for the MEL system business requirements. PPME will aim at being in a position to provide a sound performance story (at any level of the organization) at any given moment in time. This capability should ultimately improve IUCN's fundraising capacity for both project funding and framework donor agreements.	leveraging this information for communication and fundraising.	(refer to component 4 and 5 of the IUCN Operational Plan 2021-24)		Strategic Partnership Unit
Recommendation 8: Connect financial and non-financial performance monitoring (Results-based budgeting) Integrate financial information into internal and external reporting on portfolios, regional and global programmes.	AGREE IUCN will adjust its financial management capabilities along with its performance and assurance ones to for greater accountability. This will be done in a staged approach, first focusing on improving existing capabilities such as: - how IUCN allocates resources through the results and impact lense; - revising IUCN's project costing framework and budet templates; This will be done while preparing the ground for deploying results-based budgeting as a second step.	IUCN has increased alignment between its programmatic and financial planning and monitoring capabilities (e.g. results-based budgets/actuals). The results and performance aspect have become an important part of resource allocation and portfolio pipeline management. Cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness have improved due to improved alignment between the results chain and finance management.	Project costing structure has been revised (refer to Operational Plan 2021-24 section on financial sustainability). Workplans, activities and outputs are being budgeted and monitored from both the performance and financial perspectives.		Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation Regional Offices Programmatic Centres Information Technology Unit Global Finance Group
Enhancing institutional learning					
Recommendation 9: Focus of evaluations Evaluations should focus on understanding ability and key success factors of projects and intervention logics to contribute to social change.	AGREE IUCN agrees and would like to specify that evaluation focus should be both on contribution to social change and environmental conservation. The Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (2015) will be updated to increase assurance, accountability and learning on factors for project success and to confirm assumptions made in intervention logics – or provide grounds to amend them 1st and 2nd line of defense roles and responsibilities with regards to evaluation will be revised accordingly. In addition, the MEL function will be strengthened to provide adequate support for evaluative practices through the projects' life cycle and more importantly at project design phase.	IUCN has revised its evaluation policy and refined its intentions for evaluations, how they are embedded within the project and programme life-cycle and how they are used. The role of evaluations vis-à-vis performance management have been clarified from a learning, agenda-setting and policy-making perspective.	Revise the evaluation policy in consultation with key evaluation users and programmatic MEL staff. Clarify 1st, 2nd and 3rd line of defence. Update project guidelines to ensure evaluations are considered at all stages of the project life-cycle. Train M&E Officers and Project Managers on the updated policy.		Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation
Recommendation 10: Knowledge management to support evaluation Conceive evaluation tasks and data bases in such a way that they are useful for long-term observations and complement ongoing monitoring.	AGREE IUCN will work on strengthening its evaluation management capabilities. This will strengthen institutional learning and knowledge uptake. Alignment with pipeline management, Internal Audit and Internal Control should be sought in moving forward with this file.	IUCN has designed and rolled-out adequate systems and tools to leverage evaluation practice.	PPME, in consultation with programme side MEL staff, define updated guidance on aspects of management of individual evaluations: Evaluation planning and decision-making (approval of evaluation initiation, individual evaluation budgets and budget source) Evaluation Terms of Reference (developed according to guidance/template and uploaded to		Programme Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation Oversight Unit Programme-side MEL staff

			central repository), to donor´s criteria and funding availability. .		
			Evaluation inception reports (developed according to guidance/template and uploaded to central repository).		
			Evaluation reports (developed according to guidance and uploaded to central repository).		
			Evaluation management response (developed according to template, uploaded to central repository).		
			Evaluation function operations: Managing the evaluation process for centralized evaluations (having direct control in managing evaluation ToRs, recruiting of evaluators, overseeing the evaluation process and approval on evaluation products, steering the evaluation management response, fulfilling tasks around evaluation publication and dissemination).		
			Tracking the process of and providing a degree of quality control for decentralized evaluations (having access to information on evaluation planning and access to evaluation ToRs, evaluator bids and contracts, evaluation reports, and evaluation management responses).		
			Systematic extraction and categorization of key information (e.g. evaluation findings or recommendations, information about the evaluations, etc.) for use across the organization.		
			Systematic archiving of all evaluations according to a consistent set of evaluation parameters (such as keywords, geography, program type, subject, date etc.).		
			Evaluation use (beyond individual evaluation response). The use of data on and from evaluations in a range of		

			functional areas and by positions across the organization.		