

**International Union for Conservation of Nature**  
**Commission on Ecosystem Management**  
**CEM Thematic Group on Sustainable Use and Management of Ecosystems**

**Terms of Reference**

Ecosystems provide the array of services on which all life depends; many contributing to the quality of human life and livelihoods. Ecosystems are continuously being modified to meet human needs. Commercial commodity values from farming, forestry and fishing tend to be emphasized at the expense of cultural values, including recreation, which is important for human health, and the regulatory and supporting roles of ecosystems. Governance and structures to encourage humans to maintain and restore the ecosystems that they use require knowledge of social and economic motivational factors, the role the resource plays in the ecosystem as well as understanding of the state of resilience of the ecosystem. The promotion of knowledge exchange at all levels is crucial, along with adherence to principles of adaptive management to respond to uncertainty. This process is relevant to all IUCN programmes commissions and members, and needs to be transferred to society at large.

**Mission**

The mission of the Thematic Group on Sustainable Use and Management of Ecosystems (TG-SUME) is to explore how sustainable use can serve as a tool to manage, and where needed restore ecosystems; to share that knowledge with ecosystem managers and policy makers.

**Objectives**

The Thematic Group will pursue its mission by:

- Identifying how sustainable use of renewable natural resources can contribute to management and restoration of ecosystems.
- Identifying and promoting conservation advantages accruing to flora, mycota and fauna from more effective ecosystem management.
- Facilitating research and knowledge sharing that explores how sustainable use of renewable natural resources can foster more resilient ecosystems.

Many data exist from local projects, national and international databases to assess the efficacy of conserving through use. Through projects for the European Commission and UNEP, specialists have been publishing, and encouraging others to publish, analyses based on these data. These data need to inform and influence scientists and governments more effectively.

Moreover, to help maintain and restore ecosystems rapidly in the face of development and climate change requires also direct exchange of knowledge with local communities and managers of land and species, which can empower such communities and enhance ecosystem management. Platforms for this have been created as multilingual web-portals (e.g. [www.naturalliance.eu](http://www.naturalliance.eu)), with the long-term intention of developing systems to gain local knowledge, which needs to be integrated for central planning, in exchange for decision support that benefits ecosystems together with the biodiversity and livelihoods that depend on these systems.

## Relevance of ecosystem conservation through use

The following examples illustrate the governance and local practice involved in using ecosystems sustainably to meet challenges in conservation and development:

1. Development of Bern Convention charters, based on CBD's principles from Malawi and Addis Ababa, to inform regulators and practitioners how to conserve ecosystems through hunting, fishing and gathering.
2. Organization by the Netherlands government of anglers to restore aquatic ecosystems through the establishment of the public-private Sportsvisserij Netherlands.
3. Encouraging multi-functional land-use, non-timber forest products and marine by-catch retention through labeling that attracts premium pricing.
4. Researching optimal management of vegetation, domestic livestock and wild predators on uplands in order for grouse shooting to maintain peatland habitats that are important for biodiversity and carbon storage.
5. Encouraging local projects to restore road verges and enhance gardens for pollinating insects, and tourism that funds the conservation of landscapes needed for watching wildlife, horse-riding, fishing and hunting.

The examples are detailed, respectively, in [www.naturalliance.eu](http://www.naturalliance.eu): see best practice for the topics of <sup>1</sup>government, <sup>2</sup>fishing, <sup>3</sup>forestry, <sup>4</sup>hunting and <sup>5</sup>gardening/horse-care.

## Structure

The structure of the CEM Thematic Group on Sustainable Use and Ecosystem Management will comprise three parts:

Steering Committee – The leadership core-group will comprise five to seven people, with global representation to established guide development of the group.

Working Groups – According to the priorities adopted, working groups will be formed to address such use-sectors in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries as well as other ecosystems where use of fauna, flora and mycota could promote ecosystem conservation. A coordinator who is knowledgeable in the use regime and can provide guidance and leadership will be appointed to lead these working groups.

Country Coordinators Network –Country Coordinators will be appointed to facilitate communications, including translations, to develop environmental knowledge transfer that are appropriate nationally and to aid in identifying qualified specialists to contribute to the work of the Thematic Group.

Thematic Group Membership – Membership in the Thematic Group will be open to people who qualify for membership in the Commission and who have an interest in exploring relationships between sustainable use, knowledge transfer and ecosystem management.

## Priorities for action over the next six months

1. Establish the Thematic Group Steering Committee
2. Establish priorities for forming working groups, and appoint coordinators for those groups; appoint working group members
3. As appropriate, recruit country coordinators and other group members
4. Seek funding for projects
5. Address other issues as required

## Programme for 2015-16

1. Working group leads recruited (suggestions to match ecosystem topics on Naturalliance site):  
Farmland and Agriculture  
Woodland- and Forestry-based Ecosystem Services  
Wetlands, Water Security and Aquaculture  
Steppelands and Riding  
Parks, Urban and Garden Areas  
Governance (how to promote sustainability of resource uses in ecosystem management?)  
**by April 2015**
2. Naturalliance update to reflect CEM engagement and other requirements **by May 2015**
3. Bid to European Commission for Horizon 2020 project **by May 2015**
4. Inaugural meeting, start of System for Community Liaison roll-out in Europe **by July 2015**
5. Country coordinators and WG members substantially recruited globally **by Dec 2015**
6. Naturalliance MOU finalised and plans for adoption (IUCN, CBD) prepared **by Dec 2015**
7. A list of Naturalliance topics and best-practice examples for each continent ready **by WCC6**.
8. SYCL available in the coordinators language and with an example site for each continent,  
**by WCC6, probably excepting Africa and South America.**
9. Help to be provided with World Forum on Governance of Ecosystems **as required**
10. Reporting within CEM, including for Newsletters & IUCN 2012-20 Programme **as required**