

Thoughts from the Chair on structure within ESUG

The constitutional structure of ESUG consists of a Chair, Committee and Working Groups. During the 18 years of ESU(S)G existence, Chair and Committee have worked more or less as they should. Working Groups were functional initially and have been especially active when engaged in projects (e.g. AEMBAC, fishery reports and hunting guidelines), but otherwise tend to lie dormant as currently designed, despite a recent attempt to enliven them as individual D-Groups for information exchange.

During the last 10 year, two other informal structures have developed. One is our network of Country Coordinators, which has underpinned engagement in two EC-funded projects (GEMCONBIO-UNWIRE) and TESS, and is a basis for continuing work on internet portals. The second informal structure is of Divisions, for Governance and Policy, Socio-Economics, and Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. The divisional leads (Robin, Stratos and I) work together quite frequently (e.g. to design projects and SUME) and have met physically in the last year.

The potential of the Country Coordinator network was recognised by European Environment Agency at the conclusion of TESS, and underpins our portals. Therefore it is proposed to recognise this as a constitutional structure in our Statutes.

Working Groups too are important, but need real responsibilities, and especially projects, if they are to function well. A possible new structure which conforms better both to working with SULi and SUME on projects, and to other existing or potential projects, needs discussion. That discussion will be in the morning before the GM, after which the new Committee can make implementation decisions. Proposed WGs are:

Species, working with SULi on policy for conserving fauna/flora/fungi through sustainable use;

Ecosystems, working with SUME on conservation in farmland/forests/wetlands/uplands etc;

Biodiversity-based Business, working with social and economic interests in IUCN and EU;

Portals & Projects, working with our Country Coordinator network, Naturalliance, SYCL, etc.

There are of course a multitude of other possible combinations. However, this proposed list is inclusive of all current activities and would easily accommodate all members from our existing working groups (Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Biodiversity Business, Wild Species Resources, Plants and Fungi), with most in more than one WG (as at present). Their leaders could all expect to be elected or co-opted to Committee, in order that their activities inform and are guided by Committee decisions.