

IUCN-CEM Thematic Group: Sustainable Use and Ecosystem Management

Inaugural Meeting

Tuesday, 23 June 2015
15.00 – 18.00

Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology, University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna,
Savoyenstrasse 1, A-1160 Vienna, Austria

Minutes

1. Six SUME officers and eight observers were in attendance. **The agenda was adopted by consensus.**

The chair thanked Prof Fritz Reimoser for his kindness in organising the venue.

2. Round-the-table introductions of SUME Members and Observers:
Present Riccardo Simoncini (Italy, agriculture lead), Eduardo Arraut (Brazil, South America joint coordinator), Tetiana Gardashuk (Ukraine, Europe coordinator), Keiya Nakajima (Japan, SE Asia coordinator), Brendan Moyle (New Zealand, Oceania coordinator), Robert Kenward (United Kingdom, chair) for SUME, and Sonya Zlatanova (Bulgaria coordinator), Frantisek Urban (Czech coordinator), Jennifer Ailloud (France coordinator), Zenon Tederko (Poland coordinator), Janusz Sielicki (Poland), Fritz Reimoser (Austria, host) and Julie Ewald (UK, portals partner) as Observers from ESUG, with and Jenny Myers assisting. Keiya Nakajima kindly gifted the participants with a wooden Japanese sake drinking cup to commemorate the inaugural meeting.

Apologies were from Tatyana Bragina (N Asia coordinator), Mohammed Shobrak (SW Asia & N Africa coordinator), Scott Brainerd (N America coordinator) and Marina Rosales (S America joint-coordinator).

3. SUME objectives and programme; a review and stock-take. [[paper 1S](#)]
A steering group of coordinators has been appointed for seven of the eight global regions. Thanks to a grant from CEM chair's fund, four were attending the meeting. Working group themes had been decided and one lead attending. The Naturalliance upgrade was completed and translation would be complete for launch at the end of the month, when the System for Community Liaison would be ready to roll-out. Two bids for funding had been made and the first meeting was in progress. All Programme targets except for completion of Working Group leads were therefore being met, representing half the pre-WCC6 targets. However, concern was flagged that it might be hard to meet one of two year-end targets, that is to recruit all country coordinators.
4. Portals: (a) Naturalliance status and plans.
Naturalliance was a product of thinking in the former European Sustainable Use Specialist Group, which had been a part of Species Survival Commission (SSC) in IUCN, in which thinking embraced sustainability of ecosystems as well as species, and economics as well as ecology. The creation of SULi had tended to focus sustainable use thinking in IUCN back on species and was producing important policy work; however, its new involvement of the Commission on Environmental Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) also produced an emphasis on local communities. To work with local communities meant communicating in local languages, and about

ecosystem services, which was the focus of the Naturalliance portal and which had gained support from Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM).

Working effectively with local communities also means using the internet, because there are not enough experts to guide every community. It means working with the people in communities who are most interested in a productive environment, whether hunters, bird-watchers, anglers, bee-keepers, gardeners or farmers. The initial aim is to provide best-practise examples to inspire them, leading to guidance for local projects and eventually to decision support for their routine activities. Currently there are best-practise examples from Europe for each of the interests, and these have attracted considerable interest mainly in Russian, Polish and other eastern European languages after English, with 25,000 visitors in all. Perhaps that interest in the east could help avoid some of the worst intensification mistakes of the west heading east. However, the naturalliance portal was also not reaching enough people. There were peaks of visiting at launch events, but more continuous sign-posting was needed, for example from the System for Community Liaison.

Members were asked to consider continent-based implementation and the implications for recruitment to generate and translate content. [\[paper 2S\]](#)

The European languages worked locally for the Americas, a lot of Oceania and some of Africa, with Russian for North Asia, and CEM had asked for a global approach. However, people in different continents would probably need locally-appropriate best-practise and projects, and a priority on different interests. It was also not yet clear whether it would be best to have separate naturalliance portals for each continent; separate pages within a single portal might also work.

Keiya had produced Paper 2s, to look at SE Asian languages that might be needed. Some countries were larger and further ahead with internet penetration: Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese and Korean were first priorities for translation, and a second tier was also identified as Hindi, Indonesian, Filipino and Malay. It was noted that Arabic and African languages would also be important in due course, with some SW Asian languages reading right-to-left which created a technical issue for web-sites (though the portal team had solved this for the saker project).

(b) System for Community Liaison (SYCL) status and plans [\[paper 3S\]](#)

The System for Community Liaison was conceived as a way partly to bring local communities to the TESS/Naturalliance approach, but also as a way to generate income to build projects and decision support. TESS had indicated a great interest of local communities in conservation projects, and a great deal of the work of local community administrations was to do with the environment. SYCL was intended as something to be really useful for local administrations in its own right, and to network them for engaging in conservation projects through the Naturalliance portal; other networking portals might link to SYCL, for community health, traffic management etc. Another advantage of networked comparable community websites was to help build understanding between different countries, where people might feel less threatened if they could see that concerns of local communities were just the same as their own.

Members were asked to consider necessary recruitment, scope for government support (including engagement of CBD) and pricing [\[paper 4S\]](#); [\[paper 5S\]](#)

Keiya noted that a major challenge for introducing the portals was to find good country coordinators. Without initial funding, the voluntary side needed to align with personal interests.

Riccardo suggested that the content of the system indicated where to go for experts. The networking of communities could be advantageous to high level (UNEP and national), for example for mapping ecosystem services; since the services cross boundaries and are actually global, communities need to be networked for this.

Eduardo and Jennifer A posed the question of whether young professionals were suitable, especially in large countries where there is still turbulent government and endemic corruption. Where would one start? Probably a coordinator needed the affiliation to create one good local example web-site for a helpful community.

Robert noted that well-organised minority interest groups (e.g. falconers) could benefit by gaining appreciation through helping others to network.

Keiya: this would include others which are not so much minorities, such as other hunters and anglers, even commercial farmers and birdwatchers; these interests have national clubs in most countries, though they are not all organised also globally, like falconers, through personal relationships and social media rather than regulation.

Tetiana wondered how hard it would be to establish a community site in the Ukraine, where the governance was very top-down. However, with the war and poor economic situation, many people turn to nature as a resource and could use help to safeguard their resource. It may be best to find a community after local elections

Jennifer A. Most local communities in France already have web-sites. What is the Unique Selling Point of SYCL?

Robert. It is organised by the community at lowest level of government (local mayor or council), which is typically least supported by central government; SYCL is easier for local administrations to keep updated with content they want than alternative types of site, which may include self-build by the mayor's daughter (until she leaves for university) or more expensive commercial web-site builders.

Brendan noted that web access is appalling for some indigenous groups in Oceania, who are very poor, misusing their natural resources and faced with increasing debt. The bright young people are often not in the local communities. The system definitely needs to work on smart-phones, though their adoption is often not high due to poor reception. However, fisheries, reef and forestry management could provide best-practise examples. Perhaps rugby tours could promote the portals.

Sonya wondered about the durability of a system that might be affected by the politics of elections, which go to local level in Bulgaria and can benefit some interest groups such as hunters. Involving young professional men may be a better idea but international examples from neighbouring countries may also be interesting.

Robert. Party politics do not go to lowest administrative level in UK and TESS did not record how frequently it does across Europe.

Ricardo noted possible commercial advantages, e.g. advertisements for ecological tourists, and that the system might be more interesting for university research than as a political tool.

It was concluded that the objective should be to find a country co-ordinator to plant the seed of a community site. The need could be advertised within IUCN and other organisations that are well networked, to find someone who knows someone who knows a community. Academic networks may be important and the presentation of the concept in non-European countries may need modification. **Naturalliance would need different best-practise and projects across different continents, and coordinators should be asked to think about the topics to be covered.** As well as providing community web-sites, SYCL could remind communities of the importance of non-commodity services e.g. public goods for local residents and visitors, and help stock-check ecosystem services for national government.

Fritz commented that finding champions in government may be important too, using the Memorandum of Understanding to encourage local communities to adopt SYCL, and Brendan agreed that top down engagement plus community involvement, such as for Tiger reserves, may be the only way forward for some countries.

5. The discussion document on “The role ecosystem management plays in sustaining the benefits obtained from uses of species” was revised extensively, in part during the meeting and in part with more ESUG members present the following morning [and is appended to the report of that meeting]. Participants addressed in particular the questions “How does this role operate?” and “How can the management role be made most effective?”

They were also asked to consider where a line between species and ecosystems should most practically be drawn: **they concluded that there is no line.**

6. Links with SSC-CEESP SULi, including for projects (e.g. on Saker falcon). Although it was noted earlier that SUME was highly complementary to SULi, with much commonality of interest but rather little overlap of activities, the saker falcon project was a good example of a SULi project with interest for SUME due to motivation for conserving steppe land through sustainable use of a flagship species.

Links with other parts of IUCN and responsibility for them.

It was noted that Naturalliance and SYCL portals should be of considerable interest for the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC); **it was concluded that SUME chair should talk with CEC about this.**

7. SUME structure, communications and administration for the above. Regions: recruitment and structure. The outline structure was in place for steering/continent-coordination, country-coordination and working groups. It now needed to be populated.

On communications, a major task for everyone is to communicate that SUME’s work is about ecosystem services. There is a need to engage with other groups, especially those who are broad based rather than strictly conservationist. For example, Jennifer A is working in the veterinarian world, which in turn contacts a variety of groups with countryside interests, such as owners of livestock and companion animals.

On the Internet, e-mail, might be adequate for group communication while the group is small, but a Google-group might also be useful. A moderated D-group might not be necessary as much less discussion was anticipated than in SULi. SUME has a page on the IUCN site, but a SYCL site for SUME might also be useful.

Members discussed whether like SULi, SUME should ask ESUG to be prepared to provide support for running its projects, including the Naturalliance and SYCL portals for which both the ESUG country coordinator network, and the ability to run projects independent of complicated IUCN finances, were essential. **It was agreed by consensus to request such support from ESUG.**

8. Any other business. There was none.
9. The possibility was raised of the next meeting being at WCC6 in Hawaii.

The meeting closed at 18.00