

Should SUME have a Multilingual Discussion capability?

Our sister group, for Sustainable Use and Livelihoods (SULi) started a Dgroup in the 2012-16 quadrennium. It has successfully stimulated discussion and will have been educational for many people. However, as in the e-mail discussions on the SUSG listserver 15 years ago, it has become dominated by issues concerning charismatic megafauna and several Europeans left a group that produced up to 20 messages a day.

Nevertheless, sustainable use is a more complex topic than other conservation techniques, such as protecting species and nature reserves. It needs discussion and to educate at high level, just as it needs to simplify the results of that discussion for application at local level. In view of SULi's success at policy level, ESUG and SUME have focussed on the simplification aspect, initially with the European Charters through Bern Convention and later through multilingual glocal portals thanks at first to the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, then to Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species, the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) and Birdlife International, and now also to the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation in Europe and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation.

Both SULi and SUME have now recognised the need for multilingual discussion and education to transfer rapidly the results of policy for a rapidly changing world. At the same time as ESUG & SUME have been pioneering glocal multilingual networking, Keiya Nakajima has looked at sharing a Dgroup, only to discover (just in time to save ESUG subscription) that it was becoming commercial and, immediately, more expensive. We have discussed this with the new SULi chair, Dilys Roe, and concluded that when their Dgroup subscription expires we may jointly consider facilities based on our networking software. Nick Casey of Anatrack has explained briefly how the technology might work for groups based on regional and national satellite sites of the naturalliance network.

However, it would need social organisation as well as technology. Discussions need moderation and guidance by experts, which needs time and skill. Can we expect people who may be prepared to give a few hours a month to run a satellite, including liaison with national content-providing groups, also to spend much more time moderating discussion? How many such angels can we find for different languages? Is this only going to be possible by combining human resources of both SULi and SUME? At what level should this operate? Perhaps, while SULi continues for a while with its English-speaking Dgroup, we should seek to cooperatively run a couple of pilots in major languages, such as Spanish and Russian?

Let's discuss in Karlovac.