

## **IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025**

### **Sustainability Policy**

#### **Context**

The IUCN World Conservation Congress is where the world comes together to set priorities and drive conservation and sustainable development action.

During the 2025 Congress, IUCN's 1400+ government, civil society and Indigenous peoples' Member organisations will vote on major issues to help guide humanity's relationship with our planet, in alignment with IUCN's mission to "Influence, encourage and assist societies to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable".

IUCN's unique convening power of state and non-state actors gives Congress a powerful mandate to set the nature conservation agenda for decades to come. To uphold this responsibility, IUCN ensures that sustainability is at the core of its events through the [IUCN Sustainable Convenings & Events Policy](#) stating: "Each IUCN event must have a dedicated sustainability strategy which consists of a set of guidelines and principles reflecting IUCN (and whenever applicable, the Host Country) commitment in organising sustainable events." The 2025 Congress will embody this commitment, integrating sustainability principles across all aspects of its planning and execution.

#### **Scope**

The scope of this policy encompasses the online and onsite organisation of the IUCN World Conservation Congress that will be hosted by the United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi, from 9 to 15 October 2025. The Congress content, and any events held outside of the venue area are not in the scope of the sustainable event management system, and certification.

#### **Commitment**

Through the organisation of the Congress, IUCN commits to:

1. *Leverage the Congress for regional and global change for nature.* The Congress is the opportunity for a collaborative effort to create good environmental governance, engaging all parts of society to share both the responsibilities and the benefits of conservation.
2. *Demonstrate excellence in sustainable event management,* making significant strides in operational practices.

#### **Values and principles**

To ensure the integration of sustainability in every aspect of the Congress, both on the planning and the execution, IUCN and the Host Country have set the goal to achieve ISO 20121 certification.

This independently verified process ensures the implementation of a responsible management system of the Congress, also contributing to the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and guided by the IUCN values of *Integrity, Trustworthiness and accountability, Transparency, Reliability and responsiveness, Equality, Inclusiveness and respect for the diversity of people, Dignity and Environmental responsibility* and the ISO sustainable development principles of inclusion, integrity, transparency, and stewardship.

### **Strategic pathways and key objectives**

Within this framework, IUCN and the Host Country are working collaboratively and have defined 4 strategic pathways, 11 main objectives and 24 work areas.

#### **A. Economic / societal: Maximise local and global impact**

- Create a lasting positive impact on local communities and nature
- Broaden and strengthen IUCN's brand and influence



#### **B. Environmental: Minimise the ecological footprint of the Congress**

- Reduce and offset the carbon emissions associated with the organisation of the Congress
- Optimise resource consumption and reuse in the event production
- Improve the environmental footprint associated with food and beverage offerings



#### **C. Social: Organise a unifying event**

- Promote respect for human rights throughout event planning and delivery
- Promote inclusive participation opportunities for all
- Enhance the wellbeing of participants throughout event
- Prioritise social procurement and inclusive recruitment opportunities



#### **D. Governance: Strengthening organisation resilience and governance**

- Ensure resilience through enhanced organisational & funding models of the Congress
- Promote equitable and transparent governance of the Congress



#### **Implementation and Monitoring**

To uphold this policy, the main organisers, IUCN and the Host Country, the United Arab Emirates, commit to the following actions:

1. Leadership and Accountability:
  - Appoint a Sustainability Focal Point responsible for implementing ISO 20121 requirements.
  - Ensure that senior management participates in and supports the development and implementation of the sustainable event strategy (including an action plan covering the key objectives included in the present policy and the cross-cutting dimension of legacy) and its compliance to ISO20121.
2. Stakeholder Engagement:
  - Engage and collaborate with suppliers, attendees, media and community members to ensure sustainability issues and goals are understood and addressed.
  - Communicate sustainability expectations to partners and vendors through contracts and guidelines.
3. Training and Capacity Building:
  - Provide training to employees, contractors, and volunteers to ensure awareness and competence in sustainability practices.
4. Measurement and Reporting:
  - Monitor and evaluate achievements and performance against sustainability objectives using key performance indicators (KPIs).
  - Disclose progress transparently to stakeholders through post-event sustainability reports.
5. Continuous Improvement:
  - Regularly review and update this policy and the overall sustainable management approach to reflect best practices, new technologies, and evolving stakeholder expectations.
  - Incorporate lessons learned from each event to improve future sustainability performance.

**Compliance with ISO 20121**

This policy supports the requirements of ISO 20121 and forms an integral part of our event sustainability management system. It reflects IUCN's commitment to managing sustainability risks and opportunities in a systematic and transparent manner.

**Approval**

This policy has been approved by IUCN Director General and will be reviewed before every Congress to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness.



**Dr. Grethel Aguilar**  
IUCN Director General  
16.05.2025

