



The [IUCN Global Protected Areas Programme](#), [the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity](#), [UNEP WCMC](#), [UNDP GEF SGP](#) and the [ICCA Consortium](#)— with the kind support of [Parks Australia](#), [Booderee National Park](#), New South Wales [Marine Parks](#) and [Jervis Bay Marine Park](#) and [National Parks and Wildlife Service](#), Jerringa Local Aboriginal Land Council and Shoalhaven Elders and Friends are pleased to announce:

Assessing, evaluating and planning to enhance the governance of protected area systems and individual sites

Field visit and capacity exchange
20 - 24 November 2014

Country of the Dharawal, Durga and Wollongong Nations
(New South Wales, Australia)



As biodiversity becomes rarer and increasingly precious, protected areas— the jewel ecosystems, species, genetic diversity and associated values that societies agree to conserve— are becoming an ever more important focus of interest and concern, delight and conflict. In parallel, the conservation community has discovered “governance of protected areas”, a concept that emerged at the World

Parks Congress of Durban (South Africa, 2003) and is coming to maturity as main subject of one of the most popular Streams of events at the World Parks Congress of Sydney (Australia, 2014). The IUCN Global Protected Areas Programme and the ICCA Consortium have closely accompanied the emergence of relevant concepts, policies and practices and put efforts on encouraging national processes of assessment, evaluation and planning to enhance the governance of protected areas systems and individual sites. Recently, they have published a volume of [Guidelines in the IUCN Best Practice in Protected Area Series](#) (available in 4 languages) including a specific methodology. In parallel, UNEP WCMC has been reviewing its **protected planet database** (www.protectedplanet.net) to incorporate a variety of governance types and processes of submission. The CBD Secretariat and UNDP GEF SGP have strongly accompanied throughout the process.

Rare occasion and partnership

In the occasion of the World Parks Congress in Sydney, we have a rare occasion to pull together – in **one of the richest and most remarkable “governance laboratories” for protected areas in the world** - forty Congress participants who have or will make use of the IUCN governance methodology in their countries. Together, these protected area professionals, policy makers and conservation actors from civil society from five continents will distil the key results of their participation in the Governance Stream at the Congress, exchange experiences and develop concrete plans and commitments to further processes of governance assessment, evaluation and planning in their countries.

Further than that, under the auspices of a recently approved GEF initiatives run by the IUCN, a number of Regional Governance Learning Networks will start to be planned with the encouragement and technical accompaniment of the IUCN Global Protected Areas Programme, UNEP WCMC, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the ICCA Consortium and UNDP GEF SGP. Throughout the event, the Australian partners and local hosts—Australia National Parks, New South Wales Parks Service and University of Wollongong—will offer insights from their pioneer experience. They may also consider a role as potential focal point for a Regional Governance Learning Network in the Pacific.

The IUCN methodology



Volume 20 in the IUCN Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines series argues that governance **types** that are appropriate to the context and governance policy and practice that respond to standards of **quality** (“good governance”) are crucial for effective and equitable conservation. Further developments point also at the role of governance **vitality**—a complex property that offers a measure of the “functional liveliness” of decision-making institutions. Under a variety of names, governance vitality is at the forefront of research in academia, encompassing properties such as: effective integration and functional connectivity among actors and decision-making levels in conservation systems; adaptability,

flexibility and capacity to learn; wisdom in terms of governance scope and approach; capacity to innovate; and empowerment— capacity to provide self-conscious and self-directed responses to emerging environmental conditions, problems and opportunities. Type, quality and vitality of governance are rich concepts and practices that can hold the key for the future of protected areas in many countries— in particular under the increasing pressure of change affecting all physical, biological and social life in our planet.

The **methodology**— developed by the IUCN to assess, evaluate and plan to improve and strengthen the governance of systems of protected and conserved area, as well as individual sites— unfolds through a **process that is participatory, relatively rapid, and tailored to the context**. The process has a preparatory phase, gathering and analysing information, identifying technical expertise and support, communicating with rightsholders and stakeholders, and, as necessary, helping them to organize. This phase is followed by a core moment: a **main workshop dedicated to assessing and evaluating governance, and planning for action on the basis of the evaluation results**. Eventually, the process ends with taking action according to the plan, which unfolds speedily in most cases but can take more time if the devised initiatives involve structural adjustments, such as changes in policy or professional training programmes.



A spatial analysis of the status of conservation of nature in regard to governance

The core of the methodology is a participatory workshop that begins with reports on the socio-ecological history of the context at stake as well as on the institutional and legal situation in the given country. The participants then proceed to a **spatial analysis of the status of conservation of nature in regard to governance**. This requires a territorial view of the region at stake, backed by appropriate mapping and digital tools that show where the biological, ecological, economic and socio-cultural values are located and the threats they face. The methodology requires also clarity about “who governs” (who is in charge of) the units of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem values, within or outside formal protected areas.

Besides **government-governed protected areas**, the broad landscape/seascape generally include **territories and areas voluntarily conserved** by private actors, indigenous peoples and local communities, or even areas well conserved by government authorities in an ancillary way, as a by-product of management objectives that may have little to do with conservation (e.g., land used only for military purposes). Overall, what governance arrangements appear to “effectively conserve nature and associated values”? Where are connectivity values and needs particularly evident? Where are damage and threats evident or emerging? Are there issues of governance quality? The workshop setting at the core of the IUCN methodology is designed to illuminate questions such as these and identify opportunities to strengthen the ecological viability of a particular unit, save economic resources and engage new actors in conservation. It is here that the benefits of focusing



on *governance* become fully apparent. The canvas is no longer limited to management interventions but broadened to explore **new governance types** (including overlapping types), **specific interventions to enhance governance quality** (e.g., better transparency, accountability and the respect of procedural and substantive rights) and initiatives that foster **social connectivity, learning cultures, wiser settings, innovations and conservation empowerment**.

For instance, the participants in the process may review the “wisdom” of a given landscape governance situation by asking questions about the size and ecological coherence of separately managed units, the legitimacy and capacities of the involved actors, and the type of outputs they generate (e.g., solidarity or greed and accumulation of power? efficient use of resources or waste?). They may evaluate the capacity of a given decision-making

node to functionally connect with other nodes in the system, but also explore governance “empowerment”, i.e., the capacity to provide innovative and **unique responses to emerging environmental conditions**, problems and opportunities (self-conscious and self-directed decisions). Importantly, the coordination and decision-making processes that accompany the governance of the **system** of protected areas and voluntarily conserved areas will also need to be clarified and evaluated. And the national and international (UNEP WCMC) reporting frameworks will need to play a fundamental role, balancing empowerment with accountability.



What is the overall process expected to produce? The first expected **outputs** are clear lessons and identified opportunities for action. In a further articulated way, the results of the participatory process will be distilled into a specific report (useful nationally at various levels and to compile the regular reports to the CBD, for instance regarding PoWPA or National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans) and a specific plan to take action to enhance and improve governance. The expected **impact** is the strengthening and lasting effective operations of whatever governance settings appear valuable to sustain conservation, address threats and promote the restoration of damaged nature.

Objectives of the field visit and exchange

- Review and distil the results of Governance Stream at the Sydney World Parks Congress and their meaningful follow-up in various continents.
- Visit examples of Australian protected areas in terrestrial and marine environments and understand their governance settings and results while discussing them with their own managers, rightsholders and stakeholders.
- Review and discuss the IUCN methodology synthesised in Guideline no.20 in the IUCN Best Practice in Protected Areas Series, and further advances since its publication.
- Hear about and compare the experiences of countries that reviewed the governance of their systems of protected areas with the IUCN methodology and took action to enhance conservation and sustainable livelihoods in different contexts.
- Design and begin planning for a number of national processes to assess, evaluate and plan to enhance and improve governance of protected and conserved area systems and sites.
- Design and begin planning for a number of **Regional Governance Learning Networks** under the



broad support and technical accompaniment of the IUCN, UNEP WCMC, CBD Secretariat, ICCA Consortium and UNDP GEF SGP.

- On the basis of the results of the visit and exchanges, devise ways-- for all those interested-- to remain in touch and keep providing mutual support in the years ahead.

The field visit and capacity building exchange are **by invitation only**. For more information please contact: alepelle@gmail.com with copy to james.hardcastle@iucn.org and gbf@iccaconsortium.org.

Pre-final AGENDA

Date	Time	Activities
Day 1 : Thursday Nov. 20	All day	Travel from Sydney to Jervis Bay Territory (by minibus, 3 hours); lunch in Huskisson; accommodation at Bay of Plenty Lodges ; resting, kayaking, swimming; brief self-introduction of participants and collective dinner preparation.
Day 2 : Friday Nov. 21	All day	Field visit to Booderee National Park hosted by Parks Australia. Meeting Park Managers and Traditional Owners to discuss governance issues crucial for organisational effectiveness and social support in a Joint Management context. BBQ organised by Booderee National Park.
Day 3: Saturday Nov 22	Morning	Field visit (by boat) to Jervis Bay Marine Park accompanied/ hosted by NSW Marine Park Authority; lunch in Huskisson.
	Afternoon	Field visit to Cullunghutti Aboriginal Area : travel to Shoalhaven Heads and meeting with Aboriginal Elders from Shoalhaven and local staff of New South Wales National Parks & Wildlife Service to discuss their developing partnerships. Travel by minibus to The TOPS Conference Centre (Stanwell Tops, NSW). Settling down and recap/ discussion on the results of the Governance Stream at WPC Sydney 2014.
Day 4: Sunday Nov 23	Morning	Capacity exchange— Illustration and discussion of the IUCN/CBD methodology for assessing, evaluating and improving governance of protected and conserved areas (systems and individual sites). Reports from different country experiences with the methodology. Identification of key elements for in depth discussion .
	Afternoon	Focused exchange on spatial governance analysis tools (e.g., Google maps, 3D maps, participatory GIS, etc.). Beach walk in Stanwell Beach Reserve.
Day 5: Monday Nov 24	All day	Capacity exchange— Mutual learning and assistance to plan for national processes of governance improvement and Regional Learning Networks in various continents . The role of IUCN, the CBD Secretariat, UNEP WCMC, the ICCA Consortium and UN agencies in general. Farewell dinner.
Tuesday Nov. 25		International participants leave (by minibus or train) to Sydney airport.