

European Sustainable Use Group (ESUG)

General Meeting of Members

Wednesday, 24 June 2015

14.00 – 17.00

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

Minutes

1. The meeting was opened by the Chair, Robert Kenward. **The agenda was adopted.**
2. Robert Kenward noted that this was ESUG's third meeting at Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology, University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna. Thanks were due to Institute Director Professor Walter Arnold, to his deputy Prof Thomas Ruf who had arranged such an interesting tour for us at lunch-time and especially to our member Prof Fritz Reimoser who had arranged the venue.
Members present were Tetiana Gardashuk, Zenon Tederko, Robert Kenward, Robin Sharp, Fritz Reimoser, Riccardo Simoncini, Sonya Zlatanova, Ion Navodaru, Mari Ivask, Frantisek Urban, Pranas Mierauskas, Janusz Sielicki, Paul Goriup, Keiya Nakajima, Sandie Sowler, Eduardo Arraut, Jennifer Ailloud, Sándor Csányi and Julie Ewald.
Apologies had been received from: Dominique Noome, Anders Grahn, Kai Wollscheid, Jason Papatthasiou, Rob Jongman, Johan Oldekop, Mike Jones, Scott Brainerd, Andreas Bosshard, Tobias Pleininger, Frank Vorhies, Wolfgang Burhenne, Mikko Rautiainen, Viktor Segrt, Conor O'Gorman, Olaf Bastian, Guiseppe Micali, Lubomira Vavrova, Melanie Mewes, Jim Casear, Pete Robertson, David Scallan, Despina Symons, Tamas Marghescu, Stratos Arampatzis and Torsten Mörner.
3. Statement on Quorum
Robin Sharp stated that 19 members were present, safely exceeding a quorum of 9.
4. **Minutes of the meeting on 26 August 2013 were adopted by consensus.** [[paper 1](#)]
Under matters arising, Robin Sharp noted that, despite his offer to fund a working group meeting (item 14) this has not happened.
5. IUCN changes
SULi development, and relevant European government activities. It had become clear that the strengths of the IUCN specialist group on Sustainable Use and Livelihoods was in informing its members and developing policy, especially for keeping use sustainable. SULi had worked with Despina to arrange a meeting on trade in the European Parliament on 22 June. She had arranged a similar TESS final meeting for ESUG and it was suggested that Despina, who could not come to Vienna because she also needed to be in Morocco on 25 June, should be asked for help to gain support at parliamentary level for ESUG efforts to bring good conservation practise to local level across Europe.
SULi-News. Robin had been hard at work as co-editor with Rosie Cooney's assistant for 10 successful issues, though interest in providing news other than on southern Africa had lapsed recently. The meeting congratulated Robin on his efforts. It was noted that ESUG did all it could to support SULi, with members responding well to online discussion and four running the Saker projects, but had not been asked to contribute to work on trade.
SUME creation. The Barcelona resolution had lead to major change, with dissolution of SUSG and creation of a group with paid Chair across two Commissions but no regional

groups. With loss of its IUCN identity in Species Survival Commission, ESUG had approached Commission on Ecosystem Management as a potential new host. CEM was interested in the portal outreach to local level for managing land and species, so Robert, Robin and Stratos Arampatzis had worked with CEM to design a group for Sustainable Use and Management of Ecosystems, which CEM wished to be global. [\[paper 2\]](#)

Members of ESUG who had not been adopted by SULi into IUCN Commissions could join SUME, which would be complementary to SULi and focus more on outreach to local levels via portals than on policy discussion. SUME steering for Europe engaged Tetiana Gardashuk, for the Americas and SE Asia involved ESUG members from beyond Europe and for elsewhere in Asia was by Saker project co-workers and SULi members. At its inaugural meeting the previous day, SUME had asked ESUG to be a support group for expertise, projects, and meetings, as ESUG was for SULi. **Members agreed by consensus for ESUG to be a support group also for SUME.**

6. SU engagements by group members

Paul Goriup gave a presentation of his work with his wife in Ukraine to conserve reed-beds in the Danube Delta. These had come under threat through effluent from villages, livestock and fish farming making reeds dense and homogeneous whereas many species needed a more open and age-varied structure. A system for mechanised cutting and pelleting of reeds for biofuel had been developed as a social investment enterprise, creating local education and employment, with spin-outs such as sales of boilers to local people and companies. A biodiversity monitoring programme was in place, showing retention of 60 to over 100 bird species, and hence scope also for eco-tourism.

Janusz Sielicki noted that ESUG was working with International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey, which he represented, and UNEP Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) for a Saker Falcon portal system. The Saker was important for traditional Arab falconry, but wild Saker numbers had declined at a time of increasing trade. CMS had passed a resolution of partial upgrading and work with falconry (which had just received UNESCO recognition as an intangible cultural heritage) to restore populations for downgrading. Trade diversion by domestic breeding had enhanced production of hybrids and new research showed electrocution on new poorly designed power lines to be a major threat. However, placing of some 5000 artificial nests on open steppe had now produced 2,500 young. The portals, in Arabic, Farsi, Pashto and Russian, were designed to discourage trapping of adult falcons in breeding areas and encourage development legal trade in which trapping could monitor Saker populations.

7. Portal activities

Upgrade of Naturalliance portal. The Country Coordinators had done a superb job at short notice, such that translation into 20 languages of the 22 required was likely by the end of the month. Those present had also generously accepted to use their payment to fund attending the meetings.

There was much discussion in previous sessions on SYCL development [\[paper 3, Doc B\]](#) Advantages were its a) editor-friendliness and direct control b) network and mapping capability and c) low cost. If it became popular among the 120,000 European local authorities listed by TESS, especially in countries without many local authority web-sites, it could generate very appreciable income for projects and decision support. It therefore needed owning by non-profit organisation that could not be hijacked for commercial gain.

Zenon Tederko, Robin Sharp and Jennifer Ailloud pointed out the difficulty of making SYCL benefits clear, and it was agreed to form a group to work further on this than the current briefing document, including emphasis on mapping and capability for geoportal operation between levels, provision of knowledge unbiased from commercial or

government influence, potential for hazard alerting by mobile phone etc, with help offered also by Fritz Reimoser. Sandie Sowler noted that networking to local communities might also be useful for projects she knew in Southern Africa. Earlier discussion had also reached conclusions about starting with one seed-site as an example in suitable countries, and then encouraging system uptake by networking for useful projects.

8. Elections of Chair and Committee Members

Robin Sharp suggested that it might be useful to bring the election forward before discussion of the future of ESUG, and this was agreed.

Robert Kenward was unanimously re-elected as chair, with thanks for his dedication.

The five members elected to Committee were Julie Ewald, Tetiana Gardashuk, Mari Ivask, Despina Symons, and Zenon Tederko who had kindly agreed to be Treasurer.

9. Future of ESUG

Funding. There had been considerable discussion on funding. Core funding from IUCN was no longer available, but CEM had generously helped fund the SUME side of the meetings. Thanks to Stratos Arampatzis, bids had been submitted each year since TESS, including two in April 2015 of which one remained in review. This was no little work as it took about three person months to write a bid. Calls with only 50% funding (e.g. LIFE+, INTEREGG) were not attractive for voluntary organisations. It was felt that the Pan European research of ESUG, especially at local level through translation, was a unique strength. Chair agreed that lack of appreciation of this was hard to explain, and felt that if no funding were attracted as contracts or SYCL subscriptions during the next two-year term, a new chair should then be chosen to try different approaches.

Structure

[\[paper 4\]](#)

Working groups are a constitutional organ of ESUG. Chair and Committee could work quite effectively on minimal funding, and Country Coordinators were faithful participants at meetings (and deserved recognition as an organ), but Working Groups involving wider membership seemed to depend on having some project funding. The suggestion was therefore to reduce the number of working groups to four issues for which there was need:

1. Wild Species, working with SULi on policy for conserving fauna/flora/fungi through SU;
2. Ecosystems, working with SUME to conserve in farmland/forests/wetlands/uplands etc.;
3. Pro-Biodiversity Business, working with social and economic interests in IUCN and EU;
4. Portals & Projects, with the Country Coordinator network for Naturalliance, SYCL, etc.

Fritz Reimoser asked the reason for leaving the stake-holder-type list. Chair suggested that this made too many to finance, with too little depth in areas such as fisheries, fungi and flora. Robin Sharp noted that the fisheries working group had already moved to CEM; prior to this ESUG would have been able to have this group and also forestry. Riccardo Simoncini wondered if an ecosystem services group could be useful, which resulted in a suggestion by Fritz Reimoser that the first two groups could be combined, while Zenon Tederko recommended ensuring that groups relate effectively to IUCN structure. Eduardo Arraut noted that mapping was becoming a theme across all groups, and Julie Ewald suggested groups for mapping and projects and communication. Finally, Sandie Sowler queried whether named working groups on a standing basis were necessary and if they could in fact operate better if responsive to opportunity.

There being no consensus, Chair would refer this back to the committee.

Members were asked to approve ESUG engagement in portal licensing.

Robin Sharp asked about risks. Chair responded that there was negligible financial risk from failure as development was completed; possible reputational risk was hard to assess; risks in success would be minimised by ESUG's independent non-commercial nature.

Riccardo Simmoncini asked for clarity on whether this concerned Naturalliance or SYCL.

Chair noted that an agreement was in place with Game and Wildlife Conservation for Naturalliance; this is to ensure Non-Profit ownership of SYCL.

There was consensus for Committee to work with Anatrack and other partners on similar licensing, for SYCL with ESUG, to that being used for Naturalliance.

10. Report of the Chair

Robert Kenward said that most of the Committee's activities during the preceding period had been on planning the future of the organisation, which had been discussed enough already. Member activities had been with the portals, and in a financial context with the Saker projects which had been covered by Janus Sielicki and would also be mentioned during financial reporting.

11. Financial reports for 2013 and 2014

[\[papers 5 & 6\]](#)

These were given by Chair on behalf of Stratos Arampatzis

Income in the Accounts for 2013 was entirely due to three contract instalments for the Saker report commissioned by UNEP-CMS. Outgoings were the expenditure for 4 people helping on the project and travel, plus Naturalliance translation into Bulgarian and Italian and (shared funding with SULi of) travel by Chair to WCC6 in Korea.

Activity in the Accounts for 2014 was negligible except for the first instalment of the Saker Portals contract commissioned by UNEP-CMS and the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey.

The Accounts for 2015 were in a healthy state. Vienna expenditure of about €5,000 was largely covered by two generous donations. Voluntary management and currency exchange rate advantages in the project meant that ESUG could foresee repaying the loan from Chair that had been needed to enable participation in TESS.

Robin Sharp asked about the outstanding loan not showing in the accounts each year. The accountant had been asked about this but had said that the loan payment and repayment records are enough to meet requirement of Belgium law, provided they are signed as an accurate record by Chair or Treasurer. All accounts remain available for inspection and the accounting is inexpensive at €320 annually.

12. Adoption of the financial report

The Accounts for 2013 and 2014 were approved by consensus.

13. Changes to the constitution

Proposed changes had been reviewed by Committee and provided to members two months before the meeting (the statutory requirement is one month). Members were given the opportunity to vote first on whether to take a new global name, to emphasise the role of supporting two IUCN groups operating globally. Possibilities were to adopt "Ecosystem and Sustainable Use Support Group" (**Option 1**), or to link in name more closely to one of our main activities, as "Naturalliance" (**Option 2**), or to confirm the name European Sustainable Use Group requested by SULi in 2013 (**Option 3**).

Related to this was a proposal to strike from Article 5 the requirement "to *reside or work in a European country*". There was no consensus for a proposal to vote first on this, so the meeting first addressed the possible change of name, by single transferable vote. Only two votes were cast for Option 2, with one vote difference between Option 1 and Option 2. There was also strong feeling among some members that 'Europe' should be retained in the group's name as an indication of origin and to assist fund-raising. It was therefore

suggested that the group's name should be European Sustainable Use Group but that the phrase "who reside or work in a European country" should be deleted from Article 5.

As a consequence, Article 1 would read (with changes highlighted in yellow):
In accordance with the Belgian Act of 25 October 1919, modified by the Act of 6 December 1954 and that of 30 June 2000, granting civil status to international non-profitmaking associations, an international non-profitmaking association was formed under the name: European Sustainable Use Specialist Group of IUCN/SSC. In 2015 its name changed to European Sustainable Use Group - abbreviated as "ESUG". The statutes have been translated into English, but in the event of difficulties in their interpretation, the French text shall be considered as original and as binding.

and Article 5 would read:

Individuals, who subscribe to the objectives of IUCN (the International Union for Conservation of Nature) and of the ESUG, who support the ESUG's vision and strategy, who have expertise in or experience of one or more types of natural resource use relevant to the association's strategy and who are willing to make an active contribution to fulfilling the objects of the association, may become Full Members, admitted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 7.

This was formally proposed by Paul Goriup, seconded by Julie Ewald and agreed by unanimous vote of the 19 members present.

Changes had been proposed also to Article 2 to note that other Kingdoms (e.g. Mycota) and also whole ecosystems need to be used sustainably, and that addition of a fourth objective would align us better with requirements of both SUME and SULi. The result is:

As an organisation which supports IUCN - the International Union for Conservation of Nature - whose objectives are to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of Nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable, ESUG has as its objectives:

- a. to identify and evaluate the principles and elements of management which contribute to enhancing sustainability of use of wild species and the ecosystems of which they are part; and*
- b.*
- c.*
- d. To work with IUCN to provide guidance to communities that encourages conservation through sustainable use, balancing cultural and economic objectives.*

These changes were proposed by Sandie Sowler, seconded by Paul Goriup and agreed by unanimous vote of the 19 members present.

In Article 9, there was a proposal to give added recognition to the network of Country Coordinators that has become a hallmark of ESUG by addition of a 4th Organ of:

Country co-ordinators appointed by the chair in consultation with the committee

This was proposed by Tetiana Gardashuk, seconded by Julie Ewald and agreed by unanimous vote of the 19 members present.

In Article 14, there was also a suggestion to add closer linkage to IUCN by requiring one member of Committee to hold office in a sustainable use group in the IUCN Commissions.

However, the closeness of ESUG involvement with SUME and SULi was felt to be adequate without change and there was no proposer for this alteration.

14. Any other business. None was requested.

The meeting closed at 17.45