

143 Developing an IUCN policy and guidance on artificial intelligence and conservation, and the integrity of digital evidence

ACKNOWLEDGING the rapid development and expansion of the use of artificial intelligence (AI) across society and the conservation sector, and that some use of AI already offers opportunities for biodiversity knowledge, monitoring, threat detection, decision-support, ecological modelling and resource efficiency;

RECOGNISING that the use of AI can accelerate, scale up and refine conservation actions while enabling participatory science, stakeholder engagement and resource optimisation;

CONCERNED that the use of AI may also cause or amplify environmental and social harms, including high energy, material and water consumption; new biodiversity risks from industrial and land-use change; algorithmic bias, opacity, data sovereignty threats; rights infringements; potential misuse of scientific knowledge or generation of fraudulent material and broader societal shifts driving biodiversity loss;

RECOGNISING that ecological, social, and economic benefits, costs and impacts associated with the use of AI are unevenly distributed, and that current governance, procurement and capacity frameworks remain biased and inadequate to ensure AI aligns with IUCN's mission and vision and rights-based, equitable and effective conservation;

NOTING the absence of a Union-wide policy on AI development and use covering data governance, transparency, environmental footprint, human rights, the rights of Indigenous peoples, as well as those of local communities, and the need for robust tools for digital authentication and media and information literacy for the conservation sector;

AWARE that IUCN's diverse membership is uniquely positioned to provide guidance, technical standards and capacity-building for responsible AI use in conservation, and that such guidance must be practical, interdisciplinary and co-developed with Commissions and Members; and

NOTING the adoption on 26 August 2025 by the United Nations General Assembly of Resolution A/79/L.118 establishing an Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence and a Global Dialogue on AI Governance, offering IUCN an immediate opportunity and responsibility to embed nature conservation priorities within global AI frameworks;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:

1. REQUESTS the Council and Director General to convene a working group drawing on the Commissions, Secretariat, Members, including Indigenous peoples' organisations, civil society and academia, as well as other experts, the private sector as appropriate, and independent technical experts, to develop an IUCN Policy on Artificial Intelligence and Conservation and an accompanying set of Guidelines for the Ethically and Ecologically Responsible Design, Deployment and Governance of AI in nature conservation practice and policy;

2. REQUESTS that the working group process is open, inclusive and transparent;

3. REQUESTS the Director General to submit the draft policies and guidelines developed by the working group to Council, with a view to it being reviewed by IUCN membership beforehand and then formally adopted by Council as soon as possible;

4. RECOMMENDS that the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) and the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) lead development of a capacity-building and Media and Information Literacy programme on "Conservation & AI", to strengthen ethical understanding of the use of AI, data transparency and equitable access to the benefits of AI, especially in resource-limited regions; and

5. RECOMMENDS that the Director General and the convened working group consider information from and liaise with the UN's International Scientific Panel on AI and Global Dialogue on AI Governance, and other emerging relevant international fora and panels, to ensure the conservation community's priorities and concerns are considered in their work represented and reported to Council.