

**September 2025**

## **THE IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS 2025**

### **MOTIONS PROCESS**

#### **Guidance note for Virtual Contact Groups: Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures**

This document is the fifth in a series of guidance notes prepared by the IUCN Secretariat on the motions process. It is based on the [Contact Groups: Procedure and Code of Conduct](#). For further information, please consult the [Motions page](#) of the Congress website.

#### **Definition & Purpose**

A **contact group**<sup>1</sup> is a group formed during negotiations to reach consensus on an issue proving particularly contentious. In IUCN, contact groups are usually organised during World Conservation Congresses to facilitate discussion and agreement around the text of particular motions<sup>2</sup> before they are voted by Members in plenary.

Contact groups should ensure constructive and inclusive discussion and make every attempt to achieve the broadest possible support for a motion before it is referred to the plenary sitting of the Members' Assembly for a vote.

#### **Format**

In accordance with Rule 56(c), all contact groups for motions will convene in a **virtual format**. Should the initial meeting fail to result in a consensus text or a coherent set of amendments that can be put to the vote, the Congress Resolutions Committee may opt to schedule a subsequent virtual contact group. For issues hard to resolve in contact groups, the Resolutions Committee may convene a smaller drafting group that balances the spectrum of view on the motion to finalise

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<sup>1</sup> Glossary of Terms for Negotiators of Multilateral Environmental Agreements. UNEP, January 2007. Page 26.

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with Rule 48, a *motion* means a draft in writing of any decision which the World Congress is requested to take. Such motion may take the form of a resolution, recommendation, expression of opinion or proposal. Resolutions are directed to IUCN itself. Recommendations are directed to third parties, and may deal with any matter of importance to the objectives of IUCN.

the text before taking it to the plenary. Drafting groups will take a virtual or hybrid format.

Each contact group session is allotted a particular time to meet (usually 1-2 hours, and not during sittings of the Members' Assembly) and sessions are publicly announced with sufficient time in advance. However, Members should be aware that changes to the schedule can happen at any moment and thus they need to be alert to these changes.

### **2025 Motions discussed in Contact Groups**

Following the online discussion, **40 motions** were sent to the Congress for further discussion. These are accompanied by four (4) motions proposing amendments to the Statutes, presented by the IUCN Council. The full list of these motions can be found in Annex I.

### **Pre-Congress Contact Groups**

Given the large number of motions that were sent to the Congress for further debate, the MWG has decided to convene "early" virtual contact groups for **16** of them prior to the beginning of the Congress in accordance with Rule 56(d). Further details of the motions referred to these pre-Congress contact groups are provided in the MWG's [Third Update](#). The Council has also requested early contact groups to be convened to discuss the motions proposing amendments to the Statutes and selected documents.

The schedule and further information about the pre-Congress contact groups are available in the [Congress website](#).

### **Congress Contact Groups**

The schedule of contact groups during the Congress (9-15 October) will be made available on the Congress website in due course.

The majority of contact groups will be held during the Forum (9-12 October). Considering the large number of motions to be discussed, multiple contact groups can occur in parallel. Early morning and/or late evening sessions can be organised, if needed.

During the Members' Assembly (13–15 October), contact groups will be scheduled early in the mornings, during the lunch break, or in the evenings. They may not be scheduled during the plenary sittings of the Members' Assembly.

Please note that the time zone of the meetings will be Gulf Standard Time (GST) which is GMT/UTC+4 hours.

### **Registration & Participation**

Access to both pre-Congress and at Congress contact groups is restricted to IUCN constituents registered for Congress.

Unless otherwise determined, contact groups are open to delegates of accredited Members, representatives of National and Regional committees holding a Member's proxy, Commission experts, and Secretariat staff. However, different roles and responsibilities are assigned to these IUCN constituent parts during contact group sessions (see section below).

To participate in contact groups, Members will be asked to [sign up](#) in advance to the contact groups they wish to join, in order to receive the link for the meeting.

### **Accessing contact groups**

To access the contact groups please follow the steps below:

1. Register for the Contact Group(s) that you want to join following this link: <https://portals.iucn.org/congress/contactgroups/>. Please make sure to use the same email address as the one used for registering for Congress.
2. From the list, select the motion contact group you wish to join (only possible to choose one at a time).
3. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click sign up.
4. You will see a confirmation page, and you will receive a confirmation email with the information and your credentials to access the session in the KUDO Platform.
5. The contact group session will appear on your KUDO dashboard **15 minutes before the meeting starts**
6. Access the KUDO dashboard: <https://live.kudoway.eu/> and log in using the credentials you received in the confirmation email.

7. To register for another contact group, from the confirmation page (step 4 above) you can click on “Subscribe to another contact group”, or repeat steps 1-4.

Should you encounter problems registering and require assistance, please contact [supportportals@iucn.org](mailto:supportportals@iucn.org)

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

**Resolutions Committee:** The Resolutions Committee reports to the Members’ Assembly and is responsible for managing the motions process at the Congress, including reviewing motions and proposing that motions and any proposed amendments be referred to a contact group. It oversees the organisation and management of contact groups, sets up drafting groups for unresolved motions, and consults and coordinates with other Congress Committees as required. The Committee consists of the members of the Motions Working Group.

**Facilitator / Chair:** Facilitators of contact groups are appointed by the Resolutions Committee,<sup>3</sup> and may consist of Member delegates, technical experts from Commissions, members of Committees, or Secretariat staff. The facilitators are expected to remain neutral throughout the discussions and steer the debate towards consensus. They will act with respect when moderating to ensure optimal participation and a good, collegial debate.

**Members:** Delegates from accredited Members are invited to take part in contact groups to debate motions and attempt to reach a consensus on the final text before they are put to the vote in plenary. It is the prerogative of Members to propose edits to the text of motions and “negotiate” in contact groups in order to reach agreement on the final text, with or without amendments. Members can be supported by Commission experts, but the latter cannot represent them or speak on Members’ behalf (see below).

Representatives of recognized IUCN National and Regional Committees can also participate in contact groups in a technical advisory and support capacity.

**Commissions and Committees:** Representatives of Commissions can take part in contact groups in a technical advisory and support capacity. At times, representatives of IUCN Members might ask for technical experts from

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<sup>3</sup> *Note:* The Resolutions Committee shall include the members of the Motions Working Group appointed by the Council (Rule 20).

Commissions to participate in contact groups to act as their advisors. In these cases, the Facilitator/Chair should be alerted, ideally before the start of the contact group session.

Given that the contact groups are primarily for Members, the number of representatives from the Commissions and Committees (unless they hold a proxy; see below) should be kept to a minimum, with speaking restricted preferably to only one designated representative per Commission and National or Regional Committee.

If a member of a recognised National or Regional Committee holds a Member's proxy, then it may participate in the contact group in the way that a Member delegate would.

**Secretariat staff:** Secretariat staff can participate in contact groups only in a technical advisory and support role, provided they uphold the highest standard of scientific and technical rigour, remain neutral, and are free from undue influence. Roles for Secretariat staff with assigned responsibilities include:

- **Secretariat Motions Team** – Staff who are part of the Secretariat Motions Team are allowed to take part in contact groups as support staff. This includes the Motions Coordinator, the members of the Core Motions Team, and the Motion Managers.
- **Motion Managers** – Each motion scheduled to be discussed in a contact group will have a designated Motion Manager. Motion Managers are Secretariat staff who have been selected to track the changes in the text of particular motion(s) assigned to them, from the start of the discussion until they are put to the vote in plenary. They share the screen with the motion text during meetings, keep track of amendments and all versions of the text, aim to ensure that the discussion is well captured. They will work closely with and support the Facilitator. Motion Managers should remain neutral throughout the discussions, provide advice around text suggestions only when requested by the Facilitator, and be respectful and courteous.
- **Designated technical staff** – It is possible that for particular motions, Secretariat staff may be called to be present at contact group discussions to ensure that the resulting text is in line with IUCN's programmatic and technical work. Designated technical staff could include Centre or Regional Directors, Head of Teams, and other staff. To the extent possible, Facilitators

will be alerted beforehand of the presence of these staff so they can rely on their expertise and advice in the course of the debate.

- **Facilitators** – As described above, in some cases the Resolutions Committee will nominate Secretariat staff to serve as Facilitators for contact groups on certain motions.

**Observers / Others:** Facilitators may allow observers<sup>4</sup> to stay in the room if there is no objection from any of the IUCN Members represented in the contact group. Participation of observers including representatives from the media, general public or others is however not expected at contact groups. This is to allow for IUCN Members to freely express themselves on subjects which might be of a controversial nature.

### **Contact group modus operandi**

- Normally, only one motion is discussed per contact group session. However, there might be cases (mostly when motions deal with similar subjects) when the text of one or more 'additional' motions is brought into the discussion at a particular contact group. The Resolutions Committee may also request that Members discuss two or more motions in an integrated manner.
- Each contact group will be assigned a Facilitator/Chair, supported by a Motion Manager, to moderate the discussion aiming at concluding with an agreed text at the end of the session. Facilitators are expected to exert maximum efforts to reach a consensus text for submission to a decision by Members' Assembly, taking into account minority views.
- At least one technical expert – from the Secretariat or Commissions – will also be present at the contact group session to ensure that scientific and technical rigour is maintained throughout the discussions. Ideally, Facilitators would have been introduced to technical experts beforehand.
- Proper balance between government and non-government participation is encouraged in contact groups and Facilitators should strive to ensure this.
- In cases when more than one contact group session is needed for a particular motion, the Motion Manager will project the latest version of the text on the

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<sup>4</sup> Observers include non-Member States and organisations with whom IUCN has a formal working relationship, Honorary Members, Patrons, members of formally-established IUCN working groups, and others with a similar working relationship with IUCN. See Rules 8-10 for more information.

screen, and the Motions Team will ensure that all previous versions of the motion are accessible.

- Any delegate may propose amendments to any motion. They shall relate directly to the text which they seek to alter, and they should be made orally during the contact group session. Amendments may not be introduced in the chat box, though in some cases, the Facilitator may request Members to write their amendments in the chat box after having introduced them orally.
- The working language of contact groups will be the language in which the motion was submitted. Members may intervene in any of the three official IUCN languages. Interpretation will be provided by artificial intelligence, though the Facilitator may request help from other participants if he or she is unable to understand the comment.
- The Facilitator should endeavour to end discussions within the allocated time. Should this not be possible, the Facilitator may request an extension or the scheduling of another virtual session provided that the Facilitator records any changes agreed by the participants and communicates these to the Motions Team through the Motions Manager. Note that Motion Managers will not be available to track discussions taking place outside scheduled virtual sessions.
- By the end of the contact group, the Facilitator must briefly wrap up the discussion and provide participants with a “status report” mentioning whether, in their view, the discussion is concluded, and the motion is ready to be sent to the plenary; or whether there is a need for another contact group discussion.
- If needed, the Resolutions Committee can contact the Facilitator of a contact group for clarification after a contact group has ended.
- The Resolutions Committee will decide which motions are ready to be put to the vote in plenary, with or without amendments.
- As per the [Code of Conduct](#), all participants taking part in contact groups are expected to behave in a courteous and respectful way. Open discussion and differing points of view are always welcome, but impolite or undiplomatic behaviour is not tolerated.

### **Next steps following a virtual contact group**

Following the close of a virtual contact group, the Facilitator and Motion Manager will report back to the Resolutions Committee on its proceedings, and the

Committee will decide whether or not the motion is ready for debate in the plenary. In either case, the motion, as revised during the contact group, will be published on the Congress website in its working language. When it is forwarded to the plenary, the revisions will also be edited, translated, and published in the three official languages.

### Annex 1: Motions submitted a virtual contact group

#	Title	Early contact group
<a href="#">001</a>	Improving tree planting practices – Planting the right tree in the right place for the right purpose	Yes
<a href="#">006</a>	Promoting the model of regional or sub-national protected natural areas to achieve the global target of 30% protected and conserved areas by 2030	
<a href="#">007</a>	Soil security law	
<a href="#">008</a>	Conservation and sustainable management of rangelands and pastoralism	
<a href="#">011</a>	Delivering equitable accountability and means of implementation for international forest protection goals	Yes
<a href="#">014</a>	Promoting hedgerows in agriculture to foster biodiversity, strengthen ecosystem resilience and mitigate climate change	
<a href="#">032</a>	Protecting seamounts and other vulnerable marine ecosystems from destructive practices	
<a href="#">033</a>	[Port] State measures regarding illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing	Yes
<a href="#">035</a>	Protection of mesopelagic ecosystem integrity	
<a href="#">038</a>	Harnessing IUCN's power: Driving synergy for net zero, nature positive and just energy transition	Yes
<a href="#">041</a>	Developing a policy on geoengineering	Yes
<a href="#">042</a>	Addressing the climate and biodiversity crises through fossil fuel supply-side measures and a just transition	
<a href="#">054</a>	Operationalising the rights of nature through their implementation in territories	
<a href="#">055</a>	[Recognition of the rights of Antarctica] [Evaluation of the concept of rights of Antarctica]	
<a href="#">056</a>	Advancing an ethical human-ocean relationship	
<a href="#">059</a>	Advancing actions to end plastic pollution to protect human health, biodiversity and the environment	
<a href="#">061</a>	Recognising the crime of ecocide to protect nature	Yes
<a href="#">067</a>	Living in harmony with rivers through the rights of nature and ecocentric law	
<a href="#">070</a>	Integrating science, rights-based approaches and harmonious coexistence with strategies for ecological recovery	

#	Title	Early contact group
<a href="#">073</a>	Defining a robust Nature Positive for Business framework, to mobilise corporate, civil society and government support for high-integrity nature positive contributions aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework	Yes
<a href="#">079</a>	Regulating financing mechanisms based on biodiversity [credits] [certificates] and guarantee positive effects on nature	Yes
<a href="#">081</a>	Supporting the economy transformation towards a regenerative economy	Yes
<a href="#">084</a>	Developing [a circular and sustainable bioeconomy] [a bioeconomy that is circular and sustainable] for sustainable food and agriculture	Yes
<a href="#">085</a>	Amplifying the role of businesses in achieving a nature positive world	
<a href="#">087</a>	IUCN policy on synthetic biology in relation to nature conservation <sup>5</sup>	Yes
<a href="#">094</a>	Recognising the importance of Indigenous [and local] languages, knowledge and cultural heritage in biodiversity conservation	
<a href="#">096</a>	Setting area-based targets on scientific evidence and reversing historic injustices	Yes
<a href="#">097</a>	Mainstreaming mentorship for young ecological stewards to enhance conservation efforts	
<a href="#">104</a>	Safeguarding biodiversity and human rights in energy transition mineral governance	Yes
<a href="#">105</a>	Recognise and support community stewardship of natural resources through dedicated funding	
<a href="#">107</a>	Scaling-up Indigenous leadership in the protection of biodiversity and the sacred	
<a href="#">108</a>	Development of IUCN guidelines to effectively control the commercial pet trade in terrestrial wildlife	
<a href="#">113</a>	Strengthening planning for preserving biodiversity through the use of Longevity Conservation approaches	
<a href="#">118</a>	Conservation of the Critically Endangered scalloped hammerhead shark ( <i>Sphyrna lewini</i> ) and its look-a-like species the smooth hammerhead shark ( <i>S. zygaena</i> ) and great hammerhead ( <i>S. mokaran</i> )	
<a href="#">121</a>	Confirming the status of the Climate Crisis Commission <sup>6</sup>	Yes
<a href="#">128</a>	Strengthening human-nature connectedness to advance transformative change for nature	
<a href="#">133</a>	A moratorium on genetically engineering wild species in natural ecosystems <sup>5</sup>	Yes
<a href="#">136</a>	Addressing the Direct Exploitation of Wild Species	Yes
<a href="#">137</a>	Advancing biodiversity [and geodiversity] finance with a human-rights-based approach	

<sup>5</sup> The Motions Working Group intends to request Members to continue discussing motions 087 and 133 in an integrated manner.

<sup>6</sup> Motion 121 will be considered alongside the discussion on the Climate Crisis Commission draft mandate 2026-2029 (see CGR-2025-6.2-1 at <https://iucncongress2025.org/assembly/documents>).

#	Title	Early contact group
<a href="#">138</a>	Recognising unequivocally and effectively supporting the crucial conservation role of territories of life and their custodians	
<a href="#">CGR-2025-3.1-1</a> <a href="#">CGR-2025-6.2-1</a> <a href="#">CGR-2025-6.7-1</a> <a href="#">121</a>	IUCN Programme, Financial Plan 2026–29, Commission mandates, and motion 121 Confirming the status of the Climate Crisis Commission	Yes
<a href="#">CGR-2025-2.5-1</a>	20-year Strategic Vision for the Union	Yes
<a href="#">CGR-2025-1.4-1</a>	Motion A: Amendments to the Rules of Procedure regarding the motions process	Yes
<a href="#">CGR-2025-5.2-1</a>	Motion B: Amendments to the Rules of Procedure Rule 54	Yes
<a href="#">CGR-2025-5.2-1</a>	Motion C: Amendments to IUCN Statutes and Regulations	Yes
<a href="#">CGR-2025-5.2-1</a>	Motion D: Amendments to IUCN Statutes and Regulations Dues Waiver	Yes