

IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025

IUCN World Conservation Congress happens every four years. It convenes IUCN's stakeholders to discuss conservation priorities, and guide IUCN's programmes and policies. The latest IUCN World Conservation Congress took place in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 9-15 October 2025.

IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025 had three main components:

- Forum – Sessions for participants to present and discuss their nature work.
- Exhibition – Pavilions and stands for participations to showcase their work and offerings.
- Members Assembly – Where IUCN Member organisations vote on issues to guide IUCN.

UNEP-WCMC contributed as speakers and facilitators in numerous sessions. We also had a stand in the Exhibition raising awareness about Proteus. Several Proteus partner companies also made significant contributions to sessions.

This document summarises key themes from the Forum and Exhibition, then key outcomes from the Members Assembly, that are relevant for Proteus partners.

Key messages from the Forum and Exhibition

The Congress was structured around five overarching [themes](#): Scaling Up Resilient Conservation Action, Reducing Climate Overshoot Risks, Delivering on Equity, Transitioning to Nature-Positive Economies and Societies, and Disruptive Innovation and Leadership for Conservation. Nearly 1,500 sessions were run linked to these themes, which spanned a huge range of conservation topics. Two messages repeated across the Congress were: 1) The importance of unity, underpinned by trust, to drive action, 2) The importance of science to provide objectivity.

Around 50 sessions were grouped under a '[Business Summit](#)' and IUCN hosted a 'Business Pavilion'. However, the prominence of business went far beyond these spaces, with widespread recognition of the importance of business action across the Congress. The potential for businesses to contribute to existing and new threats was recognised, for example there was considerable concern around deep sea mining. The potential for businesses to contribute positively was also recognised, with a progressive narrative around a shift from supporting isolated projects, to meeting more stringent compliance requirements, to recognising dependencies and building resilience. However, there was also recognition that business understanding of nature-related risks remains limited, which presents a barrier to action.

There were strong calls for simplification and unification of approaches to assess business interactions with nature and guide action. Ecosystem integrity was highlighted as a potential proxy for multiple aspects of nature we value. IUCN [launched](#) its 'Rapid High-Integrity Nature-positive Outcomes' (RHINO) method to guide actions to reduce species extinction risk. There was emphasis on giving agency to local actors, which can include Indigenous peoples, for action to be successful.

Across the Congress, different sessions highlighted the needs for business action and for business restraint. This reflects the necessity of reducing business impacts if we are to slow nature loss, and of businesses contributing if we are to restore nature.

Key Motions to be aware of

At the Members Assembly, IUCN Member organisations vote on *Motions*. Once adopted these *Motions* become *Resolutions* and *Recommendations* that guide IUCN. IUCN Members include government, civil society, and Indigenous peoples' organisations. 148 *Motions* were considered at IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025. Three with high relevance to Proteus partners are:

- [Motion 073 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](#) – Concerns the development and implementation of robust yet practical frameworks for the private sector to contribute to positive outcomes for nature, underpinned by the mitigation hierarchy and principles outlined in the [IUCN Nature positive for business paper](#).
- [Motion 080 Ensuring companies disclose and take action to minimise negative impacts on biodiversity in ways that will achieve the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) – Concerns businesses and other actors working to effectively consider biodiversity in the implementation of assessment and reporting frameworks, including through use of high-quality biodiversity datasets such as those available in IBAT.
- [Motion 085 Amplifying the role of the private sector in achieving a nature positive world](#) – Concerns promoting private sector contributions to implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework including through regulatory measures and incentives, and voluntary business action.

Several other Motions are also likely to be of interest to Proteus partners, including:

- [Motion 034 Promotion of collaborative marine spatial planning and sensitivity maps for sustainable offshore wind energy development](#) – Concerns creation of marine biodiversity sensitivity maps drawing on established tools like AVISTEP and IBAT.
- [Motion 038 Driving synergy for a net zero, nature positive and just energy transition](#) – Concerns net-zero greenhouse gas emissions pathways with safeguards to ensure the protection of biodiversity and people.
- [Motion 042 Addressing the climate and biodiversity crises through fossil fuel supply-side measures and a just transition](#) – Concerns analysing governance in fossil fuels supply and transition pathways for states economically dependent on fossil fuels.
- [Motion 045 Reducing the impacts of forest biomass energy on climate and biodiversity](#) – Concerns reducing the potential negative impacts of woody biomass in industrial-scale energy production.
- [Motion 047 Promotion of strategic and spatial planning of electric grids to minimise impacts on nature](#) – Concerns increasing use of biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning in design of electrical infrastructure.
- [Motion 081 Supporting the economy transformation towards a regenerative economy](#) – Concerns increasing clarity around nature-regenerative business and economy concepts.
- [Motion 104 Safeguarding biodiversity and human rights in energy transition mineral governance](#) – Concerns meeting demand for energy transition minerals while minimising negative impacts to biodiversity and human rights.
- [Motion 132 Strengthening Business Engagement In Climate Adaptation For Preservation Of Biodiversity And Ecosystems](#) – Concerns greater engagement of the private sector in implementing nature-based solutions in response to the impacts of climate change.

Other Motions concerned a wide range of topics. Some related to specific ecosystem types (e.g. wetlands, forests, seamounts), species groups (e.g. dugongs, bats, mycorrhizal fungi), threats (e.g. industrialisation, plastic pollution, invasive species), and issues and imperatives (e.g. geoengineering, blue economy, human rights). Many were global in focus, while some referred to specific locations. The full set of Motions is available online [here](#), with vote results [here](#).

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