University of Cambridge Conservation Leadership Alumni Network (UCCLAN)

Policy Approval Process

June 2023

1. Introduction

These Policy Approval Process guidelines feed into Goal 3 of the UCCLAN Strategy: "Establish governance systems''. Additionally, a core component of the UCCLAN Strategy 2021-2023, especially in Goal 1, is advancing changes in policy and law for the future of biodiversity and the environment, globally. Policy improvements and formulations cover instruments of multilateral agreements or institutions such as the Rio Conventions, IPBES, CMS, WTO, Ramsar, FAO IPCC,etc, as well as regional and national policy and legislation with an impact on biodiversity globally that often manifests locally.   This policy approval process is a living document and subject to change based on Article 8. 1: General Conditions *f*

1.1. The UCCLAN Council invites member proposals for policy actions or outputs within the aforementioned scope of Goal 1, at a global but also regional, national or local scale. Policy positions, petitions, briefs, or actions (in this document coined 'policy outputs') on behalf of the UCCLAN will need to be submitted at least three months   prior for approval by the UCCLAN Policy Committee.

The Policy Committee shall be tasked with:

1.2. Addressing requests for policy outputs to or by the UCCLAN Council, working with the UCCLAN network to (e.g., goal leaders, regional leaders, specialist groups, individuals, etc.) to propose topics and take policy actions (e.g., position statements, briefs, petitions and other related external engagement opportunities to provide input where the network can provide an added value) that will be disseminated to target audiences through news outlets or websites, including the UCCLAN website, and/or through other means such as direct contacts and social media platforms.

This can include requests from Council to develop, plan, inform and/organize policy actions and statements as requested.

1.3. - The policy committee will initiate a quality assessment of the policy positions or approach, as well as considering the UCCLAN Strategy and Cambridge University policies .

1.4. Support for official UCCLAN member representation at global policy making events: Ensure a timely review of policy outputs and accountability processes that provides UCCLAN representatives with the support and flexibility to participate in global policy making events and negotiations, while also ensuring quality of participation and accurate representation of policy outputs generated in advance of such events.

The specific actions that need to be taken are:

1.4.1 . Reviewing policy outputs submitted by UCCLAN members that will be delivered on behalf of the UCCLAN, and providing input, feedback, and support to submitting members,

1.4.2. Where the policy committee deems necessary, it can recommend an external review of UCCLAN policy positions or approaches within the wider CCI and other relevant external organisations.

1.4.3. Assessing and reviewing policy outputs by other organisations to join forces when possible, and writing a statement of endorsement for solidarity as relevant.

1.4.4. Facilitate a smooth process for UCCLAN representation at global policy events, including a clear but adaptable system for utilizing, archiving and measuring impact of policy outputs.

1.4.5.Maintaining communication with UCCLAN Council on its activities.

Committee members:

1. Fabrice Inkonkoy (Chair, 2020-21)

2. Jorge Ventocilla (2012-13)

3. Rosalind Helfand (2018-19)

4. Noa Steiner (2016-17)

5. Nathan Mesnildrey (2021-22)

6. Monipher Musasa (2015-16)

7. Lucía Norris (2016-17)

2. Composition of policy committee

2.1. The committee, where possible, aims to ensure regional representation. Where possible, diversity, equity, and inclusion will be reflected in the selection of members of the committee, including gender balance, race, religious background, cohort affiliation and academic discipline.

2.2. The Policy Committee will be comprised of odd number of members, a minimum of five and a maximum of nine members to account for diversity of UCCLAN members as well as to ensure availability of members. However, the exact number of members can be decided and changed by requesting a "motion to change'' by 50%+1 member of the Council or the Committee as they deem necessary and according to available candidates to the UCCLAN Council.

2.3. A call for nominations will be sent to the entire UCCLAN and be open to anyone within the UCCLAN with the required skills and time.

Council members can also suggest UCCLAN members for nomination to the policy committee. The final selection of the Policy Committee members will be made by the UCCLAN Council.

2.4. The Chair and/or the Vice-Chair should have a minimum of 3 years of policy formulation experience in reviewing or writing policy statements.

2.5. The Policy Committee will elect a Chair every two years and a Vice-Chair every year. The Vice-chairs will share the responsibilities of being the communications focal points and disseminating information to and from the UCCLAN Council and other relevant bodies.

2.6 In an event where the Chair and/ or the Vice-chair resigns or is terminated through motion of no confidence (section 2.6) by the committee or the UCCLAN Council, the new Chair and / or Vice-Chair will be elected through the nomination process.

2.7. A vote of no confidence will be called upon in writing either by 50%+1 of the committee members or 50%+1 of the active members of the UCCLAN Council or in breach of University Alumni guidelines. Re-election could be possible.

2.8. Policy Committee members will rotate every two years, or as needed, in a manner that they do not all leave at once, to maintain continuity and organisational memory.

2.9. The Policy Committee will present Policy(ies) to the UCCLAN for feedback within 24 working days. In the event of no response within 15 days, the author(s) will send a reminder, and in the event of no response within the 24 working days, the policy is considered approved.

3. What we are looking for in a policy output formulation and engagement process

3.1. Any UCCLAN endorsed policy output must be cognizant of the reputation of the UCCLAN. Statements are encouraged to be based on the best available science published in peer-reviewed journals and in other credible and reputable sources, when applicable (e.g., economic issues, social issues, political issues, advocacy approaches, traditional knowledge). Outputs will adhere with the principles of ***"Do no harm"***, and the University's rules of ethics and publications, as deemed appropriate by the Policy Committee.

3.2. Debates must be based on sound evidence. Evidence can include all forms of knowledge including peer-reviewed literature, grey literature, indigenous knowledge, and documented experiences on the ground.

3.3. All outputs must be consistent with the UCCLAN strategy, policy priorities of the UCCLAN Think Tank and prior UCCLAN policy statements, subject to the Policy Committee discretion.

3.4. To ensure that policy positions and approaches represent the UCCLAN, it is encouraged that submitting members communicate and formulate drafts of the policy position or approach relevant members of UCCLAN including creating meetings, workshops, email/slack/WhatsApp or virtual discussions to enhance engagement.

4. Definition of terminologies

i. Policy brief

According to the Writing Centre, University of North Carolina of Chapel Hill (2021), "a policy brief presents a concise summary of information that can help readers understand, and likely make decisions about, government policies. Policy briefs may give objective summaries

of relevant research, suggest possible policy options, or go even further and argue for particular courses of action". The policy brief should be a maximum of 3,500 pages.

ii. Policy position statement

A policy position statement should give the background to a problem facing decision makers and then as made by a professional body with the authority of knowledge and credibility to do so, give its position on the problem and conclude with recommendations. Positions should be stated in at least 3 distinct points.

iii. Petition

"A formal written request, typically one signed by many people, appealing to authority in respect of a particular cause" (Google dictionary).

5. UCCLAN policy approval process

The UCCLAN comprises some of the foremost conservation leaders in the world who are at the frontlines of conservation in their countries and with the requisite experience at the interface of science and policy. They facilitate the interactions between these two fields in their work at the national and regional levels. UCCLAN strengths are 1) outstanding leadership capabilities that contribute to sound decision making necessary for policy formulation 2) a foundation in science and the grounding of the Conservation Leadership Masters that informs our analytical skills important for policy analysis 3) being nested within the community and brain trust of some of the leading conservation NGOs in the world (CCI).

Stage 1 - quality control of policy output

A fully completed policy statement must be submitted to the UCCLAN Policy Committee which the Policy Committee will carefully read through to provide feedback and constructive critique.

 There are two routes for policy statement reviews.

5.1.1. The first route requires policy statements to be submitted at least two months prior to the external deadline. The Policy committe will reach a decision within 15 days from submission.

5.1.2. A decision will be reached by consensus by the Policy Committee and formally communicated to the authors. Note: decision by consensus refers to a quorum of 50%+1.

5.1.3. In an event of tie on decision due to abstain vote by committee member(s) the policy content will go to the second round of voting.

5.1.4. The authors will have 10 working days to effect necessary recommendations, or another timeframe as needed in coordination with the Policy Committee, to submit an updated policy statement draft to the committee.

5.1.5 The committee members must avoid conflict of interest. Conflict of interest occurs when a member or members of the committee are involved in development and drafting of a policy output. This affiliation may influence the committee members' ability to fairly assess

the policy output. Thus, policy committee members must identify any conflict or potential conflict of interest and formally through writing inform the committee members. The Committee members must make a decision whether the conflict of interest may influence the decision and in light of this information take appropriate action. Action may include the committee member secluded from the committee voting session where the conflict of interest may prevent him/her from making an objective assessment.

5.1.6. The second route is under circumstances of urgency that require a rapid review process. Such The statement must be submitted at least 15 days prior to the external deadline and the Policy committee will have up to 5 days to reach a decision. The Policy committee reserves the right to decide on the urgency status of a policy statement and whether it is eligible for the second route.

5.1.7. In cases where over 80% of the Policy Committee members are the core members of the drafting team, the UCCLAN Council will resume the responsibility of the Policy committee and will vote on the approval of the policy output, following the same voting rules described in point one of this section.

Stage 2 - getting support from UCCLAN network

5.2.1. After the policy statement is submitted to the Policy Committee, a transparent and participatory process with the whole of the UCCLAN should be held.

5.2.2. Once the Policy Committee has reached a consensus on the good quality of the policy output and agreed on the urgency status of the policy statement (if any), the latter can progress to 'stage 2' - getting feedback and support from the UCCLAN network.

5.2.3. The Policy Committee's role at this stage is to ensure that UCCLAN is formally informed of the final outputs, via email by the UCCLAN Alumni Coordinator or Council with a request for feedback to be given within ten working days. The authors of the document must then address UCCLAN's comments within ten working days. Furthermore, the Committee's role is to support the drafting team with reviewing and finalising the output.

5.2.4. Any UCCLAN member making comment(s) where possible, receives a confirmation of review either by email or through formal meeting for their comment and how the drafting team plans to address it, or reasons why it could not be addressed.

5.2.5. If any UCCLAN member is not satisfied with the policy committee response, then the member could address the Policy Committee, where there should be a 50%+1 voting, with at least 50%+1 quorum, held by both the Policy Committee and UCCLAN Council, to be taken before the external deadline or relevant timeframe.

5.2.6.In the event the team making the proposal does not receive any engagement/feedback from the network within a stipulated time frame, it is deemed approved by the UCCLAN.

6. Updating the policy approval process

6.1. This policy approval process is a living document and it is subject to revisions by the UCCLAN Policy Committee and UCCLAN Council. Revisions will be done every 3 years, or as

requested by a quorum of 50%+1 active members from the committee and /or the Council, in a timely manner.