

IUCN protected area management categories

Statement of Compliance for SACs

Introduction to Statements of Compliance

Statements of Compliance are an innovation of the IUCN National Committee for the United Kingdom's *Putting Nature on the Map* project. The project has developed guidance on the use of the IUCN definition of a protected area and the assignment of the associated management categories and governance types¹. The guidance suggests that short but authoritative Statements of Compliance are produced for a conservation site or group of sites.

For groups of sites designated for conservation under one overriding piece of legislation or public policy the statements should concentrate on whether the sites meets the IUCN definition of a protected area. For statutory designations the Statements of Compliance should review all relevant legislation, focussing on the priority given to nature conservation in the long-term. For sites not covered by legislation the statements should review the significance for nature conservation of all relevant public policy positions that specifically affect the area.

In addition to reviewing legislation or policy in relation to the IUCN definition of a protected area, individual sites can also review in their Statement of Compliance which IUCN management category and governance type should be assigned to the site. In this case the statements should also provide an overview of current management objectives in particular in relation to prioritising nature conservation and summarize examples of current management practice that demonstrate the priority given to nature conservation and the ambition and vision for nature conservation in the future.

Note Statements of Compliance should be prepared with full reference to the 2008 Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories (see footnote for details)

The Statement of Compliance below has been prepared for a group of sites defined in legislation.

¹ Dudley, N (Editor) (2008) Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. X + 86pp. <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/PAPS-016.pdf>

AND

IUCN NCUK (2012); *Putting nature on the map - identifying protected areas in the UK: A handbook to help identify protected areas in the UK and assign the IUCN management categories and governance types to them*, IUCN National Committee for the United Kingdom, UK <http://www.iucn-uk.org/Portals/0/PNOTM%20handbook%20small.pdf>

Background

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are the means for implementation of EU Directive 92/43/EEC Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the UK as an EU Member State. They are identified by the relevant statutory nature conservation bodies, scrutinised by the UK Government in consultation with the devolved administrations and approved by EU DG Environment following advice from the EU's European Topic Centre for Nature Conservation.

SAC's and the IUCN definition of a protected area

The table uses the main key in the Putting Nature on the Map Handbook for identifying if a site meets the IUCN definition of a protected area².

Main elements of IUCN definition	Discussion of element in relation to SACs
Is the site a clearly defined geographical area?	Yes. Each SAC has a legally notified boundary and these are mapped digitally in all 4 countries of the UK and available from the country conservation agencies.
Is it recognised, dedicated and managed to achieve the long-term conservation of nature? NB 'nature' includes all levels of biodiversity as well as geodiversity, landforms and broader natural values.	Yes. The EU Directive and its transcription in UK and country legislation makes this clear: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 1994 for England, Scotland and Wales, amended in 2010 for England and Wales; and by the Conservation (Natural Habitats and Species) Regulations (Northern Ireland) for Northern Ireland 1995.
Is the main management objective nature conservation? Other objectives of equal standing may be present but they do not cause conflict, i.e. nature conservation is the priority	Yes. Article 2 states that "the aim of this Directive shall be to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and florawith measures designed to maintain or restore as favourable conservation status. Measuresshall take account of economic, social and cultural requirements and regional and local characteristics."
Does the designation of the site prevent, or eliminate where necessary, any exploitation or management practice that will be harmful to the objectives of designation?	Yes. An 'Appropriate Assessment' must be carried out by the statutory conservation authority to determine whether any proposals would have a detrimental effect on the interests listed in the Annexes to the Directive. Only activities redeemed to be overriding national importance can be allowed and compensatory measures have to be put in place and agreed with the European Commission.
Does the designation of the site aim to maintain, or ideally, increase the degree of naturalness of the ecosystem being protected?	Yes, as the Directive and its transcription into UK law focuses on achieving favourable conservation status . For some degraded habitats, such as blanket mires and raised bogs, priority has to be given to their restoration by the Member State authorities.

² See page 26 of the *Putting Nature on the Map Handbook*

Main elements of IUCN definition	Discussion of element in relation to SACs
<p>Is the long-term nature conservation ensured through legal or other effective means? E.g. national or international statutory law/ agreement/convention, traditional rules or NGO policy.</p>	<p>Yes through the EU Directive 92/43/EEC Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora and its transcription into UK and country legislation makes this clear: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 1994 for England, Scotland and Wales, amended in 2010 for England and Wales; and by the Conservation (Natural Habitats and Species) Regulations (Northern Ireland) for Northern Ireland 1995.</p>