

The contribution of European rural communities - land commons and Territories of Life (ICCAs)¹ - to policies and objectives, including OEEMs².

Date: 09-13 December 2024

MEETING FORMAT

Two back-to-back facilitated events consisting of 1) a joint “Land Commons conference” by the European Chapters of the ICCA Consortium and the International Association for the Studying of the Commons (IASC), and 2) a policy meeting on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OEEMs) and local rural communities hosted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The format in the Commons Conference is to have as much translated discussion as possible through two parallel moderated sessions that sets the scene for each theme. The parallel sessions are separated into a researcher/decision maker focused discussion and a practitioner/commoner focused discussion, though people are free to go between the two.

To set the stage for each theme, speakers would be expected to give short presentations, in various formats from abstracts to more interactive, grounded in reality (ie case studies and not theoretical) and importantly set the basis for a constructive discussion on the way forward.

Following the parallel sessions the two groups will come back together to collectively to share, discuss and reflect. At the end of the day a facilitated roundtable of moderators will come together to bring together all the discussion that have occurred up to that point in time, with the facilitator prompting the discussion.

The second policy meeting will have a similar format as the land commons conference, though without the parallel sessions.

¹ Originally called Indigenous and Community Conservation Areas (ICCAs)

² Other area-based Effective Conservation Measures (OEEM)

OBJECTIVE

In an increasingly urban world, rural people, be they Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities or Rural Communities, are increasingly being left behind³. Yet, in order to move towards the 2050 vision of “living in harmony with nature”⁴, we need to make sure that no one is left behind. This means that there also needs to be resolutions by various global decision makers to be inclusive and include all rural communities in decision-making processes⁵.

While some Indigenous Peoples have been relatively successful in creating space within the various global policy making institutions⁶, such as in IUCN⁷, other rural communities have not⁸. The objective of this conference is to start the process of creating a space for all rural communities, so that various 2030 policies and targets can truly be inclusive of these communities and their natural resources in all their diversity (water, forests, pastures, fisheries, game, veld, pannage, estover, turbary, piscary, animals ferae naturae etc.).

³ Kurz, D. et al. (2023) Including Rural America in academic conservation science

⁴ See - <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/towards-vision-2050-biodiversity-living-harmony-nature>

⁵ Smith, R.J. et al. (2009) Let the locals lead

⁶ See <https://naturaljustice.org/publication/the-living-convention/>

⁷ See, among others:

IUCN 1977 resolution 8 recognising the need to include local people in project design.

IUCN 1990 resolution 18.16 requesting IUCN to create an Inter-Commission Task Force to make sure Indigenous concerns are incorporated in the working of IUCN.

IUCN 1994 resolution 19.22 to ensure that Indigenous Peoples knowledge and practices are taken into account

IUCN 1996 resolution 1.49 to have greater participation of Indigenous Peoples in IUCN conservation initiatives.

IUCN 2004 resolution 3.055 requesting that other international development agencies to also integrate Indigenous Peoples.

IUCN 2008 resolution 4.052 endorsing UNDRIP

IUCN 2016 resolution WCC-2016-Res-004-EN that allows indigenous peoples organisations to become IUCN members.

IUCN 2021 resolution WCC-2020-Res-002-EN calling for effective participation of Indigenous Peoples organisations with regional focal points.

⁸ See - <https://defendingpeasantsrights.org/en/the-undrop-and-its-implementation-in-the-context-of-switzerland-an-overview-of-political-networks-and-challenges/>

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

ICCAs and Commons in Europe	Day 1	09H00	Commons Conference: Registry and Opening	
		09H30	Keynote TBC	
			Practitioner	Academic
		10H00	Theme 1 – European rural land commons and ICCAs, what do they have in common? Threats and challenges.	Theme 1 – European rural and commons and ICCAs, what do they have in common? Threats and challenges.
		11H30	Coffee	
		11H45	Pathway to change workshop – Theme 1	
		12H45	Lunch - Food will be sourced primarily from land commons	
		14H00	Theme 2 – The values that European rural land commons and ICCAs, bring to European policies and objectives.	Theme 2 – The values that European rural land commons and ICCAs, bring to European policies and objectives.
		15H30	Coffee	
		15h45	Pathway to change workshop – Theme 2	
		17H00	Round table Themes 1+2	
		18H00	Aperitif: Wine and cheese from European commons	
		18H30	Side meeting TBC	
		Day 2	09H00	Keynote Recognition and the future of European land commons.
			Practitioner	Academic
	09H30		Theme 3 – European rural land commons and ICCAs their role in conservation policy and objectives in Europe.	Theme 3 – European rural land commons and ICCAs their role in conservation policy and objectives in Europe.
	11H00		Coffee	
	11H30		Pathway to change workshop – Theme 3	
	12H30		Lunch - Food will be sourced primarily from land commons	
	14H00		Theme 4 – Identifying existing European rural land commons and ICCAs and restoring enclosed ones.	Theme 4 – Identifying existing European rural land commons and ICCAs and restoring enclosed ones.
15H30	Coffee			
15H45	Pathway to change workshop – Theme 4 (and 1 to 3)			
17H00	Round table – 1 to 4			
18H00	Aperitif: Wine and cheese from European commons			
18H30	Side meeting TBC			
Field Visit	Day 3	10H00	Field Visit TBC	
		12H30	Lunch	
		14H00	Discussion –Rural land commons, territories of life and policy: potential and shortcomings of current policy and legislation.	
		18H00	Return	
		18H30	Side meeting TBC	

OE C	Da	09H00	OECM Policy meeting: Registry and Opening
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		09H30	The importance of European rural land commons and ICCAs for conservation: Summary of previous meeting.
		09H35	What are OECMs (simple, relevance to Commons and ICCAs).
		09H45	Coffee
		10H00	Theme 5 – Potential for private and community governed restoration and OECMs in Europe, with examples from Finland and Sweden.
		12H30	Lunch - Food will be sourced primarily from land commons
		14H00	Theme 6 – OECMs on private and community governed lands: the need for two-eyed seeing and narratives.
		15H30	Coffee
		16H00	Pathway to change workshop – Themes 5 and 6
		18H00	Round table bringing small group discussion together
		18H30	Swiss Bourgeoisie wine tasting TBC
		19H00	Side meeting TBC
	Day 5	09H00	Keynote by TBC
		09H30	Theme 7 – How can policy better recognise private and community governed OECMs? With examples from Finland and Sweden.
		11H00	Coffee
		11H30	Theme 8 - Private European landowners, restoration and OECMs: bringing restoration and conserved areas targets together.
		12H30	Lunch Food will be sourced primarily from land commons
		14H00	Pathway to change workshop –7 and 8
		15H00	Coffee
		15h30	Pathway to change workshop Road Map to the future – all themes, next steps
		16H30	Coffee
		16H45	Round table – all themes, next steps
		17H30	Keynote by TBC
		18H00	Closing
		18H30	Appero
		19H00	Side meeting TBC

FIRST HALF OF MEETING: EUROPEAN LAND COMMONS AND ICCAS – CONTRIBUTION TO EUROPEAN POLICIES

Theme 1 – European rural land commons and ICCAs: what do they have in common? Threats and challenges.

Non-technical outline

For centuries European rural land commons and ICCAs have been thought of as “obsolete, old-fashioned system, whose management and very existence are no longer appropriate”⁹. This thinking has led to a loss of community lands that has been occurring for hundreds of years.

Some European land commoners feel that the rights of Indigenous peoples are better recognised than their own, as reflected by an elder French commoner who stated that the only way that French commoners’ views would be recognised is if they went to the French Senate with feathers in their hair. While his views may seem drastic, his point was clear, that the rights of Indigenous peoples were better recognised by French policy makers than the right of French rural commoners. Thankfully, this thinking is not found throughout Europe, however, there are European wide top-down policies that, unwittingly, produces similar results.

While, both Indigenous Peoples and land commoners have a lot in common, such as their struggles for recognition, having traditions that are important in “cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields”¹⁰, they also have their differences. One important difference is the international frameworks that recognise the rights of these two groups. For Indigenous Peoples they are enshrined through the United Nations declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) while the rights of rural commoners are recognised through the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP). However, while in Europe UNDRIP is used more than UNDROP to recognise these rights, both these rights can be restricted by other policies.

This session seeks to discuss the similarities and differences of these two types of rural communities within the European context. Importantly, how, and by whom, are both rural communities threatened and how can their combined experience strengthen the recognition and inclusion of their rights to their lands and resources? Especially when state and private development and conservation agendas result in policies and investments that sometimes inadvertently infringe on these rights.

⁹ Translation of the introduction to a 2019 proposed French law - <https://www.senat.fr/leg/exposes-des-motifs/pp19-182-expose.html> - Original French text « Cette loi marque la reconnaissance de la désuétude de ce dispositif d'un autre temps, dont la gestion et l'existence même ne sont plus adaptées. »

Theme 2 – The values that European rural land commons and ICCAs, bring to European policies and objectives.

Non-technical outline

The European Landscape Convention, adopted in 2000, notes that European landscapes have “an important public interest role in the cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields, and constitutes a resource favourable to economic activity and whose protection, management and planning can contribute to job creation”¹¹.

Ironically, while the cultural traditions and management systems of rural land commons and ICCAs have created this European landscape, because they are often outside standard market ideologies they are sometimes seen by policy makers as being “no longer appropriate”¹². In order to promote how these communities, and their traditional governance and management systems, can contribute to local, national, European and global policies and objectives we need to also recognise contemporary values as mentioned in the European Landscape Convention.

Other than conservation values, dealt with in Theme 3, what contemporary values do European rural land commons and ICCAs carry? How do they contribute to national, global and local policies such as the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? How do they contribute to policies such as health, social cohesion, farming and employment? What can be gained by including rural land commons and ICCAs in such policies? What are the challenges that they face in order for their contribution to be recognised, especially when policy implementation is usually carried out by the state or its partners with little participation with local rural communities?

Theme 3 – European rural land commons and ICCAs their role in conservation policy and objectives in Europe.

Non-technical outline

Globally the expansion of parks has been used as a reason to remove the land and access rights of rural land commoners and Indigenous Peoples. However, there is now increasing recognition that some communities’ activities have not only created the surrounding “natural” environment but also created local governance and management systems that maintain these environments. While these activities are being recognised and integrated into global conservation policies, there is difficulty in integrating the local governance and management systems, as these systems often greatly differ to the ones that are used by the implementers of global conservation policies.

Global policies such as ICCAs (Territories of Life), policy instruments such as Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and European policies such as the European Landscape convention are being used in order to reach biodiversity policies such as the 2030 30x30 or the Climate Accords. Importantly, these systems should not only integrate the recognition, inclusion, and consent of communities in discussion on the creation of conserved areas, but should also empower communities. However, there is often an implementation gap whereby the participation of local communities is often carried out at a very superficial level, the exception being Switzerland’s protected areas system where different local actors can develop rules and regulations on how an area can be used and maintained and get a park label for products and also access to subsidies.

¹¹ See - <https://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape>

¹² The same person who proposed the above law also likes to walk in alpine pastures.

Europe is seeing a transition from exclusion of rural communities from conserved areas to the growing recognition, inclusion and consent of communities in conserved areas. How then are global conserved area policies such as ICCAs and OECMs reflected and implemented in 2030 European policies? What are the difficulties in integrating such systems into these policies? What are the lessons learnt in implementing participatory conservation in a European context?

Theme 4 – Identifying existing European rural land commons and ICCAs and restoring enclosed ones.

Non-technical outline

In order to improve the integration of rural land commons and ICCAs in various State or European policies, they need to be properly identified. Yet, identification of rural community land is difficult, as exemplified by a recent cadastral mapping project in Spain that mis-labelled land belonging to a community and transferred it to the municipality.

Without correct identification of rural community lands, targets and policies (SDGs, environmental, social, transition) passed at either the state, European or Global levels are hard to implement on the ground and can even cause conflict.

However, there are many challenges to identifying land that belongs to a rural community. These difficulties include the reluctance of some rural communities to identify themselves as either a rural land common or ICCA, the diversity of local names given to such rural community owned lands, the challenges around participatory mapping, and the availability of cadastral data. Identifying rural community lands that have already been enclosed is even harder.

What are the hurdles to recognising, identifying and mapping rural community lands (existing or enclosed)? How could such mapping better inform policy makers as they strive to legislate and implement global policy frameworks and targets?

Field Trip – TBC – Mourex? IUCN? - TBC

Non-technical outline

Visit to a nearby common that overlooks Lake Geneva. The common consist of forest, pastures and wetlands, and is still used for grazing and fuel wood. The community has probably managed the commons since the 1400s, there is even a Napoleonic decree, dated 1860, confirming that the land is managed by the community and not the municipality. Overtime, this community has consistently fought, with success, to keep its land and user rights, despite constant threats by development or the local government.

Discussion –Rural land commons, territory of life and policy: potentials and shortcomings of current policy and legislation.

Non-technical outline

After two days of presentations and discussion around European rural land commons and ICCAs, this final discussion will involve everyone. It is dedicated to a more focused discussion on current policy, the way forward and creating networks.

Some of the issues that have been discussed over the last couple of days are not only restricted to natural resource commons and the rural communities that manage them but are also applicable to other types of commons, associations who work on commons and

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academics who research commons. Forming networks with these other commons and groups who work on commons could be advantageous to rural communities.

SECOND HALF OF MEETING: EUROPEAN RURAL COMMUNITY LANDS AND OECMs

Theme 5 – Potential for private and community governed restoration and OECMs in Europe, with example from Finland and Sweden.

Non-technical outline

Outside Europe the inclusion of other systems in conservation and restoration policy and targets, including private and local communities, is increasing. One of the principals of OECMs is the recognition of existing systems, such as rural land commons, ICCAs, and private lands as being beneficial to biodiversity. What is the potential in Europe for OECMs of non-state landowners and managers? When these landowners restore their lands and so enhance biodiversity, how can they be recognised as OECMs? Finally, how does this recognition benefit these landowners?

Theme 6 – OECMs private and community governed lands: the need for two-eyed seeing and Narratives.

Non-technical outline

By recognising that direct state intervention is not always needed in order to reach conservation objectives and targets, OECMs have created a major paradigm shift. If this paradigm shift is to be successful, the conservation community will need to integrate other forms of knowledge beyond conservation. One way to do this is through narratives and two-eyed seeing, the latter of which is a method proposed by Mi'kmaq elders and scientists in Canada to bring scientific and local knowledge together.

What do these other forms of scientific knowledge look like and how can it be used in identifying potential OECMs in Europe, such as those that engage in restoration?

Theme 7 – How can policy better recognise private and community governed OECMs? with example from Finland and Sweden.

Non-technical outline

As OECMs are a relatively new concept, there is still a lot of confusion about the different types of OECMs possible. In many areas around the globe, state based OECMs have come to dominate the OECM Protected Planet database¹³. In Europe how can policy and guidelines better recognise other types of OECMs such as those governed by rural communities or private landholders?

Theme 8 – Private European landowners restoration and OECMs : bringing restoration and conserved areas targets together.

Non-technical outline

The “Other” in the OECM acronym should include European private and community landowners. Most of the week has been dedicated to community landowners. This session focuses on how European private landowners conserve and restore biodiversity, and so are potential OECMs.

¹³ <https://www.protectedplanet.net/en>