

COMMISSION ON ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT (CEM)

Piet Wit, The Netherlands

Personal

Name: WIT, Pieter
Date of Birth: 27 December 1946
Nationality: Netherlands

Education

1971: University of Agriculture, Wageningen, The Netherlands. M.Sc. (cum laude)
Specialization: Range ecology

Current position

Director/owner Syzygy, consultancies on integrated conservation and rural development

Professional background

Piet Wit's first assignment after graduation was to act as the Head of the Forest Herbarium Ibadan (Nigeria). His career brought him to over 50 countries, with focus on West Africa, Europe and Central Asia.

Highlights in this career were his work at the Garoua Wildlife School in Cameroon (training staff from francophone Africa), DELFT HYDRAULICS (integrated water management projects), IPC Groene Ruimte (vocational training for water, land and forest management), the Hustai National Park Project in Mongolia (Reintroduction of the Przewalski Horse), in Uruzgan, Afghanistan (application of the ecosystem approach to the development of agriculture) and more recently with Chimpanzee conservation in South-East Guinea Bissau.

Piet Wit has shown to be able to bridge the gap between theory and practice, between policy makers and field managers, linking human and natural sciences across such different sectors as the military and the conservation community.

Piet Wit is fluent in English, French and German, his mother tongue is Dutch.

Relevant experience and past involvement with IUCN:

Piet Wit came across IUCN for the first time in 1972. When he was advising on the reorganization of FHI-Nigeria (the Forest Herbarium Ibadan, Nigeria's national herbarium), an IUCN publication on management of Herbaria proved to be most useful for the purpose. Since the early 1990s Piet Wit collaborated more actively with IUCN:

- Member of Steering Committee of CEM since the World Conservation Congress in Montreal, serving as Deputy Chair under Hillary Masundire, Chair of CEM since 2008.
- Member of the Board of the Netherlands Committee of IUCN during 12 years
- Numerous identification, formulation, backstopping and evaluation missions for IUCN-executed projects, a/o the Waza-Logone project (Cameroon), the West-African Wetland Programme, the Coastal and Marine Zone Programme in West Africa, the Okavango Delta Management Plan (Botswana), the Uganda Wetland project, Rufiji Delta and Floodplain (Tanzania), etc.

Regarding Piet Wit's experience in Ecosystem Management in general, the following can be highlighted:

- Integrated water management projects in The Netherlands, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Egypt and Kenya

- Forest certification missions in Gabon and in Cameroon
- Integrated coastal zone management in India, The Netherlands
- Integrated rural development projects in Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Mauritania
- Training and managing of training institutes in Senegal, Cameroon, The Netherlands
- Integrated conservation and development projects in Mongolia (Przewalski Horse), Guinea Bissau (Chimpanzees), Mauritania (Guelb-Er-Richatt), Cameroon (Sudan zone), Zambia (Kafue Flats), China (Middle-Yangtze wetlands), Tibet (Qomolangma Nature Preserve)
- Policy making, national/provincial action plans in Mauretania, Chad, Mongolia, Senegal, Afghanistan

Piet Wit is Member of the board of Hustai National Park Trust (Mongolia) and of the Foundation for Reserves of Przewalski's Horse (The Netherlands), both IUCN members. He is Secretary of the Directive Council of Daridibó in Guinea Bissau, and advisor to the board of the Chimbo Foundation, a new IUCN-member from The Netherlands.

Future priorities of the Commission

CEM should continue the road it has taken during the actual intersessional period, which a/o means:

- Further development of the Red List of Ecosystems under the inspirational leadership of Jon Paul Rodriguez
- Consolidating the agenda-setting work on Ecosystem Based Adaptation to Climate Change, and of Karen Sudmeier on Disaster Risk Reduction
- Facilitating influential networks on ecosystem management like the work of the Fisheries Expert Group
- Strengthening CEM's work on ecosystem services and ecosystem-and community resilience
- Addressing ecosystem management issues in societal sectors such as mining, food-production, the military, financial facilitators, and guiding the policy makers and decision takers of such sectors to better integration of ecosystem management considerations in their respective fields
- Further development of ecosystem management instruments like ecosystem restoration and realization of ecosystem connectivity, management of nutrient flows and agricultural inputs (e.g. systemic insecticides)
- Housing expert groups on specific ecosystems: steppes, Mediterranean ecosystems, mountains, islands, etc
- Emerging and innovative issues, e.g. like during the actual intersessional period, the work done on the Mexican Gulf Oil Spill, the Oasis Expert Group and the Libyan Conference on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development

Institutional support

Syzygy will provide office space and limited secretarial support.