

Letter of Support for Sebastian Winkler
IUCN Regional Councillor for West Europe**Dr. Francis Vorhies***Director, African Wildlife Economy Institute, Stellenbosch University**Senior Associate, Earthmind**IUCN SULi Member**Former Chief Economist, IUCN*

Dear IUCN Members

As someone who has worked alongside Sebastian Winkler for over two decades—as colleagues at the IUCN Secretariat, at IUCN Member organisation, and as IUCN Commission Members—I can attest to his application of conservation economics from policy to practice. His candidacy offers IUCN the chance to elect someone who understands that our living planet's future depends on making the management and use of wildlife sustainable and economically beneficial to people.

When Sebastian joined IUCN in 1997 as one of the organisation's first environmental economists, we pioneered approaches that fundamentally changed how conservation engages with economic systems. Together in the Economics Service Unit, we did not just analyse the economics of biodiversity loss, we focused on tools and frameworks that incentivised conservation and made it investible.

Through my work with the African Wildlife Economy Institute and Sebastian's bold leadership of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation, I saw how his approaches to inclusive and responsible wildlife management translated across continents. His understanding that conservation must generate tangible benefits for people and particularly for local communities—developed during his formative years in Africa—remains central to his vision.

With wildlife-based markets continually growing for tourism, food, medicine, fuel, well-being products and services such as carbon sequestration, IUCN needs a Council member who deeply understand conservation economics and the importance of wildlife-based goods and services for conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

I fully support Sebastian Winkler as a candidate for the IUCN Council who will not only represent Western Europe but be a voice for the economics of conservation across our planet. Sebastian understands that conservation's future lies not in opposing economic forces but in harnessing them for nature's benefit and for ours.

Yours in conservation,

**Dr Francis Vorhies**

Director, African Wildlife Economy Institute

About the African Wildlife Economy Institute: Established to demonstrate how wildlife economies can drive both conservation success and economic development across Africa, providing evidence-based solutions for nature-positive and sustainable growth.