

Evaluation Abstract

Title, author and date of the evaluation report:

Regionalisation and Decentralisation Review, Discussion Paper, prepared by the IUCN Regionalisation & Decentralisation Core Team (Mine Pabari, Andrew Deutz and Sebastian Winkler), November 2002

Name of project, programme or organizational unit:

IUCN's Regionalisation and Decentralisation (R&D) Process

Note: The evaluation focuses on reviewing the concept and philosophy of an ongoing process. It does not examine a particular project, programme and/or organizational unit.

Objectives of the project, programme or mandate of the organizational unit: N/A

IUCN area of specialisation: Organizational

Geographical area: Global

Project or programme duration, length of existence of organisational unit:

1994 – onwards. While IUCN's R&D process can be traced back to the 1980s, the development of the *Strategy of IUCN* in 1994 is considered the first major attempt to rationalize the organization's functioning.

Overall budget of the project, programme or organizational unit: N/A

Donor(s): N/A

Objectives of the evaluation:

To propose improvements to the organizational performance of the IUCN Secretariat in order to achieve the Mission of IUCN through the delivery of an effective Programme.

Type of evaluation: Organizational

Period covered by the evaluation: The historical section encompasses the whole period of IUCN existence (1948 – to date), including its predecessor. The R&D Performance Section is generally based on documents and processes that took shape in the 1990s.

Commissioned by: Director General

Audience: IUCN Director General; Director Global Programme; IUCN Secretariat; Regional Offices; Country Offices

Evaluation team: Internal

Methodology used:

The overall review is designed in two stages:

- *Phase 1 (May – December 2002)* aims at understanding the structures and processes that have evolved as well as the external environment in which IUCN works. It involves the delivery of two major products:
 - *Background Paper (the current document)* which intends to engage all IUCN staff by providing them with common knowledge on IUCN's R&D process; and

- *Discussion Paper* which intends to stimulate reflection on possible solutions and prepare for a change management plan.

The current Background Paper is based on literature review and a number of selected interviews. Five sources of performance-oriented documentation were used: three external reviews, five strategic reviews, one country office review, the Compass Study (1998), and the Report of the Bangkok Meeting of Regional Directors (April 2002).

- *Phase 2 (January 2003 – onwards)* will focus on implementation of the recommendations and priorities identified in Phase 1 that fall within the mandate of the Secretariat.

Questions of the evaluation:

- What were the driving forces (external and internal) behind the R&D process; and
- What R&D Strategies and Processes were proposed and implemented on the ground?

Summary:

Historical Review:

Section 1 provides a brief historical overview of the external and internal forces which drove R&D processes over the last 50 years and describes in detail the R&D strategies and processes proposed in the 1990s, with the Strategy of 1994 providing the starting point and benchmark for the review.

A general pattern has been observed in the evolution of regional and country offices:

- From mainly representational and advisory role to an increasing focus on development of member and partner relations, and increased member involvement in programme development and implementation;
- From single-sector projects to more integrated projects and overall regional/country programmes and technical network development;
- From reliance on HQ guidance and support, to greater local technical and managerial capacities;
- From the need for investment to substantial financial resources from unrestricted/general programme funds, to a substantial level of self-sufficiency based on project and regionally raised programme income.

Synthesis of Performance Issues:

Section 2 summarizes performance issues that have reoccurred in IUCN reviews and studies, classified into ten major categories. Each section contains a review of the current status of the measures taken.

Some excerpts are presented as follows:

1. *Progress Made in Regionalizing and Decentralizing:*
 - Need for a strategic approach, particularly in planning to identify the needs of target sectors and the most appropriate and cost effective means of meeting those needs;
 - Lack of clarity in rationale, mandate and purpose of different components of the Secretariat.
2. *Programme Development and Implementation:*
 - Need to strengthen the capacity for capturing lessons learned;
 - Need to maintain a balance between global perspectives and local priorities;
 - Inadequate capacity in economic and social analysis, and gender programming;
 - Need to demonstrate the linkages between conservation and development at the field.
3. *Membership Development and Services:*
 - Lack of tangible benefits to members, given the little difference in the services provided to members paying dues and partners who do not.
4. *Financial Viability and Security:*
 - Improving cost control systems to ensure that management and administrative operations are cost effective.
5. *Operational Systems and Capacities:*
 - The balance of representation of nationalities of staff both at headquarters and regional offices;
 - Inadequate gender balance at middle and higher levels.
6. *Management, Leadership and Vision:*

- Need for vision, leadership and business planning, and for improved management mechanisms to support regional programmes.
- 7. *Policy Development:*
 - Weaknesses in the links between policy and field activities.
- 8. *Quality Control, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning:*
 - Need for principles and standards to support a high quality of programme and project delivery.
- 9. *Commissions:*
 - Need to enhance funding opportunities for Commissions through close collaboration with regional programmes and headquarters.
- 10. *Governance*
 - Need to clarify and understand the relationship and boundaries of authority between Councillors and the Secretariat, and the implications of the latter for the role of the Director General.

The External Environment:

Section 3 looks at the changing external environment and its implications for IUCN.

The *impact of globalization* on the conservation agenda is discussed, focusing on four issues: (1) trade, (2) foreign direct investment, (3) speculative capital investment, and (4) changing civil society. An important conclusion is that funding for conservation activities in emerging markets from traditional ODA sources will become more difficult as donor attention concentrates on poverty alleviation and therefore on least developed countries. It is suggested that IUCN focus on developing its membership in emerging market countries, and building their capacity both politically and technically. It is also considered that IUCN should build its capacity to engage with a wider range of partners, including civil society and private sector.

Four trends characterizing the shifting donor agenda are highlighted:

- (1) *Increased interest in poverty alleviation.* It is recommended that IUCN continue its present course of engagement with the donor community in challenging the prevailing development model while marginalizing conservation.
- (2) *Rightward shift in European governments.* It is suggested that donors may shift funds toward field projects and away from policy, thus favoring field offices over headquarters.
- (3) *Shift to a sectoral approach.* It is considered that IUCN should position itself strategically, as an effective sectoral portfolio recipient, manager and implementor.
- (4) *Increased competition from government agencies.* IUCN's secretariat presence may have to shift to being a facilitator, convenor and provider of quality technical and policy advice.

IUCN's unique value-added is considered to be its ability to link policy and practice and its capacity to link policy and science, which is seen as its niche in this changing environment.

Recommendations: N/A

Lessons Learned: N/A

Language of the evaluation: English

Available from: IUCN Global Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative, IUCN-Headquarters