

Evaluation Abstract

Title, author and date of the evaluation report:

IUCN Regional Programme for West Africa (BRAO) Strategic Review, June 2002

Name of project, programme or organizational unit: IUCN-BRAO

Objectives of the project, programme or mandate of the organizational unit:

- Provide the basis for developing a more coherent programme in the region
- Reinforce monitoring, evaluation, and the identification of lessons learned
- Create a mechanism for more effective peer review of new projects and programmes
- Allow for representation functions to take place in countries without a national office
- Generate national economies of scale with respect to administrative and financial management.

IUCN area of specialisation: Organizational

Geographical area: West Africa

Project or programme duration, length of existence of organizational unit: 1997 - present

Overall budget of the project, programme or organizational unit: Not specified

Donor(s): Not specified

Objectives of the Evaluation:

To provide senior managers with information related to the rationale, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the IUCN West Africa Regional Programme and the appropriateness of the current organization and business model (Regional Office, Country Offices and Project Offices).

Type of evaluation: Organizational

Period covered by the evaluation: 1997 – 2002

Commissioned by:

Director-General, Director, Global Programme at the request of the Regional Representative

Audience: Senior Managers

Evaluation team: Mixed

Methodology used:

The review team collected data through questionnaires, key informant interviews and focus groups, staff self-assessments and a document review. The team used wrap-up workshops with staff to verify the initial results.

Questions of the evaluation:

The evaluation team developed specific questions around the following topics:

- The relevance and rationale of the BRAO programme in relation to sustainable development (people and ecosystems) issues and trends in the region.
- The effectiveness of the programmatic components of the IUCN-BRAO

- The extent to which the BRAO organizational and business model is appropriate, effective, efficient and financially viable.

Findings:

- The BRAO programme is successful in many areas (professionalism in project implementation, building of local technical capacity, good reputation among members, donors, and partners, recognized technical expertise, coherent strategic programme initiatives, sound project/programme operations)
- Review respondents expressed strong support for BRAO's strategic niche (convening and facilitation role, regional/multi-country geographic focus, emphasis on regional level environmental policy, effective regional/national communications, leadership in defining the critical importance of environment in sustainable development).
- Future programmatic development should include forest conservation and restoration, desertification, cross-boundary protected area management, biodiversity, state of the environment reporting, regional environmental policy development and governance, and biodiversity economics.
- Significant effort should be devoted to funding diversification, project development, improved use of planning and risk management tools, development and implementation of a well-defined Business Plan.
- Weaknesses identified included: project proposal writing, donor relations, effective budgeting (particularly regarding staff time), external communications, interaction between BRAO and IUCN global thematic programmes.

Recommendations:

Among the recommendations, the following are highlighted:

- On wetlands, the programme should adopt a new strategy recording the progress made in utilizing water resources, reduction of impacts from dams and restoration of wetlands.
- On coastal & marine, the programme must clearly define the roles and mandates of national offices so as to put forward IUCN's experience in environmental management.
- The overall BRAO programme should:
 - Take into account the issues for future programme development listed in the findings (above) in developing its next quadrennial programme.
 - Ensure that all future programmatic development is structured within a coherent thematic framework at the sub-regional level
 - Urgently address the issue of funding diversification
 - Receive training in proposal writing and budgeting
 - Review procedures for project development and risk management to better make use of IUCN tools
 - Develop a regional strategic and business plan
 - Develop capacity for communication and donor relations
 - Clarify line management responsibilities
 - Receive technical assistance from HQ on human resources issues
 - Review mandate of country offices

Lessons Learned: Not specified

Language of the evaluation: English

Available from: M&E Initiative