

Evaluation Abstract

Title, author and date of the evaluation report:

Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group 2 (ELG 2) Review, prepared by Alejandro Imbach and Kent Jingfors, May 2005

Name of project, programme or organizational unit: Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group

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

ELG2 was established in late 2002 as a result of the first stage of a reorganization process undertaken by the IUCN Asia Regional Office (ARO). It resulted from the clustering of three existing Regional Thematic Programmes (RTP): Regional Biodiversity Programme (RBP), Regional Environmental Economics Programme (REEP), and Regional Marine Programme (RMP). It aims to:

- Provide integration and synergy into the diverse programmatic work;
- Provide a stronger linkage and technical assistance to the country programme development, particularly in the areas of expertise available within RTPs;
- Offer a forum to voice this expertise collectively;
- Strengthen networking and partnerships; and
- Enhance the financial viability of IUCN Asia.

IUCN area of specialisation: Organizational

Geographical area: Sri Lanka

Project or programme duration, length of existence of organisational unit: 2002 – to date

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

Donor(s): N/A

Objectives of the evaluation:

- Provide an analytical commentary and recommendations on the mandate, consequential programme fit (within overall Asia concepts), programme delivery, engagement of the constituency in its activities, co-location, and overall contribution to the development of IUCN Asia programme.
- Review other important areas, including: current management arrangements; internal structuring of the ELG2 and the working of each component regional thematic programmes; the extent to which integration (within ELG, with Country Programmes) has improved and is directly supported by ELG's functioning; the need for adaptation of existing programmes and activities, and for ELG2 to incorporate new programmatic areas.

Type of evaluation: Programme

Period covered by the evaluation: late 2002 – April/May 2005

Commissioned by:

Audience: IUCN Asia Regional Director; ELG staff; IUCN HQ

Evaluation team: Mixed (External/Internal)

Methodology used:

- Review Design: drafting the Terms of Reference, preparation of the Review and Information Sources matrices, and development of information gathering tools (lists of documents, questionnaires, interview guidelines, etc);
- Information gathering and analysis: collecting and reading the documents, interviewing people, organizing the information, and having short Review Team meetings to develop both a common understanding of the situation and an agreed set of issues for discussion and recommendations;
- Feedback and discussion with ELG2: presenting and discussing with staff the findings of the Review;
- Reporting: preparation of the Review Report for the Regional Director and ARO, as a basis for review, follow-up and decision making.

The Review Matrix, Information Sources Matrix, and complete set of interview questionnaires are available in Annex 2, 3, and 4 of the report, respectively.

Questions of the evaluation:

The Review focused on six major areas:

- 1) Mandate (clarity, achievements against original objectives, integration among the component RTPs, cooperation with other ELGs and Country Programmes)
- 2) Programmatic Fit (within the overall IUCN Asia programme as well as degree of addressing the needs of the constituency)
- 3) Programme Delivery and Efficiency (implementation of the 'Asia Programme Development Group' process, KEGO-wise analysis of outputs, effectiveness in achieving results, resource constraints, etc.)
- 4) Co-location (situational analysis, advantages/disadvantages of continuing ELG2 in Colombo, degree of fusion with IUCN Sri Lanka programme)
- 5) Constituency (involvement of Members and Commission Members, networking with global or regional institutions, capacity building of the constituency)
- 6) Other operational aspects (financial, human resources, identification of needs and emerging areas)

Findings:

Overall, ELG2 has made significant progress in terms of consolidation of the Group and each of its component programmes. Amongst other things, ELG2 has demonstrated impressive capacity to respond to the post-tsunami restoration needs. In addition, the Marine Programme has been re-established on a stable basis; excellent relations and joint work on environmental economics have been developed with the Sri Lanka Country Office; and financial consolidation has been achieved.

Other observations include:

Mandate: The ELG mandate is understood differently across the Asia Region. Some understandings are conceptually clear (e.g. to ensure the integration of ecosystems and livelihoods), but operationally vague. Others are purely operational (e.g. to build capacity of the countries, secure funding for the countries, achieve the 60/40 in-country/regional portfolio targets, etc). There is also a significant level of heterogeneity about the issue of the ELG Constituency.

Integration within ELG2 is uneven. There are signals of growing integration between REEP and RMP, but it is not reflected yet in joint project proposals. In terms of structure, a number of individuals interviewed felt that the RTP-based structure favored isolation and tribalism and fostered competition rather than cooperation among the Programmes. Given the differences in scope, management style, and history, the RBP seems isolated. Conversely, both REEP and RBP have a good record of cooperation with the Country Offices.

Programmatic Fit: While there are concerns about RBP's fit within IUCN Asia in the sense that biodiversity is the business of the entire IUCN, REEP is viewed as fitting the needs of the region pretty

well. In addition, new potential areas of work are emerging globally, such as national level green accounting and fiscal reforms that provide incentives for maintaining or enhancing ecosystem services. With regard to RMP, the Programme has been revitalized after a brief hiatus, and its importance and relevance are widely recognized. Issues regarding its scope (i.e. whether marine, coastal, or both) have, however, emerged.

Programme Delivery and Use: There is a broad consensus about the good performance of the entire ELG2 in terms of timely delivery of outputs. Regarding use, the perception is that ELG2 deliverables are concentrated in the Knowledge part of the Knowledge-Empowerment-Governance strategy.

Co-Location of ELG2 in Sri Lanka is perceived by both sides as a positive decision. There are pluses and minuses on both sides, but the overall balance is positive.

Constituency: Remarkably low level of consensus has been registered on who the key constituencies of ELGs and the Country Offices are. As a consequence, perceptions about how well ELG is serving its constituency are not homogenous.

Other Operational Issues: Regional Finance has expressed concerns about ELG2's financial health. However, given that all component programmes are working on project proposals (some of which on post-tsunami rehabilitation), the approval process (and thus financial inflows) is expected to be faster. Regarding concerns of most projects being of short-term nature, it is believed that if ELG becomes a single team working in an integrated way on coastal landscapes in a post-tsunami environment, it will be easier to acquire medium to long-term projects.

Recommendations:

The following are some of the Review Team's main recommendations:

- Conduct internal exercises on identification of constituents for Country Offices and ELGs (both at country and regional level). Once completed, they should be harmonized at each level (ELG and CO) and shared across the region. It is also recommended that the Country Offices are taken as one of the key constituents for ELGs and vice versa.
- Include in the ELG mandate with regard to Country Offices at least the following: developing COs capacity in the areas of ELG expertise; providing mentoring as well as global and donor intelligence to COs; and developing project proposals jointly with COs.
- Dissolve all three Regional Thematic Programmes belonging to ELG2 and replace the RTP-based structure by an integrated team composed of specialists.
- Maintain Environmental Economics within the ELG2 scope and with a strategic focus that moves away from small, short-term consultancies towards integrating the economics theme into longer term, multi-disciplinary livelihoods initiatives, particularly in coastal areas.
- Move the global biodiversity policy component out of ELG2 to enhance team work and focus ELG2 contribution on biodiversity to areas more closely tied to field implementation.
- Make additional efforts to develop a portfolio of medium to long term (2-5 years) integrated projects that draws on the multi-disciplinary expertise both from within ELG2 and between ELG2 and ELG1.

Lessons Learned: N/A

Language of the evaluation: English

Available from: IUCN Global Monitoring & Evaluation Initiative, Gland, Switzerland; IUCN Asia Regional Office (ARO)